Members' Newsletter May 2015

The Primary Club
The cricketers' charity for the blind and partially sighted

Inside:
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- Your donations help to fund... – p 3
- How the Primary Club helped to save my life – p 8

www.primaryclub.org
News

More players are now taking up blind cricket than ever before but why is the sport becoming increasingly popular?

That’s the question posed by Athar Ahmad in an interesting article on the BBC website which features an interview with Hassan Khan, the first Asian player to represent the England visually-impaired cricket team. “The game’s given me so much beyond just the sport,” said Hassan, “it’s given me independence. I was so scared of doing everyday things like going on the Tube by myself but now I travel on my own. I’m more confident and it’s really changed my life.”

You can read the whole article at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-29424906

The curse of Rule 5(c)

The curse of rule 5(c) has struck again. The rule, under which members are asked to add £2 to their annual donation for each primary achieved by an England batsman in a home test match, claimed the following victim in 2014 as certified by Malcolm Ashton from the TMS commentary box.

● Gary Ballance lbw b Prasad, Monday (v Sri Lanka, Headingley 23 June, England)

Members are, therefore, asked to add £2 to their annual donation. If every member observes rule 5(c) our income will grow significantly. For those who like to keep a full check on these matters, there were no “primaries” in 2014 in home ODIs or T20s. However, in the T20 v India at Edgbaston on 7 September 2014, Chris Woakes was run out without receiving a ball, often known as a ‘Diamond duck’.

Editor’s letter

It’s always a pleasure trying to pick the front cover shot for the magazine, but I was particularly delighted to be sent this marvellous shot by David Townley of Rory Field diving for a catch at the Bill Frindall Memorial T20 Finals © David Townley. You can find more of David’s excellent work at his Blinket site on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/dt.blinket, a photographic journal of all things blind cricket in the UK.

Below it is another shot which I very much like, sent by the MCB’s Inclusion & Diversity Officer, Khushali Patel. It’s quite simple in some ways, but for me really sums up The Primary Club’s goal to provide sports and recreational facilities for the blind and visually impaired.

Many thanks for all your kind words about last year’s magazine. Some readers suggested that while they like to read plenty of smaller stories about the many groups that receive grants – more than 50 last season – it would also be interesting to have slightly more in depth pieces about one or two. So that’s what we’ve done.

As always, the work featured in the magazine relies heavily – and sometimes entirely – on your continued generous donations. When I talk to the organisers, they always ask me to pass on their gratitude to you all. I know it’s a cliché, but this money does make a difference to people’s lives. Thank you and good luck with those first balls this season!

● Alex Johnson

Milton Keynes Torch Fellowship

“Last year, we had a fantastic holiday in Llandudno, staying at the Belmont Hotel, which catered specifically for visually impaired guests,” says Sue Richards, who helps organise the Milton Keynes Torch Fellowship. “It’s right on the sea front, so we had a very short walk to the prom and the weather was fabulous.

“We were very well looked after by the staff and we enjoyed a range of visits, including a private view of a museum dedicated to the Home Front during the second World War, a tram and cable car ride up and down the Great Orme, Bodellwyddan Castle, Bodnant Gardens and Plas Mawr, an Elizabethan house.

“One of the visually impaired members of our group said that he’d been able to cross off three things on his bucket list - a cable car ride, an open-topped bus tour and, most thrilling of all - a speedboat ride which he absolutely loved!

“As always, we are immensely grateful to The Primary Club, which enables our visually impaired members and sighted helpers, many of whom are elderly and with mobility difficulties and who do so much to make the holiday possible and memorable, to afford the costs necessarily entailed in staying in a hotel with the level of access needs that the group requires. Thank you so much.”
“A range of partners worked together including East London Vision (ELVis) and Metro Blind Sport, to put on four Multi Sports events throughout East London in Waltham Forest, Tower Hamlets, Redbridge and Newham,” says Laura Ross, East London Vision Service Development and Delivery Officer.

“Each Multi Sports event was a great success in its own right offering a variety of different sports such as sailing, trampolining, tandem cycling, tennis, athletics, judo and much more.

“One participant, aged 10, was unsure what a tandem was as he had not had the opportunity to try one previously and said: ‘Is it like two bikes stuck together?’ He then went on to say ‘The trampoline was my favourite, I loved jumping around’. Another participant added ‘For me, as a visually impaired person, it was an eye opener as I never thought I’d be able to do sports. I got to try my hand at trampolining, football, self defence, and it was nice to be around such a diverse group of people. ELVis gave me the opportunity to see that I wasn’t by myself, and that I could still have fun.’

“It is felt by all involved, whether as an organiser or participant, that the multi sport days have been a huge benefit and provided blind and partially sighted people the opportunity to try something new in a safe environment and by qualified coaches and instructors.”

Masuma Ali, the Service Development and Delivery Manager for ELVis, said: “All four multi sports days have been excellent with great attendance and enthusiasm from participants, volunteers and coaches alike. On behalf of all the above, we thank The Primary Club for their funding to allow us to hold such events across East London.”
Useful Vision

Useful Vision creates positive opportunities for vision impaired children and their families throughout the North East, and helps them get the most out of life.

“We do this by offering access to a range of unique, imaginative and sporting activities, family trips, and learning opportunities, and by providing information support,” explains Rebecca Wilson, founder of Useful Vision. “In all instances access to these events for the VI child, their siblings and one carer is free.

“Those registered with us range from a few months old up to 18 years, come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and have varying degrees of visual impairment. Whether the events we offer are adventurous, sporting or educational in nature, all aim to push back the boundaries of what the vision impaired child and their family would normally be able to experience.”

Events are designed to appeal to all abilities, to build social skills, self-confidence and self-esteem and lessen the sense of isolation that vision impaired children and their families often experience.

Useful Vision’s attitude is very much that with the right help and equipment, a child with a vision impairment should be able to enjoy the same fun, thrills and sense of freedom other children get.

“The Primary Club kindly donated funding towards trips for three years, previously, 2010, 11 & 12,” says Rebecca, “but we have not run this event since then as we have been developing other activities in the region. However it is a very popular event and we have been asked regularly by families to run another trip. It is wonderful that The Primary Club have very generously donated funding to enable Useful Vision to run another visit in 2015.

“The Windermere Manor hotel is specially designed for maximum accessibility for vision impaired people, as well as having excellent facilities, a large garden with play area, an indoor pool and light conservatory restaurant. On the Saturday night we have a Useful Vision BBQ followed by a children’s disco, so the parents and children can socialise. The staff are well trained and understand the needs of VI people, always ready to help. During the day the families have an opportunity for kayaking or sailing on Lake Windermere with specially trained staff or for the ‘landlubbers’ we organise a special trip to the Beatrix Potter Experience with a guided touch tour and story telling.

“Vision impaired children and their families enjoy visiting the hotel because of the easy access and the specially organised trips by Useful Vision, enabling families who rarely get away from home to attend in the knowledge their stay will be safe and well organised with the needs of the disabled child always in mind.”

“Useful Vision is the only organisation where my child gets included in all the activities”
Did you know...

Blind cricket was invented in Melbourne, Australia, in 1922 by visually impaired factory workers who used a tin can with rocks inside.

The first Blind Cricket World Cup was held in New Delhi in 1998. South Africa beat Pakistan in the final, India and Australia were the two semi-finalists.

The first T20 Blind Cricket World Cup was held in Bangalore in 2012. India beat Pakistan by 29 runs in the final.

The first Blind Cricket Ashes competition was held in England in August 2004. Five matches were played, with England winning by three games to two.

Ten Pin Bowling

“We solely rely on donations,” says Pauline Greenhalgh Voluntary Fundraiser at the National Blind Tenpin Bowling Association, “and each summer season that we receive a donation from The Primary Club we are extremely grateful.

“Our bowlers find travel hard and therefore bowl in their local bowling centres during the league period. The only time that they come together with bowlers from other clubs is at our two finals, Summer Doubles and Winter Trios.

“All teams look forward to gaining places in our finals and try that much harder during the league games to do so. Without the donations that we receive each year we could not afford to hold the finals events. Many friendships are forged during these meetings and we have even had marriages come from them.

“The committee of NBTBA are all volunteers and most are VI too and we make sure that all donations are used for the benefit of our VI members.”

East

A visually impaired crew at the helm of an Oyster 40 yacht approaching Brightlingsea taking part in a recent EAST Anglian Sailing Trust sailing cruise for blind and VI adults.

We have relaunched our Twitter page so please do follow us at @ThePrimaryClub (and you can also follow the Primary Club Casuals at @PCCasuals)

Also well worth following is @UKBlindCricket
Hampshire VI Cricket Club

Hampshire Visually Impaired Cricket Club (HVICC) was formed in 2008.

Treasurer Jacki Killeen says: “Since our formation The Primary Club has provided us with a grant which has helped us with the cost of entering the league and cup competitions and funds our season expenses for which we are immensely grateful.

“The grant is used to pay for hiring facilities, the umpires and scorers and providing the cricket teas. As the league is not local, it also provides for a minibus for players to ease their travel to all parts of the country and hotel accommodation when needed.”

“The 2015 season was very successful for Hampshire after dropping down to the development league at the end of last year.

“We lifted the South and West Development League title,” says Jackie, “having gone unbeaten through the campaign with five wins and two draws. On the final day of the league we needed to chase down over 200 in 20 overs to beat Dorset and this with all 10 wickets to spare – a wonderful achievement for the team which proved invaluable in terms of their confidence.

“What has been amazing this year is to see all the efforts that have been put in to the winter training manifest themselves on the pitch, a credit to Ieuan Wathan and Pete Newman, the coaching team. Some individual highlights include Ryan West topping the batting averages with 416 runs at an average of 138 and Dave Allen averaging 59 with nearly 200 runs. Of the bowlers, Matt Killeen was the league’s top wicket taker with 10 at a strike rate of 21.

“All of this would not be possible without the dedicated volunteers who run the club, make teas, drive the minibus, and ‘friends’ of the club who raise money for it. Included in this list is The Primary Club – without its support, for which we are very grateful, we would not be able to provide the competitive element of the wonderful game of cricket for our players.”

Meanwhile, the grant to the West Glamorgan Blind Bowls Club was for £3,000 enabled players to attend various bowls tournaments around England (there are no club tournaments in Wales for visually impaired bowlers). The funding contributed towards travel, accommodation and kit and has given members greater competition outside their weekly practices. The team participates at events in places including Weston-Super-Mare and Torquay, and have further trips planned to Taunton and Nottingham.

The Cheshire Cobras VICC (pictured in action above) was also awarded £3,000 in 2014 by The Primary Club to help with start-up and general season expenses. Supported by the Cheshire Cricket Board it provides the chance for people in the Cheshire area to play friendly matches against local clubs across the county.

These children are from our social group is funded by The Primary Club,” says Sally Thomas, Vision Team Leader at the Sensory Support Service in Bromley. “The dry ski slope session was very popular. The young people enjoyed the experience and gained in confidence as it went on. They will be repeating this activity once the evenings are lighter. We also went trampolining followed by supper. The young people had an amazing time and all made progress. We hope to repeat this activity again soon as the young people enjoyed it so much.”

What happens to your money?

● Action from the Birmingham Sports Goalball team which received a grant of £6,000 last year for its activities
THE PRIMARY CLUB FORECAST RESULT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

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<tr>
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<th>2014/15 (forecast)</th>
<th>2013/14 (actual)</th>
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<td>Publicity and administration costs</td>
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<td><strong>Surplus for the year</strong></td>
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<td>Surplus from earlier years</td>
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<td><strong>Grants (details below)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Surplus to carry forward</strong></td>
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<td><strong>£79,567</strong></td>
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Note: Copies of the Club’s full accounts may be obtained from the Honorary Treasurer.

2015 GRANTS TO SCHOOLS AND CLUBS FOR THE BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED

- Berkshire Co Blind Soc: Monthly sports club & cricket club £8,000
- Birmingham Sports Club: Futsal & goalball £6,000
- Blind Cricket England & Wales: Equipment and development programme and women’s VI team £13,000
- Bristol Blind Bowls Club: Tournament support £500
- British Blind Sport: Cricket - KO Final £6,820
- Bromley London Borough: Children’s picnic & sporting activities £2,100
- Cambridge Dons: Goalball expenses £1,500
- Cheshire Cobras VICC: 2015 season expenses £3,000
- Cricket for Change: Development programme £8,500
- Derbyshire Association for the Blind: Swimming and tenpin bowling £6,398
- Devon Bowling Club: 2015 season expenses £2,750
- Dorset Dolphins VICC: Start-up and 2015 season expenses £5,375
- Durham VICC: 2015 season expenses £3,000
- East Anglian Sailing Trust: Training courses £3,700
- East London Vision: “Come & Try It” Project £4,000
- English Blind Golf Association: 2015 Matchplay Championship £3,000
- Gloucestershire VICC: 2015 season expenses £3,000
- Hampshire VICC: 2015 season expenses £3,000
- Kent VICAG: 2015 season expenses £2,761
- Lancashire Lions VICC: 2015 season expenses £3,000
- London Futsall Club: 2015 season expenses £2,450
- London Sports Club: Swimming £1,000
- Merton Sports Club: Hall hire & insurance £1,850
- Metro: Cricket £6,000
- Middlesex VICC: 2014 season expenses £2,850
- Milton Keynes Torch Fellowship: Holidays for members £1,000
- Northants Steelbacks VICC: 2015 season expenses £3,000
- Nottingham Knights VICC: 2015 season expenses £3,000
- Open Country: Tandems £1,600
- Outlook Trust: Replacement of equipment £1,610
- Pennine Bowling Club: Season expenses £2,000
- Royal National College, Hereford: Cricket expenses £2,190
- Scottish Blind Golf Society: 2015 Strokeplay Championship £1,500
- Sheffield RSB: Tandems and trailer £2,000
- Sight Action, Inverness: Activity days £3,600
- Somerset VICC: 2015 season expenses £3,000
- South West Rovers: 2014-15 football expenses £2,000
- Sussex Sharks VICC: 2015 season expenses and juniors £3,500
- Tandeming Together: Tandem maintenance & transport £2,280
- Taunton Deane VI Bowls: Season expenses & equipment £2,500
- Useful Vision, Northumberland: Winemere activity weekends £5,000
- VI B Somerset: Bowling club season expenses £2,500
- Vixen Support: Tandems £250
- Warwickshire VICC: 2015 season expenses £3,000
- West Glamorgan Bowls Club: 2014 season expenses £3,000
- Yorkshire VICC: 2015 season expenses £3,000

£161,568

From the Hon Sec...

Dear Member,

The year just ended has been almost a mirror image of the previous year with net income stuck at about £130,000, notwithstanding a dramatic fall in new members from 244 to 118. Once more we have had to make a dent in the reserves to maintain an acceptable level of grants but if income doesn’t increase, grants will have to be scaled back next year. So please give generously – which you can do with a credit or debit card via our website (ten years old this year and soon to have a new look) as well as by cheque.

2015 marks the 60th anniversary of the formation of the club. We had been hoping to celebrate with another dinner – but it proved impossible to find a venue and a speaker suitable for the occasion both available on the same day.

It has always been the Club’s practice to acknowledge donations. Now that even a second class stamp costs almost eleven shillings in real money, I propose to discontinue the practice, except when specifically asked to do so. If you need something for tax or other reasons, a donation via the website generates an automatic e-mail acknowledgment.

Another change this year is the discontinuance of clothing items bearing the club’s logo. There are a very few items remaining which can be purchased via the website – but they won’t be there for very long.

Immediately following this year’s annual trustees’ meeting, Robert & Marion Fleming decided to retire as trustees after almost twenty years. Robert was also my predecessor as Hon Secretary (from 1996 to 2004) and continued as editor of the newsletter and as chairman of the trustees until 2008. The Club and its beneficiaries owe each of them an enormous debt.

Yours sincerely

Chris Larlham

£161,568
Very happily married to Sally for more than 20 years, David was the proud father of two teenage sons. He ran a successful antiques business and his spare time was spent running a boys’ soccer club and enjoying playing darts to a high standard in his local pub.

Although David had always suffered from poor eyesight, he was ill-prepared for the complete loss of his sight over a 12 month period. The degeneration is his eyesight was unexpected and surgery could not delay its relentless progress.

The loss of his sight was devastating for David. He had to surrender his antiques business. He had to relinquish his soccer club activities. He could no longer play darts with his mates. While his former darts colleagues would willingly collect him for a drink, David yearned for his former freedom and bitterly resented having to rely upon other people.

David sank into depression during the long lonely days in his house; there seemed little to do once his wife and sons had departed in the morning. “I would sit for hours contemplating my uselessness,” he says. At his lowest points, thoughts of taking his own life passed through him.

Although the local authorities had pointed David in the direction of financial assistance, they could not address his core problem of his lack of self-esteem. However, it was one of their actions that started David on his long road to recovery ... they suggested that he applied for a guide dog. This David did and he was accepted on a course in his home area.

It was on the first day of his training course that David met the considerable frame of Tiny Morris the captain of the Hampshire Visually Impaired Cricket Club. Tiny recognised David’s symptoms and the devastating loss of his active involvement in sport and its camaraderie. Tiny brushed aside any reservations from David and insisted that he attended a training session with the Hampshire VICC. David hadn’t played cricket since school days and had only a rudimentary grasp of the game. Nevertheless, David’s wife took him to the training session.

David recounts with great pleasure his time at that first training session where he met his fellow cricketers. Although a complete novice, David enjoyed the coaching and being in the fresh air again playing a sport. However, the greatest pleasure was being part of a team and enjoying the banter that comes with that. On the drive home, David’s wife, Sally, was overwhelmed by the change in David.

Sally’s hopes have not been misplaced; some four years later David’s life has been transformed by VI cricket and the companionship that it’s given him. He is now a regular and valued member of Hampshire VICC in the Development League and also plays for Sussex Sharks VICC in the National League.

And has David improved as a cricketer? Undoubtedly – as in 2014, David was awarded national B1 fielder of the year and Hampshire most improved and players’ player for the season.

But cricket isn’t his only hobby. Tiny Morris and David are a formidable team in the British Blind Sport Ten-Pin National Bowling League and enjoy hilarious long distance trips to the venues guided only by their dogs. David’s role in the bowling is not confined to playing – he has taken on the organisation of the teams in the Portsmouth area and is responsible for completing match details on-line to BBS. This has forced David to increase his computer skills to an extent where he is more IT-savvy than before his sight loss.

David’s dog Irwin is his constant companion and enjoys David’s complete trust. Irwin quickly learnt the routes to David’s regular sites – the doctor’s, the local shops, and the pub where he now enjoys the companionship of his former darts colleagues.

During a quiet moment with Tiny, David was musing how becoming involved in VI cricket started his long road back to a full and happy life. When Sally and his sons leave the house in the morning, David is now busy with his cricket, ten-pin bowling and its administration and in meeting his many sighted and VI friends.

David asked Tiny: “Where does the money come for the VI cricket and bowling?” Tiny replied that most of it comes from The Primary Club, an organisation David had never heard of but to whom he is very grateful.

In David’s own words: “I reckon the Primary Club helped save my life.”