

Loud & Proud

"A voice for disabled people in Hull"

May 1999 - Volume 1 - Issue 3

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ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT - WHO CARES ?

The demonstration by the Direct Action Network (DAN) and their campaign for accessible transport was the lead story in the last issue. As well as getting a lot of media time, DAN obtained an agreement with Kingston Upon Hull City Council and the bus companies that an Accessible Transport Forum would be created to discuss how to improve the transport system for all disabled people in the area.

The Forum is putting together an interim plan to be ready for July 1999 and a final plan by July 2000. These plans will set out the ideas for transport for the next five years, so it is important we have a voice. Choices and Rights, as the democratic voice of disabled people locally, were asked to be part of the Forum and invited to nominate other interested parties. Well, we did and because we believe the issue is an important one, we gave details of organisations that aren't run by disabled people, but may well include them as part of their membership. These included: Hull Council of Disabled People, Hull Institute for the Blind, Disability Rights Advisory Service, DUET, Age Concern and many others.

Apart from two members of Choices and Rights, no other representative from the voluntary sector turned up. No one for older people or other disabled people. We accept that transport is poor and it is difficult for some to attend, but not all. If the bus companies (and train and taxi companies) said, 'We're not going to make anything accessible because no one is bothered!', it would be hard to disagree at the moment.

There were representatives from Stagecoach, two City Councillors, East Yorkshire Motor Services and officers from Hull City Council Technical Services. Powerful, influential people. Attending could make a difference to the segregated transport system we currently endure. We know that people find it difficult to complain, they don't want to rock the boat. Well, if we accept second rate services, we'll get second rate treatment.

Whether it's buses, taxis, health or social services. Choices and Rights will keep complaining, fighting and lobbying until we get what we want. There's another transport forum shortly. If you'd like to come, please contact the Choices and Rights office for more details. **"WE WILL RIDE"**

ALL CHANGE AT THE OFFICE

I am pleased to report that Liesel Dickinson was successful in obtaining the post of Independent Living Scheme Coordinator. The competition was tough, with disabled people applying from all over the UK.

Narrowing this field down to five people for interview was difficult enough, but interviewing and selecting a successful candidate was even harder. I would offer commiseration's to the unsuccessful candidates, who all interviewed excellently.

Liesel's delight at hearing she'd got the job made it all worthwhile. I am sure that she will continue to be a great as-

set to Choices & Rights. If you want direct payments information she's the person to contact. Liesel's success meant we had to fill the remaining 7 months of her existing post. Luckily we had someone with the skills and qualifications right under our noses.

Gwen Jennison has been an excellent volunteer for well over a year and the Personnel sub-Committee had no hesitation in appointing her for the post of Development Worker. Gwen will stay in post until December, when funding ends. However, we know she will do an excellent job.

Good luck Gwen and Liesel

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Loud & Proud

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We like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue of Loud & Proud.

Editor: Mark Baggley

A TRIBUTE TO IAN STANTON

Ian Stanton was an Oldham Athletic supporter. He was also a wheelchair user, a disability performer and probably the first disabled "activist" I'd ever heard of. Back in the early 80's, I hadn't heard of disability politics until I started watching Same Difference on Channel 4 TV.

I heard about the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People and sent off for their newsletter. When I started getting it, Ian was the editor and his articles were witty, clever and attacked anything and anyone who got in the way of disabled people having freedom and independence. That magazine inspired this newsletter.

Eventually, I heard him sing. He was one of the first people we booked for the Conference that started Choices and Rights five years ago. To hear him singing live was a personal thrill, and the experience was uplifting and amusing. Amusing, because he was singing about how crap day centre's were in front of a number of politicians, social workers and the conference was held in a day centre!

I bought his tape after the event and played it over and over. I've still got and still play it. However, luckily for us, Stream records brought out a CD of Ian a couple of years ago, called Rollin' Thunder. However, that wasn't the end of the story, Ian played at our Loud and Proud Disability Cabaret at Hull Truck Theatre and with respect to the other artists, he was my favourite on the night.

I heard that Ian had died while I was sat in a pub and I feel it was an appropriate place. Ian loved a drink, a smoke and being in pubs. I didn't know Ian well, although we knew each other by name. I feel sad that he won't write any more songs and that we've lost a very important member of the disability movement.

As a tribute to Ian, we have re-

printed a review of his CD that I wrote for a disability magazine a couple of years ago. The one time I got to introduce him on stage, I was told by Johnny Crescendo, how to greet him. So I hope he's playing his guitar somewhere, that he's got a pint and that the 'Old Slap head from Oldham' can see Oldham Athletic win again.

Rollin' Thunder by Ian Stanton. My favourite of the three, this features a combination of six new songs and the best (in Ian's opinion) of his last two releases. Available for the

first time on CD, I imagine this is one release no disabled activist will want to be without. Ian is a singer/songwriter out of the folk circuit. His lyrics are funny, powerful and will strike a personal chord in most people.

"Invisible" opens this album, a powerful song about how disability is seen by society. The mood then instantly changes with the comic, but biting 'Chip On Yer Shoulder'. When Ian is asked 'How did you get like that?', he responds that he was a 'Stuntman in Jaws 3'! Rollin' Thunder talks about the disability movement and states that 'You Know your Own Mind, It's Written on the banners that you wear with so much pride'.

Other well know songs include 'Tragic But Brave', 'Douglas Bader' and 'Talking Disabled Anarchist'. If you think Ian only sings about disability, you'd be wrong. He also sings songs about broken hearts and one of my favourite songs, ever is 'Bloody Funny Way'.

The first verse starts 'It happened one Friday night, while I was out having fun. When I came home it was nearly light, by the moonlight she had gone'. When I first heard this I was singing it for days and it's sad, but catchy.

Go out now and buy it.

Mark Baggley

**'I feel sad
that he
won't write
any more
songs'**

DID YOU KNOW IT'S STILL A 'BIG ISSUE' ?

As I write this, I am sat in a nice warm centrally heated bungalow. I look outside and it's snowing. It's freezing, picturesque, but because my wheels can't negotiate snow, I am stuck inside and haven't been able to go to work. I could moan about being on my own all day, getting behind on my work, or the fact daytime TV is rubbish, but today, I'm not going to. Maybe, many more of you have had a similar experience.

The reason I'm not moaning is because I have just seen a documentary about homeless people or to be correct, homeless disabled people. I was shocked at how many disabled people are homeless and living on the streets of London. Don't think, 'Well that's London', because there are homeless disabled people

all over the country. Surprisingly, the reason people were homeless wasn't necessarily about money. It was about being burgled five times because the burglars knew there was a vulnerable person there, it was about not knowing where to go for help to sort out accommodation, council tax, benefits and personal care and being put into a residential home for older people at 22.

So what can we do, to help stop it ? Well, if you need information about anything at all, ring our information hotline (see the back page for more details). If you are refused a service, appeal, ask for a review, challenge the decision. If you don't know how to do it, contact us and we'll put you on to someone who can help.

The important thing to remember is whatever the problem is, doing nothing won't work in a positive way. There is lots of advice and information out there and although it does take energy and time to get it, things can change for the better if you are armed with the facts. This won't just help you keep a roof on your head, it will help you with anything you need to do.

Finally, if you are sat, snug and satisfied in your own home, good, I'm happy that you're safe and warm and you've got what everyone deserves.

But don't forget about homeless people, they are no different from you and me and the least you can do is buy a copy of **The Big Issue** next time you see it on sale.

IDLE CHAT

What's the matter with you?
Said the stranger on the train
Is it your legs, your arms?
Or is it your brain?

Were you in an accident?
A war or disaster zone
How do you cope each day?
Do you manage living alone?

What's that, you work
and you drive
That's amazing for someone
who's only half alive

You've got two children
And you love having sex
Well you do surprise me
What will they think of next?

Your partner must be
The caring type
To take you on
When she could have Mr Right

What's that you say?
You think I'm being rude
I'm patronising
I shouldn't intrude

I was only being friendly,
Making idle chat
How dare you call me
A patronising twat

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YOUR VIEWS WANTED !!

Hello, I'm a research assistant at The University of Hull, currently undertaking a 6-month project focusing on "Family": Exploring support for disabled parents and their children.

I would very much like to hear from young carers of disabled parents, and disabled parents themselves, about your experiences of accessing support.

In particular I hope to make contact with health/social care practitioners to explore practices of giving support: guidelines which must be followed, policy and practice and personal experiences.

If you feel you can contribute in any way I would be grateful to hear from you. I can be contacted by post:

Sarah Clark
CASS
The University of Hull
Cottingham Road
Hull
HU6 7RX
by telephone (01482) 466089 or
email: S.Clark@cas.hull.ac.uk

Many thanks, Sarah Clark

Anyone who can help, please contact Sarah as soon as possible. This project is very important and has come about as a result of Amanda Dunn, a member of Choices and Rights, working with the University to get some funding for this extremely important project.

There is now a small group of disabled parents who have got together to provide support and advice to each other and they are affiliated to the Coalition.

Mark Baggley

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Assistance Dogs

“Dogs for the disabled - The Tail”

Dogs for the Disabled was founded in 1986 by Frances Hay, a dog lover, who was disabled by the disease bone marrow cancer. Carrying out the simplest of functions became impossible without help. Frances found that her own dog Kim, both instinctively and with some training, was helping her to perform some of these tasks. She quickly recognised that this could also benefit many other people in similar circumstances.

Although, sadly, Frances died in 1990 at the early age of 41, she had inspired those close to her with her ideas and enthusiasm. Realising the value and happiness that a dog trained to help people with disabilities could bring, they decided to continue with the mission she had started.

Dogs for the Disabled train specially selected dogs to carry out a range of practical tasks. A highly trained dog can improve the quality of life for a disabled person. The key benefits are;

- Greater independence
- Increased sense of security
- Renewed confidence
- Improved health
- Companionship

Dogs are trained to do many of the tasks that are often very difficult or impossible for the disabled person to do, but which are so crucial to enjoy the independence that most people take for granted. The dogs are assessed and selected from many sources, including rescue dogs.

All dogs are trained in basic obe-

dience, social awareness and hygiene. This is followed by specialist training to carry out the specific tasks required by their future owner. The dog and client then spend up to four weeks working together at a training centre under the guidance of a

Dogs for the Disabled instructor. Once a dog is qualified and the client is ready, responsibility for the dog passes to the new client and they begin a new working

partnership. Depending on the owners specific needs a dog can be trained to;

- Retrieve a range of items and picking up articles dropped accidentally.
- Open and close doors.
- Activate light switches and alarms.
- Pulling washing out of a washing machine, fetching groceries in a shopping basket and bringing in the milk in a special crate.
- Through the use of a harness, helping a person with balance difficulties to walk without a walking frame or stick.

They can be trained to bark on command to attract attention if the owner needs assistance. The dog and owner partnership is supported closely throughout the dogs life to ensure that everything goes smoothly. Dogs for the Disabled is able to provide a trained dog to people whose disability restricts them from performing everyday tasks and leading as active a life as they would like, provided they are able to take good care of the dog in line with an

agreed code.

Dogs for the Disabled plan to help a lot more disabled people by training more dogs. It costs £2,500 to sponsor the training of a dog and a further £2,500 to support the partnership during the dogs working life. They receive no government funding so money is raised by fund-raising activities or by donations.

Dogs for the Disabled come under the umbrella organisation Assistance Dogs (U.K.). The first aim of this organisation is to improve access for people who depend on dogs for mobility and independence, most particularly in supermarkets, food shops and other public facilities.



Assistance Dogs has obtained an agreement from the Department of Health to allow assistance dogs access to establishments where food is for sale, which until quite recently was restricted to guide dogs only. The founder member charities of Assistance Dogs (U.K.) are Dogs for the Disabled, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Hearing Dogs for the Deaf and Support Dogs.

Dogs for the Disabled Head Office

Tel: (01203) 302050

Fax: (01203) 302055

Web: <http://www.vois.org.uk/dftd/>

Sue Lee

DAN Dares

We had a very successful day's action in Bournemouth. About 30 DAN supporters lobbied the Annual Conference of the Association of Directors of Social Services.

Despite the heavy police protection, they felt sufficiently intimidated to invite a group of us in to negotiate with them.

We got them to agree to issue a statement to the press in broad support of Dan's "FREE OUR PEOPLE" campaign. They also conceded the right for a group of us to go into their conference and one of us was able to address them about the campaign to get people out of institutions.

We won several important concessions, including the support of the Association of Directors of Social Services for setting up a hotline staffed by Disabled People for Disabled People to report abuse.

The President and Chair of their Disability Committee have agreed to meet with us again in mid-June to look further at DAN's agenda in this campaign.

The Association will also circulate Dan's campaign material to all its members. For the first blow of this new national campaign the Action achieved a great deal. Words are cheap however (as we know from bitter experiences). We now have to try holding them to their words.

After this article you will find a copy of the final text of the agreed statement. Please have a look at it and see how you can pursue it at a local level.

It could, perhaps, be useful as the basis of a campaign platform for local demands to defend and extend services controlled and run by Disabled People.

It could also be useful when pressurizing politicians to shift money

away from segregation and into inclusion.

Whilst significant, it is only the first shot. We will need to mount a sustained campaign across a number of fronts to win, not least amongst our own people in the community and within the Institutions.

Mike Higgins

email: m.higgins@sheffield.ac.uk

THE ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES (ADSS) - PUBLIC STATEMENT

Following a full and frank discussion between representatives of DAN and leading members of ADSS it was agreed that they will urge the Association to:-

1. Encourage directors locally to meet with disabled people in their local areas to consider setting up centres for independent living or other models of organisations controlled by disabled people.

2. Encourage all local authorities to fund organisations run and controlled by disabled people.

3. Campaign that disabled people and other service users have a strong voice with Government in its review of issues of charging and means testing (which are issues not determined by ADSS)

4. Support DAN's view that disabled people should be able to move from one authority to another without jeopardising their care package.

5. Seek that all assessments should start from the position of a

personal self assessment contributed by the disabled person.

6. Do whatever it can to ensure that every disabled person has a choice not to live in an institution,

7. Seek the setting up of a national abuse hotline run by disabled people for disabled people who are being abused in institutional care and in the community.

8. Support DAN's idea of a national think tank between disabled people, the government and professionals to look at ensuring that the social model of disability becomes a core value of social work practice with disabled people.

9. A further meeting to be held by mid June between DAN and key members of ADSS.

10. ADSS will circulate DAN's campaign agenda to all Directors of Social services.

Footnote :- ADSS and DAN mean by disabled people; all disabled people including people with learning difficulties, people with hidden impairments and survivors of the mental health system.

How to contact DAN:

Tel: 0181 889 1361

email: dan@entertrainers.demon.co.uk

Soap Box is a new feature we're planning to add - basically, a letters page - so we need some letters to get it going. Write to us at the office and mark it for **Soap Box**.

Bit of this and that

“A mixed bag of goodies”

FREE WHEELIES FOR ALL!

Are you fed up with your crappy, slow, squeaky, red, old-fashioned, NHS electric wheelchair? If so, This article is for you!

Now you can get a new up to date range of indoor/outdoor chairs for free on the NHS - Yes for FREE!

My chair is blue (not the crappy red) and it is over 4 times faster (yaho!) than previously, and also with a kerb climber attached. Now you can go shopping and even pop into your local pub on the way back if you want to, without calling a taxi and paying them a fiver each way (probably around the corner) to take you to the shops.

Do you want one? If so, call your local wheelchair centre and ask for the application form for the indoor/outdoor electric wheelchairs. The next stage is to have a driving test.

The wheelchair user can have up to 10 practice tests before the real test. The instructor on the real test is independent, and therefore he doesn't have any contacts with the NHS. These tests are good idea for the users who haven't used these

indoors/outdoors chairs before because these chairs are very powerful and even more so if you haven't been in one previously, and also the kerb climber devices takes time to get a grips with.

However, if the user have been using one of these indoors/outdoors wheelchairs for many years they still have to do the test. For instance, I had 2 electric wheelchairs, my crappy red NHS chair and a private indoors/outdoors chairs but I only used this chair went I was going outside as it would of been costing me too much to run if I used it all the time because the repairs were expensive.

Anyway, I still had to do the test, I thought this was a bit stupid and insulting by an able-bodied person telling me how to drive one of these chairs as I have been driving these types of chairs for over 12 years.

However, it is worth the hassle at the end of the day, as you know you will get a modern wheelchair for FREE.

Karl Dean

BLIND ? CAN'T DANCE OR DRINK AT PARK LANE

We recently had a conversation with a blind person who had thought about going to the new nightclub, Park Lane, at the Dorchester Hotel on Beverley Road, Hull.

He telephoned the hotel and was told that the nightclub would not really be suitable for him as there were steps and that he would find it difficult since he was blind!

Although he may well have a good case under the Disability Discrimination Act, he decided he didn't want to go to a nightclub where they

had that kind of attitude.

Imagine my surprise then, picking up the Hull Daily Mail and seeing a picture of Liz Burton from the Dorchester Hotel handing over a cheque for £251 to the Hull and East Riding Institute for the Blind!

It appears that blind people are suitable to be patronised and treated as charity cases, but not good enough to visit the hotel's nightclub.

Guide dog cocktail anyone?

GOODBYE TO DEATH TRAPS!

When I was 16 I was given an "invalid tricycle" by the Government. Despite the having this terrible name it gave me a lot of independence. I could go shopping, visit friends, go to football, college, etc. without relying on anyone else. Also, despite the myths about it's speed, it could reach 65 mph (vroooooom).

Unfortunately when I sat in mine for the first time, I drove straight into my Nan who was knocked into the coal shed. Thinking I'd killed her, I sat laughing hysterically. A neighbour calmed me down and as a reward I nearly knocked him over, backing the car out of the garden!

Two months later, I lost concentration and woke up in a ditch outside my trike, my wheelchair one side of my car, me the other. After two days in hospital for observation I came home without a scratch and got back in it. Despite this traumatic introduction to driving, I recovered and have become the safe driver I am today.

The trike, or 'noddy car', is being phased out. After 2003, there won't be any left on the road. Since it was probably the first vehicle to recognise that disabled people wanted to travel, be independent, etc., for that reason alone it will be missed.

However, they really are death-traps. They are all the same awful shade of blue and you aren't allowed to customise them or carry a passenger. Hardly the sexy image that cars have now. You also stood out a mile as disabled and they often sounded like a lawnmower. So, let's say goodbye to the trike and hello to accessible public transport.

Mark Baggley

Bit of that and this

“A bag of mixed goodies”

CONCESSIONS A GOOD THING ?

Choices and Rights have recently been looking at the discounts and concessions currently available to disabled people from the City Council. One of the big questions has to be, why are we offered these ?

If it's because we are disabled, surely that is patronising and treating us as charity cases. If it's in recognition of the fact that lots of disabled people are unemployed, well, lots of non-disabled people are unemployed and do they get them ?

If we want to be treated equally in society we shouldn't expect to get into theatre's, etc., for free. We should, however, only pay the same rate if we get the same choice and equality of service.

For example, do we have a choice of where we sit in a theatre? We believe there are three good principals that should apply to anyone who is considering offering discounts or concessions. These are:

1) People who use or attend a service in order to assist a disabled person to use the same service should not be charged.

2) A discount should be available where the facilities can't meet the needs of the disabled person

3) Where a service loans or hires out items, the period of loan or hire should be extended for disabled people who have mobility difficulties.

What do you think ? Have you any details of good or bad discounts/concessions. Please let us know at the Choices and Rights office.

OCCUPIED TERRITORY !

We are currently involved in putting together a large funding bid for a Centre for Independent Living (CIL) for Hull. If the bid is successful, it means that disabled people would have a vital service to assist them with living independently, claiming direct payments, housing issues, peer support and access to a wide range of information and services.

Choices and Rights has always insisted that such a service must be controlled by disabled people, although obviously we will work with other organisations on a partnership basis. Some non-disabled people, usually working for statutory organisations or those charities which claim to represent us, question our reasons for such a set up.

If you have any doubts, look at the Social Services Department's attitude in Lambeth. Despite Lambeth CIL being in operation since 1989, the Social Services Committee have decided to shut the CIL and withdraw funding immediately. Disabled people are now occupying the

centre and demanding negotiations with the Council for the right to an independent enquiry.

Protesters have claimed that the decision was taken at a meeting that was inaccessible, even though the meeting should have been public and was supposed to be dealing with disabled people's issues.

A new cartoon book which contains over 50 unpublished cartoons by disabled cartoonist Crippen is being offered to help the campaign and can be bought for a minimum donation of £6. The CIL would welcome donations, food parcels and any support you can offer.

For more details or to offer support, contact: Lambeth CIL, Lambeth CIL-COG, 1 Barstow crescent, London, SW2 3NS or call the support hotline on 0181 671 8892, Fax 01821 671 9078.

This is one battle we can't afford to lose. If we lose our independence, we'll all be in residential homes. They'll have to send the army to get me in one, how about you ?

FROM BEYOND THE BROOM CUPBOARD

We're into April now, and I can't believe we've been based at Arthur Richardson Centre for a whole year. The information line is going well and we're looking forward to increasing the awareness of the service over the coming months.

We have been spending a fair amount of time recently on Disability Equality and Direct Payments training which has generated a lot of feedback and discussion. In our training we relay the thoughts and experiences of disabled people, good and bad, on a wide range of different issues.

If you have an experience or thoughts you would like to share (you can do it anonymously), let us know.

Our experience is that disabled people don't often like to make a fuss or alternatively never let people like Social Services for example know when they're doing something right.

If you want to have a voice then contribute to Loud & Proud. Telephone me on 788600 or alternatively write to us. Our Voice matters and creates change - add your voice to the choir and we can sing louder.

Liesel Dickinson

Computer Corner

OK EVERYONE - SAY CHEESE

For years publishing houses have been using photographs in their magazines, books and brochures.

The process for getting photos into print for commercial purposes usually requires expensive Drum Scanners, Colour Laser/Dye-Sub proof printers and all sorts of other equipment and knowledge.

This level of technology is well out of the reach of your average person in the street, but a few years ago we were given the chance to do-it-ourselves with the advent of Desktop Scanners. These work on a similar principle to photocopiers - but instead of copying the image to paper, they send it to your computer.

Once inside your computer you can use the image for all sorts of things; printing on photo quality paper, using in a presentation, sending out by email, putting on a webpage for the world to see, and much more besides.

That still left us with the effort and cost of using a traditional camera to get the original image to scan though. Take a picture, get the film

developed, pick up your photos and then scan them into your computer - too much like hard work ?

Not now it ain't !

When the first Digital Cameras came on the market a few years ago they were expensive and had limited image quality compared to what you paid. To get really good results you had to spend a lot of money.

Since then manufacturers have developed better model at cheaper prices and now you can get excellent results for a price that's comparative with traditional film cameras.

Digital Camera's 'capture' an image and store it in their memory (instead of on a piece of film). When you are ready to transfer your images to your computer, you simply plug a cable into the camera and run some software to grab the data.

Now you can have the best of both worlds, at prices that won't make you faint.

For more information try these websites:

www.kodak.com

www.epson.com

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND - MAYBE SOMEDAY

Did you ever wonder what life would be like in say, fifty years ?

Computer technology moves at such a fast pace that it's hard to guess at what's coming in the next five years, never mind fifty.

Who would have thought, five years ago, that ordinary folks like you and me would be able to watch live coverage of the Mars Pathfinder expedition from our computers at home or work through the internet ?

Who *really* saw the millennium bug coming in plenty of time ?

Did we realise that we would be offered fibre-optic communications from our own homes, at the same cost as a copper-wire phone line ?

What I'd like to challenge you to think about, is the specification of an entry level PC (if they exist) in five years time.

Bearing in mind that chip speeds and memory requirements are on the up at an amazing pace, can we expect 5 GHz Pentium 9 chips with 2 GB minimum system RAM ?

I'm all wet thinking about it :-)

WEB TRINKETS

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ListBot

You can now have your own free mailing list from your website. You simply add a sign-up link to your pages and post your messages for everyone who's subscribed, to read.

www.listbot.com

Great Britain Wheelchair Basketball Association

Wheelchair basketball is probably one of the oldest established wheelchair sports, its roots going back to the late 40's/early 50's.

<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/paad/wheelpower/basketba.htm>

Awakening to Disability

Book written by disability activist, Karen G. Stone.

<http://www.nmia.com/~kgstone/>



Shaun Hague - "IT Manager & Website/Graphic designer"

email: shaun@dtop.demon.co.uk

A time for Change

“Access for the new Millennium (Dome)”

After hearing a report on the radio one afternoon that the Millennium Dome Project were making the area around the dome a ‘no-vehicle’ zone and that people would be ferried in by train only, I became concerned that they might not have considered access issues for disabled people.

After a short while, and my imagination running wild, my concerns soon spread to include the whole site itself, inside and out.

What to do? I called directory inquiries and asked for the telephone number of the Millennium Dome Project. After a few rings the phone was answered by a bright and breezy assistant and I asked if I could talk to someone about access issues for disabled people. She politely asked me to hold and after a short while returned with a new number to call and the name of the person I should speak to.

Thinking this might not be an easy job, I thanked her, hung up and dialled the new number. The call was answered quickly and efficiently by another bright and cheery assistant who connected me straight away to

the lady I had asked for.

When the lady answered I explained about the radio news report and asked if the Millennium Dome Project had considered accessibility issues or taken any advice from outside organisations. The answer I got was unexpectedly efficient and comprehensive.

‘Yes’, she said, and then reeled off a host of organisations involved in their *Advisory Group on Accessibility*. I asked if she could post this information and at the end of the call I thanked the lady for her help and told her I was pleased with what appeared to be a refreshing approach to access issues.

There was none of the silence or ‘Can I get back to you?’ that can be associated with asking an organisation for access information, although I have to admit to still being a little sceptical after the call had ended.

I understand that new buildings and structures must now be ‘accessible’ in a general sense of the word, but I was surprised to hear that they

had a group consult with disability organisation.

A few days later I got an information pack with an additional three pages listing all of the advisory group members and the organisations they represent.

31 people make up the group from a variety of organisations, including; *Spinal Injuries Association, Access for England, RADAR, MENCAP, SCOPE, Disability Wales and Scotland, London Transport, Shopmobility, RNIB, (Centre for Accessible Environments) CAE and NMEC.*

A refreshing approach to access issues

The main points for discussion include; Transportation to and within the dome, Displays, Facilities, The natural build and environment, Site Information and promotional materials, and Awareness training for all staff.

Although you may not be familiar with all of the organisations represented and however you feel about their philosophy’s and management, it does appear that the Millennium Dome Project have taken a modern approach to access issues.

When the dome opens on Dec 31, 1999 we will have a chance to examine the results and experience the dome’s facilities and attractions.

If the advisory group have made as few concessions as possible, this could quite easily become *the* most accessible attraction in the UK, and a model of accessibility for other companies and consortium’s.

Contact Information:

NMEC, 110 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SB

Tel: (01203) 302050

Fax: (01203) 302055

Web: <http://www.mx2000.co.uk/>

Author: Shaun Hague



Disability

Informer

“Topical database information”

Topic for this issue:- HOLIDAYS

Its that time of year when many people are thinking about where and when they will be taking a holiday. It doesn't matter if its a dirty weekend away from the family or a full blown flight to foreign soil for a couple of weeks, its important to make sure that your holiday is as trouble free as it can be.

As a disabled person you know that the accommodation and travel

arrangements can make a lot of difference to the enjoyment of your holiday, although its sometimes impossible to account for some things before you set off, like farmyard animals under your bedroom window at 5am or rickety plumbing that knocks through the night !!

There's also the fact that some hotel owners don't understand the idea behind accessible accommo-

dation, or have a rather broad idea of how to interpret it, so its better to have some good advice at the planning stages so you know more about what to expect when you arrive.

We don't have the room to print all of the information we have on this page, so if you're still looking for more information on accessible holidays, call the advice line at the Choices and Rights office on **01482 788600**.

Can Be Done Ltd

7-11 Kensington High Street
London
W8 5NP
Tel: 0181 907 2400
Fax: 0181 909 1854

Description:

Publish a free brochure of accessible holidays throughout UK for wheelchair users or holiday makers wanting a tour at a more leisurely pace. Includes various overseas destinations. Contains tour itineraries. Vehicles used for the tours are fully adapted for wheelchairs.

Guide dogs for the Blind Association Holidays

Shap Road
Kendal
Cumbria
LA9 6NZ
Tel: 01539 735567
Fax: 01539 735080

Description:

The arrangement of inclusive holidays for visually impaired, partially sighted and sighted people as well as guide dog owners. Holidays are graded to suit fitness and ability, and fall into five categories; Sun, Sightseeing/Touring, Interest/Education, Activity, Adventure.

Take a Break Holidays

25 Woodruch End
Stanway
Colchester
Essex
Co3 5PW
Tel: 01206 766881
Fax: 01206 766881
Free: 0500 283467

Description:

We arrange holidays for people with physical and mental disabilities, elderly people and their carers. Holiday flyer information leaflet available.

Holidays for the Disabled 18-35 Yrs old

Flat 4
62 Stuart Park
Corstorphine
Edinburgh
EH12 8YE
Tel: 0131 339 8866

Description:

Organises holidays both in UK and abroad for people aged 18-35. Organises helpers and qualified nurse within the UK. Start from £200 per week, half board.

Grooms Holidays

PO Box 36
Cowbridge
Vale of Glamorgan
CF71 7GB
Tel: 01446 771311
Fax: 01446 775831

Description:

Aim is to provide comfortable, accessible and affordable holidays for disabled people. To cater for the needs of able-bodied and physically disabled people alike. Variety of destinations around UK. Accommodation wheelchair accessible. Provide PA's in some locations.

Accessible Holidays in the British Isles 1998

Author: John Stanford
Publisher: Radar
ISBN: 0 900270 08 X
Price: £7.50 (632 pages)

Tel: 0171 250 3222
Fax: 0171 250 0212

Description:

Reference guide to holidays in British Isles. Enables disabled people to take an informed decision about where to stay when booking a holiday. Listings indexed by region and include gradings under National Accessibility Scheme and Tourist Board classification.

Talk'in heads

Liesel

“The Low-down on Liesel Dickinson ?”

Q Why are you involved in the disabled movement ?

A I could talk for hours about this question (my colleagues and volunteers will be saying what's new!). But, to cut a long story to a reasonable length, when I was at school, I never really felt able to accept the term disabled as applicable to me well meaning teachers and other grown ups would tell me that "I wasn't really disabled" or comment how lucky I was that I could hide it really well. At University, whilst researching for my dissertation, I came across books detailing information about something called the Social Model of disability, I related to it totally and thus became a convert to the disabled peoples movement!

Q If you could have any job, what would it be ?

A I've always had a love of dancing, ultimately I guess I would love to be the female Michael Flatley - a dancer/producer/choreographer. On a slightly more realistic level, I like all kinds of dance and I really like the work that some of the groups such as Candoco a mixed group of disabled and non disabled dancers are doing. Although I do feel there is an unexplored niche to be developed around choreographing dance for disabled people other than wheelchair users in a way which is dynamic and exciting to watch.

Q What would make your life easier ?

A A world without pessimists. I like being happy and looking on the bright side because I don't like the alternatives!

Q What's your Involvement with Choices and Rights ?

A As most of the readers will know, until the 10 May I have been employed 26 hours a week as Choices and Rights Development Worker, this work involves a variety of things, chiefly the organisation and management of the disability information line, the recruitment, training and management of volunteers. From May 10 I'll be working full time as Independent Living Scheme Co-ordinator responsible for promoting and recruiting people onto direct payments (more details on pages ...) I will still be involved with disability equality training and other training consultation and meetings with organisations including the SSD. The best bit by far of my job is the fact that it that I'm paid to be a part of something I want to be - the disabled people's movement. Promoting issues of disability empowering people with information and opportunity is for me by far the greater part of involvement.

Q Name one hero or heroine ?

A I can't. I respect many people famous and not for many reasons to single one would be impossible .

Q And a villain ?

A Well ! I never liked my office studies teacher at school (she will know who she is) for the reason that her subject was needlework and she no interest in our subject or the pupils like me who were studying it. She spent much of her time making fancy dress costumes for her children in my lesson time. She lost all my respect for that - not taking an

interest or having time for our learning made her the villain. In fact my campaigning nature first showed itself then because I arranged a meeting with my head teacher (I was a fifth former) and told her I considered this member of her staff to be useless I actually negotiated some extra study time with an alternative teacher who knew the subject. I though after that encounter I had little chance of a decent reference from my head teacher but in fact I think I gained her respect for speaking out .

Q A favourite video to have on a desert island ?

A I can't choose just one ! Among my favourites would be the Erasure Live In Concert video from 1989, The film Philadelphia, The Cats video and Saturday Night Fever also probably my collection of Come Dancing tapes ! (It really is quite sad for one so young!)

Q Read a good book recently ?

A I'm really most fond of books you can dip in and out of for inspiration . One I particularly like is 10/10 the Yellow book it's full of positive quotes - every one should read it !

Q Where would you like to be in 5 years time ?

A I've got my plans - watch this space.

Did you know?

Housing

“Habinteg Housing Association”



Habinteg Housing Association has become well known for providing good quality, accessible homes in an integrated environment.

Following on from their 18 month Innovation and Good Practice Project looking at housing and related issues in Hull, they have set up a new service which can be used by all disabled people, not just those in Habinteg properties.

Habinteg's Disability Housing Service (DHS) provides free, independent and confidential advice on housing and related services to:

- Disabled people and their families, living in either rented or owner occupied properties.
- Employees in housing, social services, and the voluntary sector.

The Habinteg Disability Housing Service will provide advice, help and information on a wide range of housing topics including:

- Applying for council housing
- Housing Association accommodation
- Private rented accommodation
- Buying your own home or shared ownership accommodation
- How to apply for aids and adaptations

- Sign posting to other advice agencies for financial and benefit advice.
- Assist in getting the views of disabled people over to service planners.

The Habinteg DHS aims to offer a specialist service that will act as a one stop shop.

Working alongside the Social Services Department, the Housing Department of Kingston Upon Hull City Council and Choices and Rights Disability Coalition, the DHS is able to access a wide range of personnel and specialist resources.

These include:

- The Accessible Housing Database (managed by the Housing Department)
- The Disability Information Database (managed by Choices and Rights)
- Day Care Services
- Independent Living Scheme Coordinator
- Disability Resource Team

As well as written information, the DHS organises Housing Forums to enable disabled people to have a voice in how services are developed.

If you would like to take part in these, please contact the DHS on the number below and they will add you to their mailing list.

The Habinteg DHS is managed by Habinteg's Training and Information Coordinator, Mark Baggley.

If you need advice or would like further details about our service,

please telephone or write to Mark at:

Habinteg Disability Housing Service
Disability Resource Centre
Savoy Road
Hull
HU8 0TX

Tel: (01482) 789008

Habinteg is a charitable housing association, committed to housing those in greatest need.

Our aim is to be a leader in the provision and promotion of well designed adaptable homes with the accent on accessibility.

We believe in integration, so our wheelchair user properties are scattered throughout our developments, ensuring that disabled people can live within their local community.

Mark Baggley

Are You a Disabled Person?

Are you aged 18 or over?

Do YOU need assistance to live Independently?
e.g. : with getting up, getting showered or dressed
getting out and about?

Do YOU want to choose who gives you that assistance?

Do YOU want control over the
type of assistance and when it is available?

Want to find out more about how YOU can take
CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE?

 Then Contact



and ask for information about the
DIRECT PAYMENTS SCHEME

Interpreters can be arranged by **request**
Information available In alternative formats e.g. tape or large print

To find out more contact Liesel Dickinson
Independent Living Scheme Coordinator

(01482) 789320
(voice and minicom)

Didn't we have a lovely day...

A volunteers report from a weekend in Northampton !

I was asked by Liesel if I would like to go to a conference at the Stakis Hotel, Northampton for Disability and Information Providers.

I was delighted by the prospect of the weekend conference but then came the negative vibes, "How was I to manage?"

I decided that I would need a Personal Assistant and after a number of phone calls to Social Services I got the good news that they would help (this was the very first time anyone in Hull had asked them for a PA, a breakthrough for others ?)

Sandy Norton was my PA and she had a very lively, bubbly personality. We set off very early in the morning and arrived at the venue two and half hours later.

On arrival we were given all the information we needed for the weekend by ADAIP (the organiser). We signed in and went to our rooms. Looking through the information I knew we had a heavy schedule to keep.

Lunch was next, then an address by Max Clifford (grabbing the lime-light?). He told a story about his daughter Louise then totally embarrassed her by saying "By the way this is my daughter". I really felt for this young women, a motto to this ad-

dress 'It is not WHAT you know, but WHO you know', a very patronising man.

Workshop 1 - 'Raise Money and Your Profile Locally'

I found this very useful it gave me lots of ideas and plenty of information to digesting and think about.

Time for a tea-break. Sandy was there for both me and Liesel. I was gratefully for the drink and was amazed by how many delegates were there. People chatted to me as if I go to conferences every weekend. I disciplined myself to listen since I was a novice and this worked for me.

Workshop 2 - 'Annual Reports and Leaflets as Founding Tools'

Sandy said she'd like to come in on this workshop with me, which I have to admit was very disappointing. You could simply show a glossy brochure and that would be it. The speaker seemed like he was only there for his own Organisation and I gained nothing, except I listened to other delegates views and comments.

Time for a short rest and a change of outfits before dinner. Afterwards we mingled and chatted to people and made lots of new friends.

When Saturday morning came I began to feel like a part of the conference and relaxed a little as people stopped to speak or just said "Hi". It was a great confidence booster.

ADAIP AGM

This was excellent I enjoyed and digested information once again

'The Ingredients of a Successful Service'

Addresses by Paul Smith. I found this to be like Choices & Rights except we are working on a much smaller scale (but getting bigger all the time !). I gained lots of information once more.

Coffee again and Sandy was waiting for us both.

Workshop 3 'User Lead'

Brilliant. I understood everything that Theo Blackmore spoke about. I came out very encouraged.

Lunch followed and Sandy packed everything away ready for the trip back home.

To sum my weekend up it was a fantastic experience one I will never forget. I saw lots of smiling, happy, jovial people myself included.

The experience of the weekend helped me fit the last piece of the jigsaw that is my life.

I have come to terms with my disabilities at last. I am no different to anyone else. I am Rita Dale and I feel good about myself.

I would like to extend my heart felt thanks to Choices & Rights who made this possible.

Rita Dale



HODDLE SCORES OWN GOAL

If you had told me before Christmas that an issue regarding disability would get rid of Glenn Hoddle as England manager, I wouldn't have believed you.

His view that disabled people have 'sinned' in a previous life and are therefore being punished now isn't a 'new' view and has been aired many times. The debate about what he actually said may rumble on and on, but in the position he was in, he should have been more careful.

Should he have lost his job? Yes he should. As many people have stated we all have the right to free speech, but if that free speech affects other people by being discriminatory, deeply offensive, or inciting hatred a line has to be drawn.

If Hoddle had said black people were black because of they did something wrong in there past life, I would expect the same thing to happen.

However, let's be clear about this. Hoddle lost his job because the

press wanted him out, because he wrote a diary and divulged information that should have been kept personal and because a sponsor hinted they might withdraw millions of pounds of sponsorship.

To be honest, I was more offended about some of the people (not disabled of course) who came out to defend us. One woman stated she would be counselling disabled people for months after Hoddle's outburst. Give us some credit!

The majority of disabled people recognised Hoddle's views for what they were, outdated, incorrect and not worth worrying about. What do you think you were in a past life? Send your ideas to Loud and Proud as soon as possible. We will sort out a prize for the best one.

To get you started, I reckon if Glenn's right and to be disabled I must have done something really bad last time, I think I was either an architect, a social worker or Jimmy Saville !

LIESEL'S NOTE

From the 10 May 1999, I will be in post at Choices & Rights as the Independent Living Scheme Coordinator 35 hours per week (9 am-4.30 pm).

My priority in the first month will be the promotion of direct payments by getting the publicity under way and the networking started.

In the first year it is planned that between 5-7 disabled people will move on to direct payments and my role is to provide information and support.

It's a really exciting opportunity for myself and disabled people in Hull and I'm really looking forward to the new challenges.

In the next edition of the newsletter I will provide more information and feedback on how things are progressing.

If you require any further information on Direct Payments please contact me on 01482 789320 (voice and minicom).

Liesel Dickinson

DIRECT TO YOU

Good news for the older disabled person. The Government has announced the scrapping of the upper age limit for direct payments. People over 65 will now be able to manage their own PA's if they meet the relevant social services criteria.

Similarly, the government believes there is a strong case for phasing out the payment of residential care allowance (to help with their residential care charges) and instead pay it as a special grant to local authorities. This money would probably be 'ring fenced' (it could only be spent on certain things) and could be used instead to pay for more people on direct payments.

This would be certainly be welcome. If you had a choice of living in your own home, employing someone you chose, or go into a residential home, which would you choose?

A CLEAN SWEEP IN THE CUPBOARD

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Gwen Jennison and I am taking over from Liesel as Development Worker from 10 May until December 1999. As you may be aware Liesel has got a new post as the Choices & Rights Independent Living Scheme Coordinator and has relocated (to the other side of the office !).

I've been involved with the coalition since it started in 1992 and have been a member of the management committee. I am currently volunteering on the information line. I am a trained Community and Youth Worker and have several years experience of working in the voluntary sector.

At present I am working with Liesel to learn about the finer details of the Development Worker's job. However, in May I will be on my own

(scary thought, watch out world !).

One of my main priorities is to continue to advertise the information line so more people get to know about us and the work we do. I am also looking to recruit more volunteers to staff the information line, complete admin tasks and to sit on our management committee. So if you or anyone you know is looking to do some voluntary work, please get in touch with me at the office on 01482 788600.

Finally I would just like to say that I am really looking forward to starting work as Development Worker, as having a disability myself I enjoy representing Choices & Rights and especially the views of disabled people. Please feel free to contact me at the office, I'm looking forward to hearing from you !!

Gwen Jennison

STOP PRESS

Everybody go surf'in ...

We are now connected to the internet with our own email and webspace addresses. If you want to send us and email, write to:

office@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk

.... that's "office @ choices and rights, dot demon, dot co, dot uk"

Our website will also be moving to our new webspace over the coming months - we'll let you know when that happens.

Congratulations !

Whilst surfing the net we discovered that two of our members from outside the area have got married.

Dave Griffin (who used to put the newsletter together) and Sue Lee (who met Dave via the internet) both now live in Bournemouth and have tied the knot.

Congratulations to them both and we hope they have a long and happy future together.

We're still waiting for our pieces of Wedding cake though !!



Disability Information Service

Using our own *local area* data and the national database provided and updated by DIAL UK, we are able to offer you lots of practical information on all sort of topics including:

- Law & Rights
- Education
- Social Issues
- Holidays
- Transport
- Accommodation
- Direct Payments
- Volunteering
- Personal Matters
- Arts & Leisure
- Aids & Equipment
- Sports & Interests

The lines are open from 10:00am to 4:00pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. You may leave an answerphone message at all other times.

 - **01482 788600**

Fax - 01482 788688

Contact Details



For information on Independent Living and Direct Payments contact:

Liesel Dickinson

Independent Living Scheme Coordinator

01482 789320 (Voice/Minicom/Answerphone)

email: liesel@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk

For general information on Disability issues contact:

Gwen Jennison

Development Worker

01482 788600 (Voice/Minicom/Answerphone)

email: gwen@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk

For information on Housing issues contact:

Mark Baggley

Habinteg Housing Association Training and Information Officer

01482 789008 (Voice/Answerphone)

email: habinteg@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk



Choices & Rights Disability Coalition are funded by the National Lottery Charities Board. We are full members of BCOBP and affiliated to DIAL UK.

