

DABhand



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DAB – INSIDE NEWS

Successful funding applications.....but with a sting in the tail



There have been reasons to celebrate at Ipswich DAB since the last DABhand was published. Firstly, we survived all the funding cuts that hit us in the last financial year and were still assisting our clients, as usual, as the new financial year began.

Two days in January 2012 saw more activity on the funding front than the Manager and the Chairman would really want to experience again in a hurry.

On 30 January 2012 we received a conditional offer of a **£40,630** grant from the Advice Services Fund. This was the second year that the Office for Civil Society, part of the Cabinet Office, had run a scheme for which that charities that had lost at least 10 percent qualified. As you will realise from previous articles, we qualified with a big deficit to spare! We then had eight days to get a range of documents signed, by different people as well as our bank, and to the Big Fund, administrators of the funding, in Newcastle upon Tyne by post.....and that week it snowed! (It should have been the first week that the Manager was doing Jury Service but fortunately, after a nail-biting wait, she had heard ten days previously that it had deferred to September! Phew!) Our grant was confirmed on 6 March 2012 and paid into our bank three days later, which made our end of year balance look deceptively healthy. We were not allowed to tell anyone about

the grant until it was publicised at the end of March when we found out that we were one of only two charities in Suffolk to get an award.

The day after hearing about the conditional offer, the Manager and the Chairman were needed to be in two places at once, and together. We opted to meet with Councillor Sandy Martin, who holds the portfolio for Community Groups on Ipswich Borough Council and an accountant from the Borough Council along with Helga, our Finance Officer. This proved to be a good move as we have now been awarded a 3-year Community Partnership Agreement with Ipswich Borough Council worth **£17,250** a year. This also means that we will be involved in work with the Council as a member of the Equality Panel.

Meanwhile over at the meeting of the Suffolk Disability Advice Services in Woodbridge, there was not good news that morning. They were told that Suffolk County Council had received an unsolicited expression of interest to run a single disability advice service across Suffolk. Therefore, they would be giving six months notice of the ending of their grant to us all. A month later the specification for the countywide service would be published and we could either bid as individual organisations or as a consortium.

We received the six months notice at the end of March. Although we worked on the bid as a consortium it was not without its difficulties ... the timetable had slipped and the specification for the service to be provided by the successful bidder had not been published. Drafting a bid involves detailed work and is time consuming, also there was a conflict of interests for DAB as we had just signed contracts in respect of our grants from Ipswich Borough Council and the Office for Civil Society as an independent organisation.

THEN, 18 days after receiving the noticeit was revoked, the bidding process stopped and a grant paid, for this year only, on the same basis as for the last financial year. A month later we learned the reason for the U-turn.....a piece of European Union legislation meant that, as Suffolk County Council had also grant funded the organisation that put forward the unsolicited expression of interest, a full scale tendering process had to be gone through and this was totally out of proportion to the amount of funding involved.

Staff news.....

Other good news is that Alicia, a volunteer who joined us in September 2011 as she had then been unemployed for over a year, found a full time job in March, although she still volunteers with us on an ad hoc basis. We have also welcomed new volunteers. Alex, Edna and Sally have been going through their inductions and will be mainly working in reception. The number of phone calls, and clients who drop in, has risen significantly with the welfare reforms and enquiries have become more complex so it now takes two receptionists to cope on most days.

THE OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY



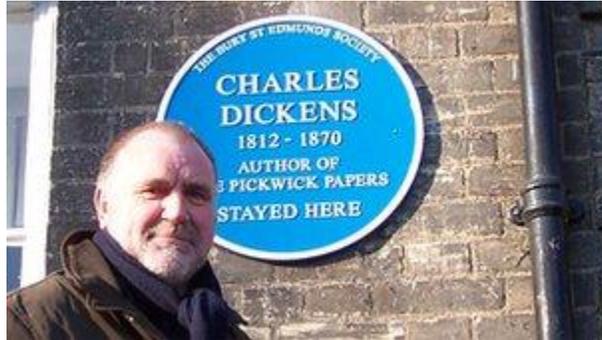
Kevin Curtis, DAB's President will be carrying the Olympic Torch through Ipswich on 6 July 2012 at 6.47am

However, you will need to get up rather early, as although he is the second torch bearer of the day, he will leave Soane Street, near the main gates of Christchurch Park at 6.47am!

His route will then take him into Northgate Street, past Ipswich Library and into the Buttermarket, before he hands over the torch to the next runner at the Ancient House (Lakeland shop) in Dial Lane.

CHARLES DICKENS

A Suffolk town is marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens by commemorating his visits with a blue plaque.



The author stayed at the Angel Hotel in Bury St Edmunds in 1859 and 1861 and gave lectures at The Athenaeum. The plaque has been put on the front of the hotel, on Angel Hill by the Bury St Edmunds Society. The society said that Dickens probably visited the town in the 1830s as he set part of The Pickwick Papers there.

However, The Angel is not the only Suffolk hotel with a claim on Dickens. In 1835, the author stayed at the Great White Horse in Ipswich while he was reporting on the general election for the Morning Chronicle. Dr John Blatchly, Ipswich local historian, said: "He was extremely impressed, not only by the fine building, but he loved the horse [above the door] which he called a 'rampacious animal'.

Dickens also said that he used all his experiences of staying in Ipswich for The Pickwick Papers. The sadness is that it isn't a hotel anymore and the 'ill-carpeted corridors and tiny rooms' have all gone."

Charles Dickens is much loved for his great contribution to classic English literature. He was the quintessential Victorian author. His epic stories, vivid characters and exhaustive depiction of contemporary life are unforgettable.

His own story is one of rags to riches. He was born in Portsmouth on 7 February 1812, to John and Elizabeth Dickens. The good fortune of being sent to school at the age of nine was short-lived because his father, inspiration for the character of Mr Micawber in 'David Copperfield', was imprisoned for bad debt. The entire family, apart from Charles, were sent to Marshalsea along with their patriarch.



Charles was sent to work in Warren's blacking factory and endured appalling conditions as well as loneliness and despair. After three years he was returned to school, but the experience was never forgotten and became fictionalised in two of his better-known novels 'David Copperfield' and 'Great Expectations'.

Like many others, he began his literary career as a journalist. His own father became a reporter and Charles began with the journals 'The Mirror of Parliament' and 'The True Sun'. Then in 1833 he became parliamentary journalist for The Morning Chronicle. With new contacts in the press he was able to publish a series of sketches under the pseudonym 'Boz'. In April 1836, he married Catherine Hogarth, daughter of George Hogarth who edited 'Sketches by Boz'. Within the same month came the publication of the highly successful 'Pickwick Papers', and from that point on there was no looking back for Dickens.

As well as a huge list of novels he published his autobiography, edited weekly periodicals including 'Household Words' and 'All Year Round', wrote travel books and administered charitable organisations. He was also a theatre enthusiast, wrote plays and performed before Queen Victoria in 1851. His energy was inexhaustible and he spent much time abroad - for example lecturing against slavery in the United States and touring Italy with companions Augustus Egg and Wilkie Collins, a contemporary writer who inspired Dickens' final unfinished novel 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood'.

He was estranged from his wife in 1858 after the birth of their ten children, but maintained relations with his mistress, the actress Ellen Ternan. He died in Kent of a stroke in 1870. He is buried at Westminster Abbey.

Taken from the BBC Website Charles Dickens Historic figures

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/dickens_charles.shtml



Priority Service for customers with special needs during power cuts

UK Power Networks looks after the electricity network in London, the South East and East of England.

UK Power Networks can offer help and advice by calling their Emergency and power cut helpline on: East of England 0800 783 8838 (which is free phone)

Customers with special needs often ask if we can offer them anything extra during power cuts – we can.

We keep details of our most vulnerable customers on our Priority Service Register. Although this won't necessarily mean we can restore your power more quickly, because of engineering restrictions, we can offer you additional help and support during a power cut.

Who can be included on the register?

- Any customer living in our network areas who is: dependent on electricity for medical equipment such as oxygen/nebuliser/dialysis/apnoea/bed or bath hoist/chair or stair lift.
- Chronically sick/disabled such as: blind/deaf/speech difficulties/mobility problems
- A special case that we should consider

For more information, call in to the DAB for a booklet or contact.

Priority Services,
UK Power Networks,
Fore Hamlet,
Ipswich,
IP3 8AA.

Perfect Weather for Poets

Brendan Pearson

I recently went on a poetry writing week at Lumb Bank, near Hebden Bridge, featuring George Szirtes and Jane Draycott as the poets leading the course. Both of these poets have won many awards for their poetry. George teaches at the University of East Anglia and Jane has recently published her third complete book of poetry.

It rained hard all week that inspired poetry rather than discouraged it. All of the students found it very useful to present some of their poetry to George and Jane for comment when they saw them in individual tutorials. George was especially good at knocking out words and lines that were redundant, ending up with terse witty verses. We were all very impressed with one young girl of seventeen amongst our number who had won a Foyles Young Poet award in 2010 and second place in the 2011 Ledbury Poetry Festival Competition in the 11-17 age group for her poem entitled *The Chase*.

All the students together had a two hours seminar every morning with one of the poets. Both George and Jane encouraged students to be aware of what was behind the original inspiration to write a poem and relentlessly ask themselves what the poem was really all about. George also encouraged students to use this approach when reading other poets, to find the deeper meaning behind what a poem superficially seemed to be about.

In the evenings we had poetry readings that were from George and Jane, from a visiting poet on the Wednesday or from the students themselves. On Thursday evening the students read out poetry by poets that were already established and, on the last Friday evening, read ten minutes of their own poetry, including poetry they had written whilst on the course.

By then, some of the students had put together a short pamphlet giving photos of the students, their email addresses and some examples of their poetry so these pamphlets were distributed amongst the students and tutors.

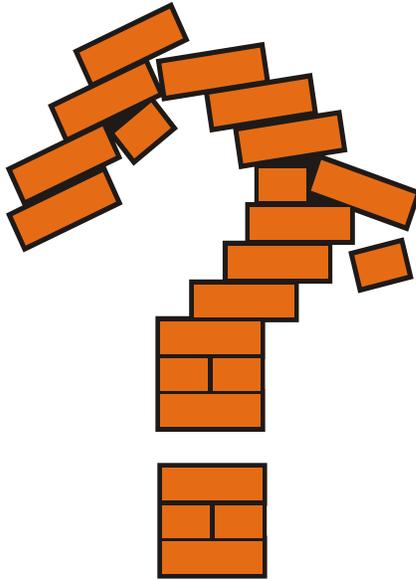
Friday was the last day of the course so, on Saturday we all went home to our different parts of the UK, having had a very poetic week, because of, rather than in spite of, the rain.

QUIZ NIGHTS

Darren Page is a volunteer Advice Worker at the DAB. In addition he has run quiz nights for many years and the questions that he poses are always brain teasers – questions about sport are more likely to be about tiddlywinks and croquet, than football and cricket! Therefore, we asked him how he became a quiz master and this is his story.

“I volunteered in a Day Centre for the Elderly and decided to help raise money for their amenity fund by holding a quiz. Since then, I have been asked by other residential homes and day care centres to hold quizzes for them also.

In 2005, I had to have an operation at King’s College Hospital in London, a new operation to do with epilepsy. This meant, every month I had to have follow-up sessions in London, the Ipswich Epilepsy Support Group kindly offered to help fund my transport costs.



Due to this my father-in-law wanted to raise money for the Ipswich Epilepsy Support Group as a thank you for helping me, and decided to hold a quiz night at Westgate Ward Social Club. These have been running successfully every year since. Sadly when my father-in-law passed away in 2007, but I decided to carry on with these quiz nights and our most recent quiz raised £640 for the charity.”

Darren also ran a quiz night for the DAB in March of this year, raising £137 for us. There were eight rounds of questions and we much appreciated the break in the middle of the evening to recharge our brains with some refreshments.

We will be booking Darren for another one next year – so watch this space.

Handcycling with a Stricker Parahand Bike

Kevin Curtis

Last year I went to the Mobility Road Show at Peterborough to review hand cycles and fitness for my personal use following an industrial accident on the 10th August 1978 when I sustained a compression of my spinal cord at level T11/T12. The Mobility show is excellent to show case the latest equipment and I try to attend every year, driving the adapted cars, testing the light weight wheelchairs and looking for the best replacements for my current products I use.

In 1994 whilst doing my training with the British Sailing team I bought an early Tracker hand cycle to help improve my upper bodily strength, build my stamina, maintain my weight, provide a cardio-vascular workout and have some fun. My Tracker model was an early model made of steel requiring an adapter tube to be fitted to the underside of the frame of my Swede elite wheelchair. I tried this piece of kit and loved it! The chair was taken away for the docking system to be fitted to my wheelchair. It was returned with the Tracker hand cycle boxed for me to put together, lucky Kev!



Having a docking tube permanently fixed to the frame of my wheelchair was a pain, resulting in the lightweight wheelchair became too heavy for everyday use. The instructions said, “ It detaches quicker than you can take off a jacket”. Sadly it had to be the heaviest jacket I’ve ever had to take on or off.

When lining up the unit, you had to be careful, in case the oily chain made contact with your legs. All this aside, I have enjoyed many years of pedalling on this machine, although the loss of traction on hills and the weight of lifting the Tracker on and off, led me to look for an upgrade of this hand cycle.

I met Paul Moore, a wheelchair user, from Active Linx at the Mobility Road Show, we spoke briefly and he handed me a brochure with his contact details/specifications of the range of cycles, as he was already tied up fitting a hand cycle to a little girl’s very narrow RGK wheelchair. It was a busy day and I, sadly, didn’t get a chance to try any Stricker hand cycles, which are hand built in Germany, but I did try many of the other different manufacturers models in the cycling area comparing them with my current hand cycles.

The following week I phoned Paul and he agreed to do a demonstration of the hand cycles and powered hand cycles at my home. This was great because I could see if the new hand cycle would tackle slopes and terrains better than my current tracker hand bike. I live in Kesgrave, Suffolk, and Paul duly arrived with his adapted van and selection of hand cycles. It was a lovely sunny day, so I asked Paul if he fancied a Kevin special assault course via the old Martlesham Heath World War II airfield. I'm lucky living in Kesgrave, as there are many cycle paths, underpasses, overpasses and bridges and with a power cycle this would extend the distance I could travel.

What I liked about the Stricker bikes was that there was not the need to transfer on or off, or up or down from the hand cycle. The Stricker Lipo Smart Parahand Bike, clips straight onto the frame of my RGK Octane Titanium wheelchair which is excellent, because this is my everyday chair which provides the correct pressure relief and my posture support. The bike had a 24" front wheel 3x8 chain drive derailer unit with a power supply to a hub motor provided by a 36v lipo battery which was light to lift and just slid on and off and was then locked by a key. After putting on my helmet, Paul attached the standard hand cycle to his wheelchair and we did a 10km run together, which provided an excellent test of the cycle's capability. The battery display showed I had only used 8% of the battery power. The motor made life so much easier when I encountered the hills and headwinds.



I absolutely loved this piece of kit - the German build quality and engineering is excellent. Paul and I talked our way around, discussing the full controls and I experimented with the power assistant which is great for powering up the hills/inclines with ease. At the end of the test I said I would like one and wrote the deposit cheque!!

My Stricker Lipo Smart has an electro drive, providing a kick down of power similar to an automatic car through a 24" front wheel. I hand crank 3x8 chain drive derailer unit. Ergo handles with twist shifting both sides, allowed me to change gears without taking my hands off the handles. It has 36v hub motor with lipo battery, 11.6ah left hand thumb accelerator and a disc brake. It comes with kickstand, front and rear lights, a bell, cycle computer and a full instruction book.

I would certainly recommend this Stricker Lipo Smart Parahand bike and the sales service I have received from Active Linx. I was provided with a proper

hand over not just a box being sent for me to check it over and sort it out! My local cycle shop will be able to undertake any repairs, and servicing.

I have already enjoyed many hours of fun flicking switches, working the gears and the power assistance takes the strain out of my shoulders as the loads come on going up hill, or just pulling away. I can now leave my car at home, save my fuel costs, and avoid transferring in and out of my vehicle, no brackets, no fuss, just clip on and go. Once I arrive at the final destination I disconnect, lock up my bike and wheel in. It is simply superb, a pleasure to ride and exercise with. Storage takes half the space and it remains ready for use on its stand in my garage.

For more information about Stricker bikes contact Active Linx at www.activelinx.co.uk or telephone 07872 187078.