



***Social Activities for people with sight loss***

**Chair's report  
Annual General Meeting  
14th February 2009**

One of the exciting things about preparing these reports is looking back and seeing how much we have achieved during the year, once again it is a thrill to report on another exciting and full year with over 20 activities arranged

2008 will be remembered as the year we were named as the Evening Argus Charity of the year, in the citation it said that in City Synergy "Sussex has a gem", the write up not only acknowledged the activities we do but the mutual helpfulness and friendships that exist within the group. I want to take this opportunity once again to say how proud I am of all our members and volunteers and to thank you deeply for your support and co-operation in making this possible

At the start of the year we were all very saddened to hear of the tragic death of former volunteer Andy Cross in a motorcycle accident, on this anniversary of his death our thoughts go out to his family

Our Programme has again been very varied, with several new and original ideas, one of the most memorable being the school dinner in October where

many of us dressed up for an evening of schoolday japes and reminisces and enjoyed a meal of sausage and mash followed by puddings, the evening finished with impromptu singing ranging from High School Musical to traditional music hall

The year had started with a visit from Brian Kellett who gave us a delightful telling of the story of Nicholas Nickelby. As the days grew longer we looked to enjoy some days out, in previous years we have been very lucky with the weather but 2008 was slightly different and for the first time we had to cancel an event when a sudden snowstorm in April made it impossible for us to get to Glynde. A Visit to Tonbridge Wells also had to be curtailed because of the wind and rain

In spite of the weather we had some very enjoyable days out with visits to Hastings, Wakehurst Place, Fishbourne, The Trevor Arms in Glynde, Stanmer and Newhaven Fort for the armistice memorial day, as well as a walk on the downs from Ditchling to the Jack and Jill windmill, a day trip to London, and a archaeology field trip and talk from John Funnell.

Towards the end of the year we again celebrated fireworks night at Chris & Jonathan's where a window in the weather allowed us to enjoy most of the planned display.

Our Christmas Programme is always a highlight, we returned to the White Horse where the function room offered a lovely setting as 32 people enjoyed the

customary good service as well as taking part in a quiz organised by Valerie,

The Christmas season started with a group of us going to see "It's a wonderful life" at the new Venture Theatre starring our very own Carl Boardman, this was a delightful evening with a story very pertinent for these times.

The Singing for Pleasure evening was also well attended and several of us took part in Carol Singing at the Charles Napier assisted by friends from Brighton Morris with a surprise visit from a group of mummers who presented an updated twist on the story of St. George. The year ended with a visit to the Theatre Royal to see the Wizard of Oz

We have been successful in bidding for funding this year as will be reported in the Treasurer's report and I would like to thank the Robin Hood Pub and Legal and General for awards that have made a real contribution to enabling us to plan for the future, fundraising will remain a challenge particularly at the time. Involvement in a car boot sale was slightly less successful but an interesting experience

We were also successful in getting funds from the Take Part sports programme and used this to organise some sessions of Tai Chi which were very much enjoyed.

It has been good to build on close working relationships with other organisations including ESAB and with Kerry Leask at the Eye Hospital, In May we ran a computer

course called Eye T 4 All at Blatchington Court Trust, later in the year we took part in World Sight Day and had a stall at the International Day of Disabled people event at Hove Town Hall organised by the local Federation of Disabled People.

It has been great to welcome new members and volunteers, we are always thrilled to have new people join with us and we hope you will feel fully involved and valued, In November we had a vision awareness training session run by Christina and Lynne which was greatly appreciated and may become something we could offer to a wider audience.

May I close by re-iterating my thanks to everyone for your contribution during 2008 and especially my gratitude to the committee and to all our volunteers whose hard work has made it all possible.

Paul Gillett  
Chair  
February 2009