

# Spelthorne Committee Access Now



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1992 – 2023



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## Wheelchair Tennis Champions Recognised In King's Birthday Honours

<https://www.skysports.com/tennis/news/12110/12903778/alfie-hewett-and-gordon-reid-have-been-recognised-in-the-kings-birthday-honours-list>

Wheelchair tennis legends Alfie Hewett and Gordon Reid, who secured their 17th wheelchair tennis doubles Grand Slam title together earlier this month at the French Open, have been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours list

Hewett, 25, has also won seven Grand Slam singles titles while Reid, who became an MBE in the 2017 New Year Honours list, has two Grand Slam singles titles. He said: "I never would have dreamt that I'd receive something like this in my lifetime, I just get my head down and work hard in the sport that I love so I'm extremely proud and grateful for this, and everyone who has helped me get to where I am today. It's amazing to see wheelchair tennis and disability sport get this level of recognition. It's so vital in encouraging people with disabilities to be active and to just be creating a more inclusive society.

It's a big passion of mine to keep growing the sport, and with the platform I have to send the message that anything is possible with a leap of faith, relentless determination and the right mentality."

### **Commanders of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)**

Major General Nicholas John Caplin CB. Chief Executive Officer, Blind Veterans UK. For services to Veterans and to the Vision Impaired. (Pewsey, Wiltshire)

### **Officers of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)**

David Colleton Buxton. Chief Executive Officer, Action on Disability and lately Chair, British Deaf Association. For services to the Deaf and British Sign Language Communities. (Epsom, Surrey)

### **Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)**

Sebastien Joseph Bechara. For services to Wheelchair Rugby League. (Abroad)

Thomas Dillon Coyd. Coach, England Wheelchair Rugby League Team. For services to Wheelchair Rugby League. (Gillingham, Kent)

Sally Magnusson. Broadcaster and Author. For services to People with Dementia and their Carers. (Glasgow)

Dorothy Joyce Kay. Volunteer, Citizens Advice, Elmbridge West. For services to Employment Advice. (Walton on Thames, Surrey)



## Disabled Parking Row People Displaying Blue Badges Handed Fines

<https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/waitrose-egham-disabled-parking-row-26982863> Disabled Waitrose shoppers in Egham have been left “really angry” after being slapped with parking fines, despite displaying blue badges. Shoppers with blue badges visiting the store are required to “register” online via Runnymede Borough Council in order to use the space.

The signage says disabled drivers get up to three hours of free parking, directs them on how to register their badge, and states what happens if they exceed the allotted parking time. The car park is run by ‘Park There’ on behalf of the council and uses ANPR cameras to track vehicles.

Britta, was a frequent shopper at the Egham store and was handed three parking tickets. Each fine was £100. She said: “I wasn’t aware that I had to register at first. Then I got the fines through, but I don’t have a computer, how am I meant to register when I don’t have a computer? “I can’t be the only one either, what about if you are just passing through and want to pop into Waitrose? What are people going to do? Go home, get their computer, register and come back? Not likely.

A Runnymede Borough Council spokesman said: “The car parks next to Waitrose and Travelodge in Egham are privately owned and monitored by automatic number plate recognition systems. While blue badge holders can use the car parks for three hours without having to pay, because of the ANPR system, they must register their vehicles, so the system recognises them and does not issue a fine. “Anyone finding it difficult to use a computer to register their badge can either ask a friend or family member to help, contact our customer services team by phone or in person at the Civic Centre and we will help them to register, or visit one of the borough’s libraries.”

A spokesperson for Waitrose and John Lewis said: “This isn't caused by us but we realise that it's causing issues for customers. We have asked the council to look into this again.” The council also states that the rules and requirements for car park users are made clear on signs at the site. Blue badges can be registered to more than one vehicle and once badges are registered, any fines will automatically be cancelled.



## Amputee Wows Britain’s Got Talent Audience

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-news/amputee-who-lost-leg-10-30089184> When Musa Motha lost a leg to cancer as a 10-year-old boy, he said to himself: “I’m going to live with this.” He’s done that and more, first learning to play football again, before mastering

African street dancing, performing with rapper Drake and travelling across the world to chase his dream of dance stardom.

Now 27, what Musa can do with one leg and one crutch is astonishing. “I was only little when I got cancer,” says Musa, who was living with his family in Sebokeng, a township about 30 miles south of Johannesburg, South Africa, when the symptoms began. “But I didn’t even know what cancer was or how life-threatening it was. I’d been sick for over a year.

The diagnosis of cancer was terrifying for his mum and dad, Ntokozo Precious and Solly. For Musa, so young, it was bewildering. He just wanted to get out and have a kickabout with his mates. Instead there was two months of chemotherapy then the news that his leg was going to be amputated. “It’s totally contrary,” he says, “but I was glad and I thought, I need to lose this leg! “I was a bit relieved. It was a solution for me, not traumatic or sad. I believe in new beginnings and I just said to myself, ‘I’m going to live with this’.”

“The first thing I did was learn to play football on my crutches,” he says. He’d balance on the crutches and swing his right leg. One-legged football mastered! What next? “One day we were at a party and my friends were dancing.” Musa watched for a bit and then wanted to join in. “I asked them to teach me,” he said. There were tumbles, scrapes, endless picking himself up and trying again.

After earning a diploma in chemical engineering, he joined Vuyani Dance Theatre in Johannesburg, and eventually decided he wanted to dance professionally. The moves that were performed by the able-bodied dancers, he would have to adapt for his one leg. “It made me really creative,” he says. “I’d have to adjust the move, interpret it and make it look similar. It’s very challenging.”

Musa does have a prosthetic leg but doesn’t use it, preferring his crutches. ‘When I used the prosthesis, I was a different person and I didn’t know that person anymore,’ he explains. “It’s the person I was before the amputation and I’m not him now.”

To inspire other differently abled dancers. Musa, who lives in Bermondsey, South London, has a new dream. “I want to have a dance company that can empower them. He still plays football – for Arsenal Amputee Football Club. You get the feeling he can do anything he puts his mind to. Really, it was no contest, Musa Motha versus cancer. The rogue cells knew when they were beaten.



## **Banks Must Give You Access Cash... By Law**

<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/betterbanking/article-12131065/At-banks-access-cash-law.html>

Government has agreed to enshrine in law a requirement for banks to provide customers

with convenient free access to cash on the high street.

The move comes against a backdrop of hundreds of bank branch closures since the start of last year – and a steep long-term decline in the number of free-to-use cash machines.

Reduced access to cash or a bank makes it difficult for cash-dependent people – especially the elderly – to go about their everyday lives, whether doing their banking or shopping.

It was Baroness Ros Altmann, prompted by consumer group Which?, who persuaded the Government to toughen up legislation passing through Parliament, paving the way for 'minimum levels of free access to cash'. She was backed by Life Peers from all three main political parties.

Although the amendment to the Financial Services And Markets Bill is unlikely to stem bank branch and ATM closures, it should mean that every high street will now allow consumers to withdraw cash for free. This is likely to be through a free-to-use ATM, bank branch, hub, Post Office or even a cashback service provided by a local retailer.

Government figures confirm that more than two million over-70s do not access the internet. This means they cannot do banking online and are reliant on the high street. Over the last 15 months, the big banks have shut or announced their intention to close almost 900 branches, bringing the number left to around 5,000.

Although the number of free-to-use ATMs only fell by four per cent last year, more than 15,000 cash machines have been removed from high streets over the past five years.

Which? says that without Baroness Altmann's amendment, the objective of the new legislation – protecting access to cash – would have been undermined as swathes of free-to-use ATMs were either shut or replaced with fee-charging machines.

Rocio Concha, director of policy and advocacy at Which?, says: 'Whether it's to buy everyday essentials or to keep track of spending during the cost-of-living crisis, cash is important for millions of consumers. We have campaigned to ensure that laws protect free access to cash and are delighted the Government agrees that people should not have to pay fees to access their own money.'

John Howells, chief executive of cash machine network Link, agrees. He believes the toughening up of the legislation represents a big step forward. Link has already had to protect 3,400 free-to-use cash machines that would have been shut. In a deal with the banks, it has recommended more than 100 banking hubs in communities where all branches have been axed.

The task of opening them is in the hands of Cash Access UK,

funded by the banks. So far only a handful have opened, the latest in Troon, South Ayrshire. Howells says: 'At least five million people rely on cash and although its use is declining, we must protect access to it.'



## Man With Down's Syndrome Gets Unexpected Gift From Senior Naval Captain



<https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/family-downs-syndrome-man-taken-27015449>

Tony Armitage, from Walton (Liverpool), who has Down's Syndrome, was enjoying a day out on the Pier Head with his family to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic when they got chatting to a group of captains. The group included Captain Richard Hewitt OBE, Commanding Officer of HMS Prince of Wales, who approached Tony after posing for a picture with him and his family. Tony's cousin, Angie Kelsall, said "[Captain Hewitt] just made a fuss of Tony. He had his hand in his pocket and put this coin in Tony's hand. "He didn't realise the significance of it at the time. I WhatsApped a picture to his dad and he Googled it. He said 'that's quite a significant thing you know.'

Angie said Tony, who is almost non-verbal, was "made up" after being gifted the official crest coin which was embellished with the words "commanding officer" and "HMS Prince of Wales". She added: "He was all smiles. It was so lovely. All of them were so friendly, even as we were walking away they were saying 'bye Brenda, bye Tony'."

Commander or challenge coins are given to honour military service, from the Royal Air Force to the Navy and the Marines. They can mark a specific achievement, time served, a commendation, or allegiance to a particular military unit or office. Tony's uncle Joe Kelsall said: "I thought it was a unique thing for a man of that senior rank. As far as I'm concerned he's more important than royalty - the captain of the largest aircraft carrier we've got."



## Should Mobility Scooter Drivers Be Subject To Regulation?

<https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/cars/1773762/mobility-scooter-regulation-poll-spt> There are more than 250,000 electric mobility scooters in use in Britain and a coroner has warned that a lack of regulation around the transportation is a risk to pedestrians.

A 92-year-old woman, Natalie Young, of Taunton, Somerset, died after being knocked over by a mobility scooter at a supermarket.

The driver was not identified and police judged them not to have committed any crime. An inquest into her death heard there are no restrictions on drivers and after hearing the case, senior coroner for the Somerset area Samantha Marsh wrote to the Transport Secretary Mark Harper alerting him that the lack of regulation “will continue to result in further deaths”.

She wrote: “Someone who is legally prevented from driving due to age, infirmity or other inability is freely able to own, use and operate a mobility scooter without any restriction whatsoever. “Mobility scooters can reach a fast enough speed to pose a significant risk to the entire community and population but specifically, small children, pregnant mothers and the elderly who are all particularly vulnerable to being impacted at speed by a blunt-force object and dying as a result of the injuries they sustain.”

Mrs Young's son Robin said the lack of regulation around mobility scooters needed tightening, telling BBC Points West that users should have to have insurance and a sight test: “We don't want people not to have them but there should be a law where you can't just drive out of a shop after knocking someone down. “There is no eyesight test, no tuition - anyone can go in and buy one. They don't need any insurance either. It [the law] needs to be completely changed. At the end of the day if people can't drive one then they shouldn't be having one.”

Mr Harper said: “We encourage all users of mobility scooters to consider training to ensure that they can confidently handle their vehicle in all conditions. The department seeks to improve the safe use of mobility vehicles, while ensuring that they remain accessible for the people who use them and for whom they are a lifeline.” He added that this summer the Government would be supporting a “nationwide certified powered wheelchair and mobility scooter assessment and training scheme”.



## **Wheelchair Sketch Only Offended Able-Bodied Audiences**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/06/02/wheelchair-sketch-show-offended-able-bodied-audience-writer/> The comedy screenwriter Andy Hamilton has revealed that a pilot for a sketch show written and performed by disabled people only offended able-bodied audience members.

Mr Hamilton, who has written for The Two Ronnies, Outnumbered, Not the Nine O’Clock News, Alas Smith and Jones, The Armstrong and Miller Show, and co-created Drop the Dead Donkey, said people want to be outraged “usually on someone else’s behalf”.

Speaking on the Always Be Comedy podcast, he recalled a pilot

written by producer Ash Atalla, who created The Office. “Ash contracted polio when he was a boy and so he uses a wheelchair,” Mr Hamilton said. “He made a pilot written and performed by disabled people with the working title of ‘Goodness, Gracious, Wheelchair’.”

Mr Atalla asked him if he would mediate a discussion forum for the 25-minute sketch programme. After it aired, the audience was asked to raise their hands if they were offended by anything they had seen in the show. “About 30 hands went up out of about 200, but they weren’t disabled people. They were able-bodied people,” he said. Mr Hamilton added: “I’ve a long-term concern, which is so much of humour, so many classic jokes, so much of what we joke about are very serious topics, like death, marriage, relationships failing, illness. Part of it is that jokes are sort of a relief valve. “So a lot of it is about laughing in the face of life.”

### **Trigger warning**

Mr Hamilton recalled being asked if his stand-up routine required a trigger warning during his last tour. A young front of house manager asked him questions about the length of his show, as well as if there were any loud bangs or special effects. “Then he went, ‘trigger warnings?’ I’d never heard that so I sort of went, ‘what do you mean?’” Mr Hamilton said. “He went, ‘Should I warn the audience about anything you’re going to say?’ And I went, ‘No, I want it to come as a horrible surprise.’”

Mr Hamilton said he “felt a bit cheap” that he had made a joke about it, because “he was just doing his job”. He added: “I presume the previous week someone in the audience had been offended by a joke, had made a complaint, and as part of the complaint had said ‘and why wasn’t I warned that there was a joke that would offend me?’” Mr Hamilton said that the surge in trigger warnings could threaten the future of comedy.

“I think there’s a risk that if we went too far down that road then we’d lose a lot culturally,” he said. “You want a world where Frankie Boyle and Jerry Sadowitz are still performers that people can go and see, but you also want a world where people feel they don’t have to see Frankie Boyle and Jerry Sadowitz. “That’s the thing that’s always been a bit of a puzzle to me is the sort of outrage that you sometimes get. You think ‘Well, it is on the tin, that’s who it was’.”



## **Kew Gardens Walking Tours for People Living with Dementia, Sight or Hearing Loss (incl. BSL) and Community Well Being.**

Kew have started their walks around the beautiful setting of Kew Gardens that are designed to be accessible for people living with



dementia, sight or hearing loss and for Community Well Being.

All walks start from Victoria Gate and last around 60 minutes. The walks are led by their volunteer walk leaders. Support workers, friends or family are very welcome and will also receive free entry to the Gardens. Please Check with Kew for any changes to the schedules

### **Forthcoming BSL Tour Dates**

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/monthly-british-sign-language-tours>

Sunday 9 July 2023 11am to 12pm

### **Forthcoming Dementia Friendly Tour Dates**

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/health-walks-for-people-living-with-dementia>

Wednesday 12 July 2023 11am to 12pm

### **Forthcoming Sensory Tour Dates**

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/sensory-guided-walking-tours-for-visitors-with-sight-loss-and-their-carers>

Sunday 9 July 2023 2-3pm

Walking tours have a limit to the number people who can participate for any of their Events and Walking Tours so it is essential that you register in advance for ALL walks and events at Kew. Email [discovery@kew.org](mailto:discovery@kew.org) or Telephone 07341 114533.



### **Spelthorne Para Sports Club**

Aimed at young people aged 5-25 and their siblings, Spelthorne Para Sports Club provides opportunities to play a wide range of sports as well as offering sport specific coaching for those interested in developing skills.

All sessions are overseen by enthusiastic volunteers although parents/guardians are encouraged to stay on side during the sessions. No need to book - come and try - first session free!

**Where** - Spelthorne Leisure Centre, Knowle Green, Staines,

**Cost** - £3 a session (£2 for siblings) payable on the day.

**When** - 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month 10:15-11:45am (term time)

For more information please visit the council's web site

[www.spelthorne.gov.uk/parasportsclub](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/parasportsclub)



### **Spelthorne Boccia Club**

Boccia is a disability sport that is similar to bowls and petanque.

The aim of the game is to propel leather balls, coloured red or blue, close to a white target ball (the jack).

It is played from a seated position and the ball can be moved with players' hands, feet or an assistive device eg a head or hand pointer.

Our club is aimed at people aged 16+ with disabilities (young people aged 14+ may join with an adult carer present)

**Where** - Spelthorne Leisure Centre, Knowle Green, Staines

**When** - Every Thursday 6pm - 6.55pm

**Cost** - £3 per week (no need to book, just turn up and join in)

For more information please visit the council's web site

[www.spelthorne.gov.uk/boccia](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/boccia)



## Staines Shopmobility

making staines accessible



**Two Rivers (West Car park),  
Mustard Mill Road,  
STAINES, TW18 4BL.**

**Telephone 01784 459416**

*The service will be available Tuesday to Saturday from 9.30am until 4.15pm, with the last equipment hire time of 3pm.*

*All equipment is to be returned by 4.15pm.*

[stainesshopmo@gmail.com](mailto:stainesshopmo@gmail.com)

[www.stainesshopmobility.com](http://www.stainesshopmobility.com)

[www.facebook.com/stainesshopmobility](https://www.facebook.com/stainesshopmobility)

### **Membership Charges**

*Membership is available on a daily or annual basis. Please contact manager for details*

### **Holiday Hire**

*Wheelchair- Overnight, Weekend, Week, Fortnight - maximum hire period of 6 weeks.*

**A Cash Deposit Of £50 Is Required.**

*Scooter - Overnight, Weekend, Week, Fortnight - maximum hire period of 4 weeks.*

**A Cash Deposit Of £100 Is Required.**



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## **Groom Stands Up From Wheelchair For First Dance**

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/groom-stuns-bride-stands-up-30143617>

Barry MacDowell, 49, has Multiple Sclerosis and relies on a wheelchair but thanks to physiotherapy he was able to stand for the duration of his first dance with his bride, Emma.

Barry and his new wife, Emma, 36 both have Multiple Sclerosis

and met on a MS support platform and bonded over their similar sense of humour. In 2021 dad-of-three Barry - who has used a wheelchair since 2018 - proposed and the couple began planning their big day. Determined to stand for their first dance, Barry started physiotherapy to help him learn to stand so he and Emma could dance.

When the medley of Thinking Out Loud by Ed Sheeran and Shut Up And Dance by Walk the Moon started playing he shocked the room when he stood up. He managed to continue on his own two feet for the entire dance lasting 90 seconds - beating his record for standing up. Barry said: "The dance was amazing. "My legs were sore for two and a half weeks after the wedding, but it was worth it of course.

The couple enlisted the help of Move4ward - an organisation specialising in neuro-physiotherapy and rehabilitation ahead of their big day on April 8. Over countless sessions practising walking on parallel bars and a zero-gravity treadmill, Barry's progress was slow but steady. They tried to get him vertical using leg braces but it was too painful, so the plan was for Dave and Jude from Move4ward to hold him up for the dance.

Emma, a former hairdresser, added: "It was amazing to dance with him, although, the whole time I was worried he was about to headbutt me. "Because of that, I would always have to be behind him pushing him, because at the start he couldn't self-propel. "So that dance was a different type of closeness. Until then, I never even knew he was taller than me. "Now it's done, it doesn't feel real - I want to do it again."

Barry was diagnosed with relapsing remitting MS (RRMS) in 2015 - after waiting over a decade for a diagnosis. The delay meant he wasn't able to get the right treatment for a long time - meaning the condition became more severe, leading to him becoming reliant on a wheelchair. Emma has the same condition - after being diagnosed following a bout of meningitis aged 29.



## **Dumped E-Bikes 'Dangerous' For The Disabled,**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/06/08/dumped-e-bikes-pavements-dangerous-disabled-blind-people/>

E-bikes being dumped by irresponsible users have turned pavements into dangerous no-go zones for the disabled, according to a report by a leading think tank.

Policy Exchange said it said the failure of Government, councils and police to tackle the scourge of e-bikes meant they had become a "significant safety risk" to the disabled, who account for up to 20 per cent of the population.

In its report, Policy Exchange quoted three disabled

parliamentarians - Lord Shinkwin, Baroness Brinton and Lord Blencathra - who said pavements had become “completely impassable” and “actively dangerous” because of irresponsible users discarding the bikes and scooters.

The report by Policy Exchange’s head of crime and justice David Spencer, a former Met Police detective chief inspector, said users of e-bikes or e-scooters who left them parked on their side or obstructing the pavement should be fined a penalty charge equivalent to a parking fine, which is on average £90. Mr Spencer said the fines could be automatically deducted from an irresponsible user’s payment card the next time they hired an e-bike or e-scooter if they left it obstructing a pavement. If they were repeatedly fined, they would be banned from using them.

### **‘An insuperable barrier’**

He cited Guide Dogs research which found 97 per cent of people with vision impairment had encountered problems with street obstructions, citing a “dramatic” increase in the number of rental e-bikes and e-scooters. Policy Exchange also recommended the DfT should introduce a licensing scheme requiring e-bike and e-scooter hire firms to pay the full cost of installing bays and removing dangerously or irresponsibly parked bikes within at least an hour.

The think tank said the problem was compounded in Westminster, the public face of the nation, where disabled people faced the twin threats of e-bikes and protests by organisations such as Just Stop Oil. All who work and visit Westminster are affected by these behaviours, the impact is perhaps most keenly felt by disabled people,” said the report. What may be a mere inconvenience for non-disabled people may be an insuperable barrier to a person with a disability.

Lord Blencathra said: “The Department for Transport must stop pandering to the e-bike and scooter thugs who ride on the pavement and dump their bikes on the pavement. Some of these big electric e-bikes are the same size and weight as motorcycle trail bikes.”



## **I Was In Denial About My Blindness - Until I Was Hit By An Electric Car <https://metro.co.uk/2023/06/15/i-was-in-denial-about-my-blindness-until-i-was-hit-by-an-electric-car-18948590/>**

While I can hear and usually identify planes, trains and automobiles – the silent glide of electric vehicles is a problem when it comes to crossing the road.

Except, I would admit that being hit by one, back in 2019, has changed my life for the better. That it finally helped me come to terms with living with sight loss. No longer embarrassed, ashamed or in denial. As soon as my life was at risk, I couldn’t ignore it any

longer.

I started losing my sight when I was 15. I was working part-time in a car wash and, within three months, I was struggling to see its sign. My eyesight had been perfect until then – I never needed glasses or anything – but, now, everything was hazy.

After seeing an optician, I was rushed to hospital with sudden sight loss – with doctors worried I had an infection. Specialists finally diagnosing me with Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy, meaning that I have no central vision. I have a little bit of peripheral vision, but can't clearly see faces, or read print..

I had to give up playing football, something I loved. And going from being a cocky young lad, with a big group of mates to losing about 80% of my sight within a matter of months was life-changing. My mates talked about footie, and starting their driving lessons – I'd wanted a moped more than anything, but it started to dawn on me that my life would never be the same.

In 2019 I was hit by an e-car, and rolled over the bonnet. I hadn't seen or heard it, and had hurt my shoulder quite badly – having to crawl across the road for help getting up. I felt really embarrassed. It was the wake-up call I needed to get help. By then I had two kids, now aged 10 and eight, that I shared custody of. What would have happened if they'd been with me when I'd been hit? I needed to get help for them, as well as for myself.

It was then that I connected with Guide Dogs, the UK's leading charity for helping people with sight loss. They matched me with my four-year-old labrador. Ringo has been life-changing. He takes the anxiety away of walking around or crossing the road.

With him I feel safe and confident – and I can safely say he's been a great friend to me, too. I couldn't imagine life without him now, and he has helped me come to terms with my blindness. He helps break the stigma, and I finally have the confidence to talk openly about my sight loss.

Ringo and I have featured in a TV advert for Guide Dogs called Find My Way – showcasing the My Life Skills service the charity offers, and the importance of children with sight loss learning everyday life skills from a young age. Now, aged 34, I'm about to study for my barrister training alongside my current job as Head of Internships at the Thomas Pocklington Trust, a national charity supporting blind and partially sighted people.



## **Disabled Britain: Doing It For Ourselves**

By Rachel Charlton-Dailey, guest editor and founder of The Unwritten. Disabled Britain: Doing It For Ourselves, is a series across the Daily Mirror's print and digital platforms, showcasing



the lives of disabled people and the issues important to us. The articles have been conceived by disabled people, written by disabled people, and photographs - where possible - taken by disabled people. After all, there are 14 million of us, and we aren't

all the same, it's time the public stopped listening to lazy stereotypes and viewed disabled people in all our wide-ranging splendour.

## **The Media's Dangerous Portrayal Of Disability Fakers**

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/the-medias-dangerous-portrayal-disability-30178141>

*I was crossing the road and I found my hands too full of shopping to use my stick. As it was an okay mobility day, I crossed slowly whilst my cane dangled from its wrist strap. When I got to the other side my hips were sore so I stopped, rearranged my bags, held my cane properly, shook out my legs and carried on walking with my cane.*

*It was then I was caught off guard by a man walking past "oh aye in case the fraud squad are watching ya" he laughed. I thought I'd misheard him or it wasn't aimed at me so I went "you what?" What followed next really threw me. "Well you obviously don't really need that, I just saw you walking fine, you faking it now in case you get shopped?"*

*A man had just witnessed me attempting to mask my discomfort after crossing a street unaided and instead thought I must've been faking the pain. Scope says the media must stop 'destructive disability narrative' - and I agree. In his narrow view, he'd just watched someone carry a stick and then remember they were supposed to use it.*

*What he'd actually witnessed was someone with a dynamic disability who can do short distances and doesn't always need to use a cane, but does to make their life easier. This is because the view of disability that's presented by the media is so black and white, you're either "fit and healthy" or you're viewed as "suffering" from a condition, miserable and constantly in pain, needing help from non-disabled saviours.*

*The encounter in public shook me, but one of my first thoughts was that it could've been a lot worse. I could've been screamed at or physically attacked in the street.*

*Charity Leonard Cheshire has reported that disability hate crimes rose by 25 per cent in 2021, with violent crimes rising by 27 per cent.*

*I shouldn't be reflecting on being accused of not being disabled as a lucky escape, none of us should have to deal with this just for*

*trying to live our lives. But as long as the media and government keep pushing this dangerous narrative that disabled people are faking it for benefits and turning the public against us, it will only get worse. I might not be as “lucky” next time.*



## **Shambles Leaves Disabled Man In Limbo Without Care**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-12205883/Shambles-mean-BBC-journalist-Humphrey-Hawksleys-son-stuck-limbo-FOUR-years.html>

While most of us have been out enjoying the sunshine this past fortnight, 27-year-old Christopher Hawksley has been mostly sitting in one room, watching TV. Christopher, has multiple severe disabilities and uses a wheelchair, must wait for his parents' weekly visit just for a short trip around the block. The care staff where he lives have limited resources so can't take him to the shops or the music lessons he loves.

The talented pianist was born with a number of conditions, including cerebral palsy, and requires round-the-clock medical assistance to help him walk, eat, communicate and use the toilet. He is on the autistic spectrum and often bites and scratches himself when frustrated.

After he graduated from his specialist residential college in 2019, the local authority struggled to find a suitable home, so he was placed in an emergency respite centre an hour and a half away from his family's West London home.

These facilities are meant to provide basic care for disabled people for just a few weeks. It now means that Christopher can't enjoy activities such as swimming and walks in the park because there is no one available to take him. 'My son is rotting away, the care team do what they can – and are brilliant, given the circumstances. But there are no activities for him, or anything to do. He is constantly asking when he can go home, and his outbursts continue.'

Shortly after Christopher's birth he suffered a build-up of fluid on his brain and had to be kept alive by a machine. Doctors gave Humphrey and his wife Jonie, both then 41, a stark choice: give the go-ahead for a series of risky operations that might save Christopher but leave him severely disabled, or have the machine turned off. Humphrey, now 68, admitted, hauntingly, that at times he has questioned whether they made the right decision. 'It is something I'm still thinking about all the time,' he says. 'My wife and I are in our late 60s now – we can't lift a grown man several times a day. I'm worried now that there's nowhere suitable to look after my son.'

One potential home promised by Hammersmith and Fulham Council – an apartment in a supported living facility for people with disabilities – fell through. Then another private care provider withdrew its offer. Both services said they didn't have enough staff to provide Christopher with the round-the-clock care he needs.

Things to do are essential for Christopher – without them he can become agitated and aggressive towards himself and others.

'When he was at college his days were filled with piano lessons, swimming and physiotherapy, among other activities,' says Humphrey. 'Back then, he'd only show signs of agitation during the school holidays, because he had nothing to do. In term-time he expressed far less frustration. He knew what he was doing, and where he was going.'

Kari Gerstheimer, chief executive of Access Social Care, says it is not uncommon for severely disabled people to be turned away from residential facilities at the last minute and told their needs are too complex. And there is another major challenge – the national care staff shortage. Between spring 2021 and 2022, the shortage of carers rose to roughly 165,000, according to a report by The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services. Low pay seems to be an issue.



## **Runnymede and Spelthorne Volunteer Awards**

<https://voluntarysupport.org.uk/runnymede-and-spelthorne-volunteer-awards-2023/> Monday 5th June, the Runnymede and Spelthorne Volunteer Awards were hosted and jointly held with Royal Holloway University.

### **Volunteer Award Winners 2023**

#### **Volunteer (individual) who has made the most impact:**

Jason Lane - Spelthorne Parkies

#### **Volunteer Team that has made the most impact:**

Village Centre - Volunteers from Englefield Green,

#### **Young Volunteer:**

Matthew Neathey - Staines and Egham Sea Cadets

#### **Inspirational Volunteers:**

Ari Zoides - Tea Boat Project,

Lizzie Wayland - Elevate Life and Little Lights,

John Martin - White Lodge

#### **Fundraiser Award:**

Jane Cawsey - White Lodge

#### **Health and Wellbeing Award:**

Mel Connolly – Local Conversation Stanwell

#### **Volunteer Team Award:**

Citizens Advice - Runnymede and Spelthorne Court Desk Team,



## Environmental Champion Award:

Neil Maitland-Walker - Spelthorne Litter Pickers

## Long Service Award: Lesley Windle - SCAN



*Lesley has been volunteering with SCAN (Spelthorne Committee for Access Now) for many years filling roles that are necessary for the smooth and successful running of an organisation but that often go unrecognised.*

*For a number of years Lesley has also been producing regular newsletters for distribution electronically and in hard copy to individuals and organisations Borough wide. The information may originate in the media/internet, specialised publications, or publications of support organisations.*

*The main recipients of the newsletter are people with disabilities who may not have a support network or for whom the internet is a mystery. These newsletters pull together articles, news and information on matters relating to issues affecting disabled people and which can sign-post readers to amazing services and support that they would otherwise been unaware of.*

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to nominate the volunteers who make such a difference to our communities.



### North West Surrey Drop-In Hubs

**Addlestone** – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each Month

**KnapHill** – Every Monday

**Shepperton** – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each Month

### Surrey Downs Hubs

**Epsom** - 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each Month

**Hersham** - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each Month

**Leatherhead** – Every Friday

To contact Action for Carers Surrey, Telephone 0303 040 1234

Email [CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk) Text 07723 486730

Web site [www.actionforcarers.org.uk](http://www.actionforcarers.org.uk)



### Disability Rights UK (DRUK)

**DRUK Helplines**

Our helplines are operating as normal:

**Personal Budgets Helpline**

Opening hours: 9.30am-1.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone: 0330 995 0404 [personalbudgets@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:personalbudgets@disabilityrightsuk.org)

## Disabled Students Helpline

Opening hours: 11am-1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone: 0330 995 0414 [students@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:students@disabilityrightsuk.org)

## Welfare Rights Helpline for Member Organisations

Opening hours: 10.30am-12.30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone: 0203 687 0779 [ken.butler@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:ken.butler@disabilityrightsuk.org)

**PLEASE NOTE** – *The news Bulletins received from **DRUK** and the **Surrey Adult Social Care Information & Engagement Team** are now being distributed as enclosures with each monthly SCAN Newsletter.*

*Please contact me if you wish to receive these enclosures by sending a text message (with your name and postal address) to 07859 639025.*

*If your preference is for an electronic copy then please email me on [info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk](mailto:info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk) or use the 'Contact SCAN' form on [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/)*



## Disability Empowerment Network – North Surrey & Surrey Wide

Administration and management of the Disability Empowerment Network (DEN) meetings is arranged by the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People (SCDP)

**All Empowerment Meetings Continue To Be Held Via Zoom unless otherwise noted**

### North Surrey Meeting Dates 2023

Runnymede, Spelthorne, Woking & Surrey Heath.

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September at 10.30am *hybrid at Goldwater lodge*

### Surrey Wide Meeting dates for 2023

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September at 6pm

**For more information, please contact:**

[involvement@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:involvement@surreycoalition.org.uk) or Tel/SMS 07492 249 513 for details of how to participate in meetings remotely.



## SCAN and Spelthorne Physical, Sensory & Cognitive Disabilities Forum (SPSCDF)



The meetings bring together service providers and users to influence the solutions to any problems or access issues

encountered by people with physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities. We receive reports from a number of local groups and

service providers. Send your news or reports to [info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk](mailto:info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk) or fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on our website pages at [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/)

Our next meeting will be on **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023** starting at 12 noon and be Hybrid - held in person at the Goddard Room, Council Offices Knowle Green and via Zoom.

**SCAN's AGM** will be held on **Tuesday 10 October 2023**. The Goddard room in the council offices, Knowle Green has been booked from 12 noon for those who are able to attend in person. The details for the ZOOM session will be distributed nearer the time.

**One of Trading Standard's SCAM Champions** has been invited to be our Guest Speaker. There will be a short break after the AGM for a buffet lunch before an abridged meeting of **Spelthorne's Physical, Sensory and Cognitive Disability** forum will be held.

Further details for this forum are available on SCAN's web site at [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/news/scan-news/spscd-forum/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/news/scan-news/spscd-forum/)



## **Donations for SCAN's Newsletters**

This project will require new sponsorship from April 2024 as demand for paper booklets continues to evolve after the pandemic. It had been intended to increase distribution in 2020 and funding was applied for and approved, but the pandemic meant we couldn't use the award and the demographic has also since changed.

Sponsorship and membership subscription packages are available to any individuals, councillors or organisations interested in supporting SCAN's newsletter project – please use the contact options below for information about making donations.

If you have news that you would like included in the newsletter or on our web site, or to be reported at the quarterly meetings, please send a report via an email to [info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk](mailto:info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk) or fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on SCAN's web page where you will also find more details about SCAN's work [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/)



## **More From Former Contributor to SCAN's Newsletters**

Richard sustained a severe brain injury in a motorcycle accident in 1983 and he felt that although people tried to relate to his situation, they often couldn't understand.

He put his thoughts and experiences together as a collection of poems and articles about his life after his injury to help others in a similar situation to realise that they're not alone, and to try to give 'able-bodied' people a small insight into the world of disability.

Richard died in 2014, and his son shared his father's book with Headway who provided a link to the book from their website <https://www.headway.org.uk/>.

Richard's personality and wit shines through the book. The local artist who supplied the, often poignant, drawings for Richard's book has also died. Electronic versions of Richard's book can be viewed on the Headway website .

### **Coming To Terms**

*There are all those hours  
I spend with only me,  
trying to be philosophical  
about what's gone and also what might be.*

*Discipline is essential  
to keep negative thoughts at bay,  
or find lots of things to do  
well that's the theory anyway.*

*Dreaming is a nice escape,  
but must be done in moderation.  
Real life unfortunately must be faced,  
with determination.*

*It doesn't always work like that,  
I get caught up by the blues.  
Feeling sorry for myself  
I'm afraid is nothing new.*

*But the longer I'm disabled,  
the less it feels like a crime  
and wallowing in self-pity  
is such a waste of time.*



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