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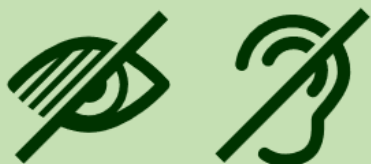
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1992 – 2023



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## **Martin Clunes: A Dog Called Laura**

<https://www.itv.com/presscentre/presscentre/ep1weekweek-40-2023-sat-30-sep-fri-06-oct/martin-clunes-dog-called-laura>

At the beginning of October 2023, Martin Clunes started a new tv series where he set out to explore the secret lives of Britain's army of guide dogs in a new documentary.

The dog loving actor was inspired to make the documentary after hearing a podcast story of a blind woman whose life had been changed by her guide dog, but who now faces the daunting task of finding a new dog.

Jaina Mistry was a teenager when she lost her sight following a freak reaction to penicillin. For the past decade, her 'eyes' have been a black Labrador cross called Laura, but now after nine years, safely guiding her through the mayhem of modern life, Jaina's faithful labrador cross has just been retired from her harness, and lives with Jaina as a pet. "At the beginning it was love at first sight," says Jaina, a nutrition consultant "She gave me the confidence and freedom I thought I'd never get back, so letting her go will be the hardest part of our journey. Keeping Laura along with a new guide dog simply isn't possible or practical. What will help me though will be her finding a loving family."

Martin says "I heard Jaina's story and it was like having a window opened on a whole other world. It's an incredibly moving world where animals are trained to do a life-changing job, and it dawned on me that most of us know virtually nothing about the secret lives of Britain's heroic army of guide dogs."

Martin called the Guide Dogs UK charity and soon afterwards, he arranged for Jaina and Laura to meet him at his home in Dorset, to offer Laura a new home for her retirement, with his own canine chums, Heidi, Penny, Jim and Bob Jackson. Assuming Laura takes to her new family then Jaina's worries about Laura's future will be over.

The film follows Jaina's next huge challenge as she visits the Guide Dogs UK's national base in Leamington Spa, where they can breed up to 1,500 puppies a year. This is where Jaina first met Laura, and where she will meet her next guide dog.

Martin meets some of the people who have the serious and challenging responsibility of getting each dog ready for that daunting role. Finally the film will follow Jaina with her new guide dog, and visiting Martin at his Dorset home to see how Laura is settling into life with her new family.

The documentary is produced by and directed by Ian Leese, the executive producers are Philippa Braithwaite (aka Mrs Clunes) and Bill Jones.

## **Northern Rail Ticket Inspector Pets Guide Dog On Train** <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1824909/northern-rail-inspector-pets-guide-dog>

Chloe Tear, 25, was sitting in a Northern Rail train from Blackburn to Leeds on Sunday (October 15) when the conductor said the guide dog wasn't working and repeatedly made a fuss of her Labrador-Golden Retriever cross, Dezzie.

Chloe went to point out Dezzie might have been lying down but it didn't mean he was not doing his job, but before she could say so the inspector bent down and stroked Dezzie, despite a sign on his lead reading, "Do not pet". Another warning on Dezzie's harness states: "Do not distract. I'm a working guide dog". The freelance writer and content designer said before and after what happened her journey had been great and what a traveller with a visual impairment would have expected.

Chloe, who started to lose her sight at the age of 18, said: "I know they didn't mean any malice. It wasn't done to cause offence. The thing that shocked me was they assumed Dezzie wasn't working because he was lying down. "I'm slightly annoyed at the situation, but it was an honest mistake. I don't blame them. It's just important to highlight how people should act around guide dogs. It made me feel uncomfortable. I find it hard to tell people no when I'm asking people to stop stroking my dog. It happens so quickly, and Dezzie gets distracted."

Michael Wordingham, Policy Manager at the Royal National Institute of Blind People, said: "It is important to always be mindful that guide dogs are on duty if it is walking somewhere or quietly settled with their owner. "If people pet or talk to the guide dog when it is in harness it can undermine the partnership between the dog and the owner. Please ask the owner before interacting with a guide dog, even if you think it is not working at that moment."

Chloe said she experiences members of the public petting Dezzie often when they are out together, adding: "People don't realise the harm they are doing by stroking him. By stroking a guide dog, it could then mean in future they will seek affection from strangers, undermining their training. They are trained to ignore people."

Also, petting a guide dog without the owner's permission can put the owner in danger. A distracted guide dog might not respond to a command or lose focus Chloe said: "Guide dogs live very happy, fulfilled lives. Dezzie gets plenty of time off. He enjoys his job and his purpose. If Dezzie didn't enjoy it, he would not have been trained as a guide dog."

Northern has been approached for comment.

## Etiquette When Meeting A Guide Dog – Do's And Don'ts

1. Do ask permission to pet the dog or to allow children to pet the dog if the dog is out of harness and not working.
2. Do teach children the difference between a pet and a working guide dog.
3. Do walk on the owner's right side, a few paces behind when sharing a pavement.
4. Don't grab or hold the dog's harness.
5. Don't interact with a working dog by petting, calling out the dog's name, or giving the dog cues. A guide dog should only hear cues from its owner.
6. Don't allow your pets to interact with a working guide dog. When a Guide Dog is working in harness you should avoid your pet dog interacting with them as it may distract them just like a human would.
7. Don't feed the dog anything without the handler's permission, especially not table scraps.
8. Don't attempt to guide, steer, or hold a person navigating with a guide dog.



## Ban On Blue Badge Vehicles In York Set To Be Reversed <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/blue-badges-york-controversial-ban-on-blue-badge-vehicles-in-york-set-to-be-reversed-4361901>

On Thursday (Oct 12) York council's executive will discuss the new local transport strategy and plan. It will vote on measures proposed by the transport executive councillor Pete Kilbane to reduce congestion, improve air quality and make the city more accessible. One measure to achieve the latter listed in the plan is to "listen to the disabled community and review blue badge access to the city."

Disabled parking was permanently prevented in pedestrianised areas of York in 2021 and prompted an outcry from disability campaigners and even attracted the attention of York-born actress Dame Judi Dench.

The City of York Council leader councillor Claire Douglas said. "We want to get access for people in a safe manner as soon as possible and that's what we hope to achieve in executive. Then there will be a period of seeing what works well, what doesn't and if we need to change anything. We'll be going through a bit of a cycle of improvement and adjustment over a period of time. It's so important to us to get people back into the city centre that they've been excluded from for three years and enable them to enjoy their city. We're over the moon about it."

Andrew Morrison, chief executive of York Civic Trust, said: “The document makes clear that transport policy is not just about reducing congestion. We need to tackle climate change, reduce air pollution, address the scourge of casualties on our roads, and protect York’s unique heritage. At the same time, we need a transport system which provides access for all, supports York’s economy, and ensures that all communities in York are safe, healthy and lively places in which to live and work. These are all objectives which we advocated in our transport strategy for York, published last year.”



## **Drivers Risk £100 Fine for Parking In ‘Blue Badge’ Spaces** <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/drivers-face-100-fine-ignore-31120246>

A new survey from CarMats.co.uk found one in 20 motorists across all age ranges admit to unauthorised parking with five percent of 1,366 respondents admitted to parking in disabled spaces when they shouldn't.

Elderly drivers could be slapped with a £100 fine for making a major error when parking their vehicles.

If motorists stop in a disabled parking bay and don't have a valid blue badge, they could be issued with a strict penalty.

However, experts have warned motorists that only blue badge holders should park in these bays as offenders are likely to face severe consequences.

Ash Young, founder of CarMats.co.uk said parking in these spaces can cause headaches for motorists. In some cases, he warned disabled people may even ditch their shopping if they can't find a comfortable place to park. Mr Young said “Our survey results show that there’s still a lot of unauthorised use of parking spaces. They’re designed to make it easier for anyone with specific needs so they can access shops, facilities and services. Parking in these when you don’t need them can make it really difficult or impossible for those who require them to go about their daily life. Some disabled people may even be forced to abandon a shopping trip and go home if they can’t find suitable parking.”

Drivers who ignore the rules and park in spaces illegally could be slapped with a fine between £70 and £100. Meanwhile, road users who use a blue badge without being entitled could be issued a whopping £1,000 charge. Specialists have reminded motorists that a blue badge is linked to a specific person and not a vehicle.

Age UK added: “Disabled parking spaces are generally the same width as standard bays, however, there is more space

between each bay that is usually marked out with white or yellow crosses on the road to enable sufficient access for those with limited mobility and wheelchair users. This makes them approximately 1.2 metres wider than a standard space and they have a total width of 3.6 metres.”



## **Security Guard Denied Entry To Hospital for Guide**

**Dog** <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/oct/07/nhs-says-sorry-to-blind-woman-amy-kavanagh-after-security-tried-to-bar-her-guide-dog>

Dr Amy Kavanagh was seeking urgent care for daughter at West Middlesex University hospital when a security guard tried to prevent her entering a hospital with her sick daughter because she was with her guide dog.

Historian Dr Kavanagh, 34, wrote on X – formerly twitter: ““We kept walking after firmly saying ‘this is a guide dog’. “Very grateful to the members of the public who also shouted him down & the nurse on the reception who had words.”

She added: “As a mother with an ill child I should not have to also deal with the additional fear & stress of an access refusal because of my guide dog.”

Kavanagh said the “law has existed for over 25 years” – a reference to the Disability Discrimination Act, introduced in 1995 – and that there is “no excuse for staff, including third-party contractors, in public service to be unaware”. “Ava wears a huge sign and multiple labels stating she is a guide dog,” she said. “Little One [Dr Kavanagh’s baby] is OK, nothing serious but worth checking so we could get some advice.

“It’s exhausting constantly dealing with this in the NHS. If you work in healthcare, have conversations with your security teams & educate them about assistance dogs.”

A spokesperson for the trust said it had contacted Dr Kavanagh and that the issue had been “raised at the highest levels. We are taking this incident seriously, our organisation is fully committed to providing accessible services for everyone in our community, in a safe and welcoming environment,” the spokesperson said. “We have contacted the patient to offer our sincere apologies and, importantly, to ensure that appropriate action will take place following an immediate internal review.”

Dr Kavanagh has previously spoken about the harassment she experiences as a blind person. “I get harassed in public, on the street, in shops, on public transport, in cabs and even in professional environments,” she said. “A typical experience is that someone offers to help me cross a road and, whether or not I accept, they grab me by the arm and refuse to let go.

## Marathon Runner With Stoma Withdraws From New York Marathon Over Bag Rules

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-67310110>

Gayle Redman, a GP from Flint, Flintshire, said her vest carries supplies for her stoma and water and has allowed her to safely run marathons in London and Paris. She said she believed she had been discriminated against.

New York Road Runners (NYRR), which organises the race, said the vest did not adhere to rules set by police.

Gayle has a stoma and needs to self-catheterise six times a day following surgeries for endometriosis. Gayle has found certain aids to help her race and has competed in numerous events over the last decade.

She sent organisers pictures of her vest, which has pouches on the back for a 1.5 litre water bag and a straw so she can drink continuously, as her condition makes her susceptible to dehydration.

The vest also has a pocket on the back where she carries supplies for her stoma. "I carry huge volumes of fluids when I go out on my really long training runs," she said.

But Gayle was told by the NYRR that only waist belts would be allowed, a type of aid that would affect her stoma. "I emailed them again and said this is a disability issue, this is really important," she said. "I can't take part if we can't figure something out." The organisers sent her a type of clear ruck sack for carrying water, but she said it would not work because it had no room to carry stoma supplies.

Eleven days before the race she got another email saying she could use front water bottles in a vest, but nothing about where she could carry her stoma supplies. She said she was left with no choice but to cancel the trip, losing £500 in entry fees that she and her husband paid to run in the race. "I'm disappointed that they couldn't find a way of including me," she said. "I feel like I've been discriminated against. "I've got a disability that is recognised... the Equality Act in the UK, and as far as I can tell the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is very similar, says that reasonable accommodations should be made.

NYRR said in a statement: "We work with intention to provide reasonable accommodations in accordance with local laws and federal ADA guidelines to ensure runners of all abilities have access to our races while making sure that each and every runner, spectator, volunteer and staff member are safe." It said it went "above and beyond to provide this runner with options including purchasing two hydration packs for her, in addition to our 20 course-based hydration stations". "It is unfortunate that her

requests didn't align with local law enforcement restrictions and that she has chosen not to join us this year," the organisers said, pointing to hydration vests being on a prohibited items list.



## Comedian Adam Hills – Grow Another Foot

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-12374359/Adam-Hills-rugby-international-level-born-one-foot.html>

Comedian Adam Hills, Australian comedian, 53, was born without a right foot and wears a prosthetic in order to play rugby, having started a Physical Disability Rugby League (PDRL) team in Warrington, Cheshire.

Host of **The Last Leg** – and Rugby League fanatic – Adam told his story in Channel 4 documentary **Adam Hills: Grow Another Foot** after emulating his sporting heroes by playing for Australia in the first ever Physical Disability Rugby League (PDRL) World Cup which took place in the UK last year.

'I don't know how I became Mr Rugby League! I've put my comedy career on hold. I turn down massive gigs because it's on training nights. Everyone around me can see how obsessed I am by it. When PDRL began, the dream was to see it at the World Cup because that would take the sport to a new level.

'It's kind of hilarious that this all started with a few blokes in Warrington running around and playing Rugby League.' Adam describes PDRL as 'fast, brutal and borderline unhinged', admitting he's been knocked out, fractured his ankle, torn a hamstring and damaged a ligament while playing.

The star also has a compression fracture in one of his discs which may be the early onset of osteoporosis. Adam previously said in a statement of his documentary: 'I've loved Rugby League ever since I was a kid, but the thought of playing it at an international level seemed impossible. 'So when the opportunity came to take part in the first ever Physical Disability World Cup, I jumped at it with one foot and a prosthesis. 'I played the game I love, made mates for life, and had the experience of a lifetime. 'I grew another foot, and I can't wait for people to see the hits, the laughs and the characters of Physical Disability Rugby League.

After playing for Australia in October last year, Adam said: 'I'm not surprised that we've had a PDRL World Cup, I'm surprised at how well attended, how well covered, how well broadcasted it is. It's given me a chance to fulfil a boyhood dream and it's given what, however many, 40, 60 contestants, 80 I think rugby league players the chance to represent their country. So it's been massive.'



## Disabled Woman On Mobility Scooter Refused Onto

**Bus** <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1825753/canterbury-mobility-scooter-stagecoach-refusal>

After a series of heart problems, Ann Ingham, a former nurse can only walk around 50 yards before having to use her electric scooter. She also has a pacemaker fitted.

The couple from Spalding, in Lincolnshire took a day trip to historic Canterbury in Kent. They decided to leave their car at the park and ride bus stop when they were told by the bus driver “Mobility scooters aren’t allowed.” The pair had to turn around and drive into the traffic-filled Canterbury city centre.

Mr Steve Ingham, 67, said: “I think it’s completely wrong in this day and age and we want to warn other people about it. “We didn’t know if the driver was just fobbing us off. She just shrugged us off when we tried to discuss the matter. “I’m used to going to cities where they have a park and ride and you think ‘thank God for that,’ but here it was an issue . If they’re trying to push people to use the park and ride, this is the worst way of trying to get people to do it.

Mr Ingham explained how they often check if they will be able to board the bus before they travel. He said: “You have to think differently now. "You get some places where you can’t use your blue badge unless you’re a local, so you get used to looking ahead of time at what restrictions might be in place. “We looked up on the web pages to see if the park and ride is disabled-friendly. There was no mention of mobility scooters not being allowed.

Canterbury County Council spokesman Rob Davies said many of the drivers on the park and ride service are new and need more training. He said: “We would like to apologise to Mr and Mrs Ingham for what happened on their recent visit to Canterbury. "Having investigated their complaint with our park and ride contractor, Stagecoach, the driver should have accepted their class 2 mobility scooter on board. “The company will also be apologising to the couple directly.

“Clearly, there is a need for some further training on these issues to make sure this is a one-off incident that cannot happen again.



## 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 e.g., 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

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*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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## **North Surrey Sports Association for Disabled People (NSSADP)**

has been established by local volunteers to facilitate the provision of sports for disabled people within North Surrey and adjacent areas. The association will initially focus on Boccia, with coaching for disabled people, training for coaches and arranging some competition.

It is intended that the association will extend this



principle to other sports, both paralympic or main-stream, facilitating the creation of other clubs aimed at providing sport for disabled people.

Membership is open to both individuals and organisations interested in furthering the association's work. For more information, please contact [nssadp@gmail.com](mailto:nssadp@gmail.com)



## **I Starred In A TV Ad – But Was Horrified By What Happened Next** <https://metro.co.uk/2023/10/21/i-starred-in-a-tv-ad-but-was-horrified-by-what-happened-next-19695136/>

Samantha Renke is an actor, presenter and disability rights campaigner.

*I landed my first big television job in a Maltesers ad in 2016. One light-hearted 30-second commercial had people on social media tagging me in hurtful memes and making fun of my disability – brittle bones disease, which is a rare genetic condition that means I'm of petite stature so I use a wheelchair full-time. Having the opportunity to highlight incidents like these is why National Hate Crime Awareness Week is so important.*

*I always wanted a career in the spotlight. Little did I know that as a disabled woman with a voice and eagerness to help change the world for the better would put me in such a vulnerable position. This led me to experience some of the most awful hate and ableist abuse, which impacted my sense of self-worth and negatively affected my mental health. It's not always so overt as the fallout from my Maltesers ad, either.*

*New Research from non-profit support provider Dimensions has found that a fifth of the public have laughed at someone, called someone names or avoided talking to someone because of their learning disability or autism. Shockingly, 6% of UK adults admit to having physically hurt someone because of their learning disability or autism, which is the equivalent to 3.6million people. You might not be part of that 6% statistic but if you turn a blind eye, you are part of the problem.*

*I am often left saddened and frustrated by the sheer lack of outrage and action taken when it comes to disability hate. Do I want a witch hunt and my allies to become vigilantes? Absolutely not, as I believe hate just adds to more hate. However, I will no longer stand for apathy. If you want to be a friend and ally to disabled folk you need to – first and foremost – educate yourself and those around you.*

*Are you using ableist terminology and slurs? Are you also holding your children accountable if you hear them using degrading terms? Do you even understand what ableism means and how it impacts the lives of disabled people?*

*If the answer to that latter question is ‘no’, educate yourself on the history of ableism until you understand how deep-rooted some of these ideologies are. The systemic ableism surrounds our society like a toxic smog. Whether or not you can see it, it’s still there. Above all, I want you to start to begin the tough work of uncovering your own hidden ableism biases. If a disabled person calls out ableism, please be respectful and understand that it is never too late to unlearn and relearn.*



## **David Holmes – The Boy That Lived**

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2023/oct/25/daniel-radcliffe-produces-film-about-his-paralysed-harry-potter-stunt-double-david-holmes>

David Holmes worked closely with Daniel Radcliffe on the Harry Potter films until he sustained a spinal injury during filming in January 2009. The gymnast from Essex, who was selected to play Radcliffe’s double, broke his neck and was paralysed from the chest down.

A recent documentary, titled David Holmes: The Boy Who Lived, is executive produced by Radcliffe and debuted in November. It features candid personal footage shot over the last decade, behind-the-scenes material from Holmes’s stunt work, scenes of his current life and intimate interviews with Holmes, Radcliffe, and others.

The two form an inextricable bond, but on the penultimate Harry Potters film a tragic accident on set leaves David paralysed with a debilitating spinal injury, turning his world upside down. As Daniel and his closest stunt colleagues rally to support David and his family in their moment of need, it is David’s extraordinary spirit of resilience that becomes their greatest source of strength and inspiration.”

Holmes, who is now 42, has previously revealed details of his tragic accident, which occurred during a flying scene at Warner Bros Studios in Leavesden. In an interview in 2014, he said he was pulled backwards “at speed” by a high-strength wire in a “jerk back” stunt that replicates the effects of an explosion. However, Holmes was launched into a wall and immediately broke his neck.

He has said the new HBO documentary tells the story of not just his achievements in front of the camera, “but also the challenges I face every day, and my overall attitude to life after suffering a broken neck. “In the turbulent world we find ourselves living in right now, I would like to quote Harry: ‘We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided.’”



## Current Scams

<https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>

### Merry Berries

Tis the season to be merry and bright again and, who knows, just possibly we may overspend and overeat. It is also the

busiest time of the year for scammers and they are anticipating our largesse when buying for ourself and for our loved ones.

Bank transfers to the private account of a seller who is new to us is of course fraught with danger. Best by far to avoid this payment method.

Topical are money saving devices, including the high demand / popular air fryers. So the bad guys know this too, we should assume. We should beware also the unjustified claims made about plug in electrical devices that can for sure lower our energy bills; treating them with caution. See details at site.

[www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/professional-resources/product-safety/plug-in-energy-saving-devices/](http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/professional-resources/product-safety/plug-in-energy-saving-devices/)

Black Friday seems to be 50 days long nowadays. With us enticed to grab never to be repeated bargains right up till our preferred white Christmas. Often we are pressurised to buy, “for stocks running out and goods stuck on a huge container ship somewhere.” Well; might even be true, but buying slowly is safest.

Late panic buying online increases our risk for we may not have had enough time to research the seller, looking for signs of a fake website. Even addresses starting with the important https:// do not mean that the site is legitimate or trustworthy. It just means that what we transmit is encrypted and thus others cannot intercept it.

Email offers to us out of the **blue** for goods and services that do not exist are commonplace. We could of course consider buying in a shop! Where we can examine the article. And we know by now that anything far too good to be true is!

May it be sleigh bells ringing in our ears early on 25<sup>th</sup> December and not warning bells about purchases!

You can visit the website ([www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)) or call Action Fraud on 0300 123 20 40.

You can visit the website ([www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)) or call Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133 or 0808 223 1144 for a Welsh-speaking advisor.

If you have received an email which you're not quite sure about, forward it to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS):  
[report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)

You can report spam text messages to your mobile phone provider free of charge by forwarding the text message to 7726.

## **‘Ableist’ Sign Language Criticism On Great British Bake Off** <https://metro.co.uk/2023/11/01/bake-off-tasha-bsl-sign-criticism-ableist-19753434/>

Tasha, from Bristol is the first ever deaf contestant, to take part in the Great British Bake-Off series. The presenters learned British sign language (BSL) to be able to communicate, and Tasha is joined on the show by her BSL interpreter, Daryl.

However, on a recent episode, Tasha’s decision to sign rather than speak inexplicably riled up some people watching along at home. The bakers were tasked with creating botanical inspired spiced buns and then a dessert, with Tasha making an elderflower and hibiscus floral showstopper. But when it came to explaining her cake to the judges, she said *‘I’m going to be signing because I don’t feel comfortable pronouncing quite a few words,’* she shared.

Describing her 10-layer creation, Tasha, with the assistance of Daryl, told the judges more about her ambitious design. After the judges went to speak to some of the other bakers, Tasha signed to the camera as she debated whether or not to reduce the number of layers of her cake, before deciding to get on with the job ahead. However, as this was happening, some viewers questioned why she was choosing not to speak, with one person saying they were ‘confused’ by her decision. But many others quickly jumped in to defend Tasha and her right to communicate how she pleased.

‘The sheer ignorance shown regarding Tasha and why she is mostly using BSL this episode is absolutely staggering,’ one person posted. ‘I implore people who have a similar attitude as this to educate yourself on Deafness/hearing loss before sharing your ill-informed opinion.’ Many others also made sure to share their support and praised her.

‘Delighted to see Tasha using her preferred communication mode of signing during parts of today’s episode of #GBBO. There are many ways to language and all are valid. Delighted to see more representations of diverse language use on the television. Thank you for this, Tasha,’ someone shared.

Ahead of appearing on Bake Off, Tasha said she found it very emotional to see Daryl, among the rest of her co-stars. She went on to explain she couldn’t have competed without him and ‘without the dedication from the show ensuring I had the same access as the other bakers.’



## **Rail Ticket Office Closures In England Scrapped** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-67263931>

Transport Secretary Mark Harper said the government had

asked train operators to withdraw their proposals because they failed to meet high passenger standards. However, a source told the BBC rail bosses were "furious", saying the original plans had been approved by the Department for Transport.

Train companies are under pressure from the government to cut costs. They had argued staff would be better used helping passengers in person, in other areas of the station adding that only 12% of tickets were now bought at station kiosks. But passenger watchdogs Transport Focus and London Travelwatch objected to the proposals, saying they had received 750,000 responses from individuals and organisations in a public consultation. These included "powerful and passionate concerns" about the potential changes, they said. The watchdogs said they had secured significant changes, including getting companies to revert to existing times for when staff would be available at many stations.

A senior rail source told the BBC. "They have been made to sell these plans, defend them and change them to try and get them over the line. All in the face of the inevitable onslaught of criticism. All of these plans were approved by officials and ministers at the DfT. To say they fell short of their expectations is totally disingenuous," the source said.

Labour's shadow transport secretary Louise Haigh called it "shambolic" and a "humiliating climbdown", saying the cancelled plans had been "a colossal waste of taxpayers' money".

The RMT union described the decision as a victory, while TSSA - the union representing rail ticket office workers - said it was delighted.



## **Paralysed By Treatable Disease**

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/health/my-sons-paralysed-treatable-disease-31385073>

Stephanie Tanner-Boyer first noticed baby Freddie was less mobile than peers when he was six months old. Health professionals put it down to simple laziness. But symptoms persisted and aged 12 months Freddie was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy. Stephanie, 32, said: "After a few doses of treatment he began to roll and sit unsupported. Then he could self-propel his own wheelchair. It was life changing."

Due to the family history, younger brother Louis was tested for SMA in the womb. He was positive and so immediately received gene therapy, preventing irreversible nerve damage. Now 21 months, he has no lasting symptoms. A child can get SMA if both parents have a faulty SMN1 gene.

SMN1 produces a protein essential for the nerves linking the brain and spinal cord to muscles. One such child is born every five days in Britain but unless they have an older sibling with SMA, the average age of diagnosis is six months. By then 95% of lower motor neurons will have died, causing difficulties with eating, moving and breathing.

The UK only checks for nine out of 50 serious health conditions. This compares to 48 in Italy, 36 in Russia, 31 in Austria and 29 in Poland and Portugal. The National Screening Committee first considered adding SMA in 2018. Since then, three effective treatments have been developed.

Nurse Stephanie, from Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, said: “We’ve got treatments that are lifesaving and life-changing for kids if we can just diagnose them.”

The Department of Health said: “The UK National Screening Committee has recommended a large-scale study for Spinal Muscular Atrophy screening in newborns. We are also working alongside the Spinal Muscular Atrophy community to enhance understanding.”



## **Ade Adepitan's Childhood Illness**

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/bbc-children-need-ade-adepitans-31452860> As Ade Adepitan prepared to present the 2024 Children In Need, we take a look at the Paralympian's life away from the camera, including the childhood illness that resulted in his disability.

The 50-year-old retired Paralympian has also thrown himself into disability advocacy work and is involved in various organisations that promote sports opportunities for those with disabilities.

For Ade, who was awarded an MBE in 2012 to mark his contribution to disability sports, this is a cause very close to his heart. After discovering wheelchair basketball at the age of 12, he set about forging a career out of his passion and continues to inspire to this day. His road to success has been anything but smooth, however, and Ade has previously spoken candidly about the childhood illness that changed his life forever.

Last November, Ade pledged his support to a NHS polio booster vaccination drive in London, which offered children between the ages of one and nine a polio booster vaccination, after vaccine-derived polio virus was found in sewage water. As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), polio is a disease that mainly affects children under five, and one in every 200 infections will result in irreversible paralysis.

Ade himself contracted polio when he was just 15 months old, resulting in him permanently losing the use of both legs. Urging



parents to make sure they vaccinate their children, Ade said: "Polio can have consequences, which I know all too well. As a small child I contracted polio, I quickly became very unwell, and as a result of the disease taking over my nervous system, I permanently lost the use of my legs. It was life-changing.

"But polio can be completely prevented through vaccination, which is why it is so important that parents book in to get their children a booster jab at their GP or nearest vaccination site as soon as possible. Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself and your children against the disease. To put it simply, if I had been vaccinated when I was exposed to polio, I would not be in a wheelchair now."

In 2013, Ade travelled to Nigeria, the country of his birth, to shoot a Channel 4 documentary about polio entitled Journey Of My Lifetime. Reflecting on the personal significance of the film at the time, Ade said: "Making this film has changed my life. It was always very personal territory for me. When the polio virus attacked me as a baby in Nigeria, it took away any chance of me being able to walk again." Two years after the documentary was released, it was announced that Nigeria, which up until 2012 accounted for more than half of all polio cases globally, was being removed from the Polio-Endemic list in what was described as a 'historic achievement' by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). Today, the illness is now only endemic in two countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan.



### **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)**

**Disability Rights UK 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** – Paper versions of the information bulletins that are received in emails from **Disability Rights (DRUK)** and the **Surrey Adult Social Care Information & Engagement Team** are distributed with the newsletter. If you wish to receive the copies 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

The Surrey Coalition of Disabled People (SCDP) arrange administration and management of the Disability Empowerment Network (DEN) meetings.



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

### North Surrey Meeting Dates 2024 – Dates TBA

covers the areas of Runnymede, Spelthorne, Woking & Surrey Heath.

### Surrey Wide Meeting dates for 2024 – Dates TBA

**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.



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This means you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you're buying. If you haven't signed up to support us yet, it's easy and completely FREE. These donations really help us, so it would

be great if you could take a moment to get started!

You can find our easyfundraising page here:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/spelthorneaccessnow/>?



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

These 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.

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/)

Further details for Spelthorne's Physical, Sensory and Cognitive Disability forum are 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

Our Newsletter project requires new sponsorship every year as demand for paper booklets continues to evolve after the pandemic.

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 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/)



## From A 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/>.

Some of the poems and the, often very poignant, drawings that went with them will be difficult to publish as the local artist who drew them for Richard's book. Electronic versions of Richard's book can be viewed on the Headway website.

## **DREAMS**

*Yes, I'm a dreamer, so what?*

*I've got both cheeks firmly on my chair.*

*Sometimes it's nice to be somewhere else, in another land far out there.*

*We all need to enjoy our dreams of walking, driving cars.*

*Anything and everything is relevant depending on who or what you are.*

*Isn't it funny that dreamers become visionaries when they do? Enough to make their life a success and make their dreams come true.*

*So, if I appear to be miles away, indulging in some optimistic scheme, I may be thanking the man in the sky for the reality of one of my dreams.*

*Then of course there's our fantasies, the sort best kept in our heads, cos if it ever came out what we were thinking about we'd get a hard slap on the leg!*



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