# Monthly What’s On Guide

Welcome to your monthly update of accessible services and events in Bristol, Bath & NE Somerset, and South Gloucestershire. This update mainly covers September 2024.

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# Sight Support Events and Notices

## Bristol Eye Can Exhibition

Our next Eye Can exhibition is only 6 weeks away!

Eye Can Bristol will be held on 9th October from 10am at BAWA, 589 Southmead Rd, Bristol, BS34 7RG.

The event is free to attend and is a one stop shop for all things sight loss related. There will be a wide range of suppliers demonstrating equipment and assistive technology designed to make life easier for anyone living with sight loss. It’s a great chance to try them out and find what works best for you. You will also find local and national organisations offering helpful services. In addition, there will be a range of interesting talks held throughout the day. You can pre-register your place by calling us or using our [Eye Can Bristol Eventbrite sign up page](https://eyecanbristol2024.eventbrite.co.uk/)

This event is sponsored by: [Optelec](https://lowvisionshop.co.uk/) and [Humanware](https://www.humanware.com/en-united_kingdom/home)

## Summer Raffle

We're holding a Summer Raffle, and tickets are now available! You may have received some with the latest issue of Visible magazine. Our goal is to raise over £3,000 for our community sight loss service.

To buy tickets, you can:

* Call our office
* Visit our [Summer Raffle webpage](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/get-involved/raffle/)
* Use the return envelope included with Visible to mail us your ticket stubs and payment. Put your name and postcode or phone number on the first ticket; we'll handle the rest. If it's tricky, just send them back with the letter, and we'll fill them in.

We partner with Wiltshire Sight and Insight Gloucestershire for this raffle. If you live in Bristol, BaNES, or South Gloucestershire, you can choose to support our local efforts.

Want to sell more tickets? Contact our office, and we'll send you some.

Good luck!

## Beginners Smart Phone and Tablet Training

Our last tech course this summer is taking place in September.

We will introduce you to the core skills of using a touch screen device. Learn how to navigate around a device and the features which can make it more accessible to you. Be part of the digital world emailing; messaging, using a digital assistant, and helpful Apps. Our 4-week training will take place at the following venues:

**Mondays in Henleaze 1:30-3:30pm**

2, 9, 16, 23 September

Trinity Church, Waterford Road, Henleaze,BS9 4BT

**Tuesdays in Bath 12:15-2:15pm**

3, 10, 17, 24 September

Good Living St John's Hospital Chapel Court Bath, BA1 1SQ

**Wednesdays in Broadmead 10-12pm**

4,11,18,25 September

Broadmead Baptist Church, Union Street, Bristol BS1 3HY

**Thursdays in Kingswood 10-12pm**

5,12,19, 26 September

The Park Centre, High Street, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 4AR

**Contact Sam Edwards to book your place on 0117 322 4885** [sam.edwards@sightsupportwest.org.uk](mailto:sam.edwards@sightsupportwest.org.uk)

## Could you represent us?

We are receiving more requests for charity representation at events like awareness talks, cheque presentations, and charity engagements. We're also looking to run fundraising stalls at community events like fairs and information days.

We'd love to hear from you if you're interested in helping, whether it's suggesting events, manning a stall, representing us at ceremonies, or becoming a Volunteer Speaker delivering talks to community groups about your personal story as well as increasing audience understanding of visual impairment and the work and impact of Sight Support (training and support are provided).

To learn more, contact Becs at 07849 833 047 or email [volunteering@sightsupportwest.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@sightsupportwest.org.uk)

# Sight Support Hubs and Social Groups

Our sight loss advice hubs provide a space for consultations with your local advisor, offering information, guidance, and advice on equipment and technology. You can explore a selection of helpful aids, and many hubs also offer tech support and training from trained advisors or volunteers. Additionally, most hubs host social groups where you can meet others, share tips and tricks, and enjoy a chat.

For full details of our sight loss advice hubs and social groups, see our website which has the latest information, or you can call our office on 0117 3224885. [Click here for our website hub and social group listings.](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/events/) You can put your postcode in the search bar to find your nearest hub.

## Changes To Note for Upcoming Hubs

* From September, the Henleaze hub will take place the 1st Tuesday, the 3rd of September, rather than the 1st Monday.
* As we have Eye Can Bristol on the 9th of October, our Whitchurch and Chew Valley hubs will be cancelled.

# Events & Notices From Other Organisations

These events and notices are from other organisations. Please check with the contact given that the event is going ahead as planned. Sometimes changes need to be made to dates and times at short notice.

## University of Bath - Research Opportunity

How do social groups support young adults with vision impairment?

“Hi there! I'm Adam, a Master's student at the University of Bath who is looking for participants for an exciting research project. The project will explore how young people with vision impairment have experienced social support and what role these groups have played in their lives.

Those interested must be:

• Aged 18-25,

• Have lived experience of visual impairment

• Have previous or ongoing experience of being involved in a support / social group

Participants will partake in a 45-60 min confidential interview over the phone or online, whenever is convenient for you and will receive**£10 Amazon voucher** for their time.

Feel free to email for more info or to answer any questions: [ajn63@bath.ac.uk](mailto:ajn63@bath.ac.uk)”

## Free Alexa Device from British Wireless for the Blind Fund

People living with sight loss can apply for a free Echo Show or Echo Dot device from the British Wireless for the Blind Fund. To qualify, they need to receive certain disability or income-related benefits and have an internet connection at home. Apply for a free Alexa device here: [Referrals - British Wireless for the Blind Fund](https://blind.org.uk/referrals/)

## Cancer Improvement Collaborative Project

The Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Cancer Improvement Collaborative seeks visually impaired participants who have received cancer care in this area for focus groups. Participants can share their experiences to help improve the cancer care pathway. Contact [shamim.kholwadia@nbt.nhs.uk](mailto:shamim.kholwadia@nbt.nhs.uk) or call 07766 220104 if you or a loved one had this experience.

## Schedule of events at The Bristol Braille Innovation Centre

Inviting Braille users interested in 2D electronic Braille on the Canute Console. Events: Sep 14 (Maps), Oct 5 (Requests, E-Braille). Travel expenses may be covered by Bristol Braille Technology. Contact [stephanie@visionthroughsound.co.uk](mailto:stephanie@visionthroughsound.co.uk) or [bbtenquiries@bristolbraille.org](mailto:bbtenquiries@bristolbraille.org)

## Historic Textiles Research Project

The University of the West of England, Bristol, is digitising historic textiles, focusing on stumpwork embroideries from The Holburne Museum. The project, led by Dr Xavier Aure Calvet, aims to create tactile reproductions for visually impaired audiences. Contact Dr Calvet at [xavi.aurecalvet@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:xavi.aurecalvet@uwe.ac.uk) to join the two focus groups (October and early next year) that will evaluate these reproductions.

## Improving experiences of the NHS for visually impaired people

“Do you get the support you need from the NHS?

Many Visually Impaired (VI) people report being unable to get information such as appointment letters or Patient Information leaflets from their local NHS services in a format they can read and understand independently. Reports also suggest difficulty accessing NHS premises with sometimes inappropriate or even no support from clinical and non-clinical staff when they arrive.

The West of England Sight Loss Council (SLC) and North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT) are working to improve this, and they need your feedback to track progress.

If you've had an appointment or visited NBT sites like Southmead or Cossham Hospitals in the past year, please share your experiences by completing a confidential questionnaire. No personal details are required.

Ways to complete the questionnaire:

* Online: [Microsoft Form: Audit of Visual Impairment Awareness and Support at North Bristol NHS Trust](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=tVkocm0TkU-bLK_RD7ZUnQ9IPaUjVYRJj-WWFFLhNzZUQ1ZYWDVDSFdLMlQ1V0o2MTVKVE9GMkZMUC4u)
* Request different formats: print, large print, Word version, email content, Braille, or by phone with a Patient Experience Team member.

To request a questionnaire, email [Emily.ayling@nbt.nhs.uk](mailto:Emily.ayling@nbt.nhs.uk) or call 0117 414 4573.

Return your responses via:

* Post using a stamped, addressed envelope provided
* Email to the address above
* Braille by post with an "Articles for the Blind" label provided
* Telephone using the number above

Your feedback is vital to improving NHS services for VI people. Thank you.

Heather Armstrong, West of England SLC, Emily Ayling, Head of Patient Experience at NBT”

## Guide Dogs – Free Sighted Guide Training

Guide Dogs offers a range of free sighted guide training, for people looking to learn the basics of guiding adults with sight loss. There are sessions available for the general public, for friends and family of people with sight loss, and for organisations. There is a handy quiz on the website to help people select which session suits them best, and highlights who the sessions are aimed at: [www.guidedogs.org.uk/sightedguiding](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/sightedguiding) You can also contact Guide Dogs on 0800 781 1444.

# Local Leisure and Sporting Activities / Events

For a list of regular sport and leisure groups that don’t change each month and offered by other organisations, please see our website: [Regular sport and leisure groups webpage](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/sport-and-leisure-groups/)

## Emersons Green and Surrounding area audio tour

The Emerson's Green Audio Tour offers a free 3.7-mile walk with audio narration on local history, including mining and royal connections. Starting at Emersons Green Library, the 90-minute tour covers 14 points of interest. **Available until September 31,** 2024. Visit [Emersons Green Audio Tour webpage](http://www.emersonsgreenaudiotour.com) for details**.**

## VIP Reading Group – Bristol Central Library, College Green

The reading group, for visually impaired people takes place on the last Thursday of every month from 10.30 till 12. New members are welcome.

Audio books are chosen by members mainly from RNIB’s talking book service so it’s helpful if you have already signed up. The next books are:

* 26 September – Brooklyn by Colm Toibin
* 31 October –The Outsider by Albert Camus. Or L’Etranger for those who want to read it in French
* 28 November – Yellowface by R F Kuang

For further information please email [vibookgroup.bristol@gmail.com](mailto:vibookgroup.bristol@gmail.com) or ring Katharine Seymour at the Central Library on 07880 069877

## Bathscape Walking Festival

As part of the Bathscape Walking Festival this year, there are a few events that are either aimed at blind and partially sighted people, or where a guide can be arranged.

Becoming Tree - Join Bathscape under the beech trees in Alexandra Park, Bath, for an immersive audio experience, “The Man Who Became a Tree,” by Olaf Stapledon. This session fosters inclusive engagement with nature and is accessible to all, including those with visual impairments. After the listening event, participate in a paid focus group on nature and inclusion. Book your tickets here or contact Lucy Bartlett at [Lucy.Bartlett@bathscape.co.uk](mailto:Lucy.Bartlett@bathscape.co.uk) for assistance: [Becoming Tree Eventbrite booking page](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/becoming-tree-tickets-966014945707)

They also have several other walks where one of their trained guides can be available (on request) to guide someone who wishes to attend. Contact Lucy Bartlett to arrange.

* September 8th 12pm - Pilgrimage with Bath Interfaith Group [Pilgrimage with Bath Interfaith Group Tickets](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bath-interfaith-pilgrimage-tickets-948767407857)
* September 10th 10am - Views and Vistas [Views and Vistas Tickets](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/views-and-vistas-tickets-967561571707)
* September 11th 2pm - Locksbrook: The Making of a Cemetery [Locksbrook: The Making of a Cemetery Tickets](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/locksbrook-the-making-of-a-cemetery-tickets-952489751487)
* September 12th 1pm - Characters of Bath - Famous and Infamous [Characters of Bath - Famous and Infamous Tickets](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/characters-of-bath-tickets-952507695157)
* September 15th 2pm - Sensory Smallcombe [Sensory Smallcombe Tickets](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sensory-smallcombe-tickets-952587443687)
* September 16th 11am - Wellbeing Walk Mondays [Wellbeing Walk Mondays Tickets](https://www.bathscape.co.uk/event/wellbeing-walks-mondays/)
* September 19th 11am - Accessible Wellbeing Walk with Bath Mind [Accessible Wellbeing Walk with Bath Mind Tickets](https://www.bathscape.co.uk/event/accessible-wellbeing-walk/)
* September 20th 2pm - Hidden Corners - The Upper Town [Hidden Corners - The Upper Town Tickets](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hidden-corners-the-upper-town-tickets-941895202907)

## GiveVision Headsets available at FORWARDS Festival

FORWARDS takes place 31st August and 1st September on Bristol Downs.

GiveVision provide low vision headsets designed for individuals with low vision who use magnification tools, and they will be available at FORWARDS. The headsets allow you to view the stage in close and viewing areas are available that take you out of the crowds. GiveVision are looking for people to try out the headsets. Contact Joanna Liddington [joanna@givevision.co.uk](mailto:joanna@givevision.co.uk)

**Sleight of Hand by VI Artist Jo Bannon Heads to Southbank Centre!**

As part of Unlimited 2024, Bristol VI artist Jo Bannon presents Sleight of Hand at Southbank Centre, London, 7-8 September, 2-5pm. This tactile installation invites audiences to explore unknown objects, blending audio description, choreography, and immersive ASMR soundscapes. The installation is accessible to both sighted and non-sighted audiences, with guiding and audio description available. For more on access, email [accesslist@southbankcentre.co.uk](mailto:accesslist@southbankcentre.co.uk) or call 020 3879 9555. Book tickets: [Sleight of Hand webpage](https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/jo-bannon-sleight-of-hand/)

## Westonbirt the National Arboretum at Tetbury

Join visually impaired guides for Sensing Nature and Wellbeing Walks at Westonbirt Arboretum, held every Friday at 11:30 am from April to September. Enjoy an immersive sensory experience, exploring trees through non-visual senses. Walks last 1.5 hours and are free after admission. Meet at the Welcome Building. Wear suitable outdoor clothing; some paths are off-road. Assistance dogs only. Contact 0300 067 4890 or email [customerrelations@forestryengland.uk](mailto:customerrelations@forestryengland.uk)  for more information. Westonbirt National Arboretum Westonbirt Tetbury Gloucestershire GL88QS.

# Support Groups and Courses

For a list of regular support groups offered by other organisations that take place locally and online, see our website: [Webpage for regular support groups and services](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/support-groups-and-services/)

## Bath Macular Group

On 18th September The Bath Macular Group will meet at 2.0pm in The Bubble at St Johns Foundation behind The Cross Bath The speaker will be The Chaplain at St Johns, Rev Jacky Wise. She will talk about her varied work at St Johns.

## Retina UK Groups

**‘Talking’ Tech Peer Support Group**

Thursday 29th August 7pm - 8pm They will discuss assistive technology used in the kitchen to celebrate National Cooking Day. Share your experiences, tips, and tech know-how on talking kitchenware, appliances, and cooking apps that boost confidence and skills. Whether you're a kitchen pro or a beginner, everyone is welcome!

Register now on this link [Retina UK Peer Support Group](https://retinauk.org.uk/event/bristol-bath-wilts-local-peer-support-group/)

Call [0300 111 4000](tel:0300%20111%204000) or contact [Mark.Baxter@retinauk.org.uk](mailto:Mark.Baxter@retinauk.org.uk) for more information.

# Local Audio Described Arts Events

## Galleries and Museums

### Arnolfini Gallery

**What Are You Looking At?** is a film that follows visual artist Angela Charles and her story of unexpectedly losing her sight, and her experience of ‘coming out’ as a blind artist after years of hiding it. There will be a preview event with an opportunity to meet the artist - and filmmaker Liberty Smith - on Friday 13 September, 7pm to 8:30pm. The film will then be shown on loop across the weekend, 11am to 6pm.

**16th November 7.30 to 9pm Plantation A . . .** is an experimental sonic theatre work by composer Edward Jessen. It is presented by London-based Phaedra Ensemble with Polish soprano Anna Pych and movement artist Iris Athanasiadi. It has been developed with Bristol-based movement artist Holly Thomas as Audio Description and Access Consultant.

[Plantation A at Arnolfini webpage](https://arnolfini.org.uk/whatson/plantationa/)

And a bit further away, but we've also just scheduled our AD Tours for the upcoming autumn show for 23rd November & 25th January and it would be lovely to see you again!

Sighted guides available. Complimentary tea and coffee served in the café bar Free event. But please email [community@arnolfini.org.uk](mailto:community@arnolfini.org.uk) to book a space.

### Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

**Audio Described Tour for Adults**

28 August, 6:00pm – 8:45pm

Celebrating John Constable’s iconic painting The Hay Wain, currently on loan from The National Gallery. There will be an opportunity to handle items from the museum’s collection linked to the exhibition.

[Eventbrite link - Adult Tickets](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/constable-in-bristol-truth-to-nature-audio-described-tour-tickets-928515403567?aff=oddtdtcreator)

Email [steven.bradley@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:steven.bradley@bristol.gov.uk) or call 0117 922 3571 with your contact details and reason for calling.

### Royal West of England Academy

There are 2 VI Tours planned for the 171st Open Exhibition on:

* Friday 18 October – from 3 – 4.30 and
* Saturday 14 December 10.30 – 12.00

As always there will be a variety of works on show - many of which can be handled. Refreshments available after the tour.

Please say whether you will bring a sighted companion or need a volunteer guide. To book: email: [ellen.pye@rwa.org.uk](mailto:ellen.pye@rwa.org.uk) or call 0117 973 5129 and say whether you will bring a sighted companion or need a volunteer guide.

### Art on Mondays, Victoria Art Gallery, Bath

Meet monthly at Victoria Art Gallery for coffee, biscuits, and a talk by curatorial staff or a visiting speaker on exhibitions and topics from their collections. Sessions run from 10am to 11am. Meet at the Accessible Entrance on Bridge Street.

Upcoming talks:

* 9 Sep 2024 at the Roman Baths: Meliha Hussain on "Bathing Beauties"
* 21 Oct 2024: Dr Michael Rowe on 18th & 19th-century antique moulded China.

To book, call 01225 477232.

## Theatres

### Bristol Hippodrome

* 27 September – Rambert Dance Company in: Peaky Blinders the Redemption of Thomas Shelby
* 11 October – An Inspector Calls
* 21 November – Mary Poppins
* 2 January – Goldilocks and the 3 Bears

Book touch tours separately. Contact Access for All service - email [bristoladmin@theambassadors.com](mailto:bristoladmin@theambassadors.com" \t "_blank) or call the access booking line 0333 009 5399 for tickets

### Bristol Old Vic

* 26 October – Reverberation – A powerful play about loneliness and longing. Originally set in Connecticut and now restaged in London – this is its European premiere
* 16 November – Never let me Go based on the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro
* 21 December – The Little Mermaid

Contact the Box office on – 0117 987 7877

### Bath - Theatre Royal

* 29 August – The History Boys by Alan Bennett
* 18 December and 11 January – Snow White

Contact the box office on 01225 448844

Be part of the first Theatre Royal Bath Radio Play Project!

Join Theatre Royal Bath / Engage's Radio Play Project this August and September. Led by BBC Radio 4's Paul Dodgson, you'll learn to write or perform in a short audio play, produced and recorded with Theatre Royal Bath Engage actors. No previous experience is needed!

For more information and joining info, contact Katherine Lazare at 01225 823433 or visit [Theattre Royal Radio Drama Project webpage](https://www.theatreroyal.org.uk/events/play-back-writing-radio-drama/)

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Tel 0117 322 4885, Email [info@sightsupportwest.org.uk](mailto:info@sightsupportwest.org.uk)

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