



# Kingston Independent

Autumn 2009

Dear Readers

I can hardly believe a year has now past since I joined the KCIL team. Over this time, staff and volunteers have worked extremely hard to ensure our members and users received quality services. Whether we're providing information and advice, supporting people to live independently through creative use of Direct Payments or producing our information-packed quarterly newsletter, we have been totally focussed on quality improvement and this has been clearly evident in our achievements this year.

Our major achievement was retaining our Investors in People Award . A lot of work went into getting KCIL back up to standard, and the staff team were delighted when we received the Award in February.

**Achievements:** Another milestone for KCIL was being chosen to work in partnership with RBK to develop brokerage and support planning services for personal budget holders. This project was also part of an NHS programme to accelerate excellence in partnership working. We recently showcased the Kingston Brokerage Project at the NHS London World Class Commissioning Conference. The Royal Borough of Kingston was highlighted as being the only one of thirteen local authority areas in London to team up with a Third Sector partner to deliver their World Class Commissioning Project.

KCIL has now appointed a Project Development Worker who, over the next few months, will be gathering information from potential service users and Brokerage Consortium members in order that service users and other stakeholders' input will be pivotal to shaping the development of the service.

**Developments:** Since I last wrote to you, we have made significant developments with our new website. Working in partnership with Illuminate, our web developer, Superhighways and a team of dedicated volunteers we have now started to upload content to the new website. Inside this newsletter you will hear from our volunteer photographer, who has been out and about putting Kingston "in the frame" for the site.

We plan to launch the new website in January 2010; however before that we would like to carry out some user testing, especially around accessibility issues. We are particularly keen to include people with visual impairments in the testing process. If you are interested in being involved in testing the new website please contact me at the KCIL office.

**KCIL Membership:** I am really pleased to report that despite the introduction of a fee, we currently have the same number of members we had this time last year. I would like to thank you all for supporting us and for all your additional donations. We will work hard to ensure that we provide high quality services to you and our service users, and with your continued support we will achieve this aim.

**And finally.....** I hope you enjoy this edition of Kingston Independent. As you see we have kept the new format, thanks to your fantastic reviews.

Best regards,

Theo  
CEO

**Contents:**

<b>Introducing KCIL's Patron</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Accessible Transport</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Blue Badge Appeals</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>DLA Feature</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Big Care Debate</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Mobility Memories</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>DP News</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Reaching the Community</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Hate Crimes</b>	<b>19</b>

## Introducing our new Patron, Miss Ann Macfarlane OBE

KCIL is delighted to announce the appointment of Miss Ann MacFarlane OBE as its new Patron. Ann Macfarlane has been involved in the disability movement for many years and she is currently a Disability Rights and Equalities consultant specialising in health and social care in relation to disabled adults and older people. She is renowned for her commitment to local community organisations and has been involved with KCIL since its inception.

I recently asked Ann to share some of her experiences with our readers so that you get a better understanding of why she was the chosen to be a key representative of the organisation.

### Give a brief summary of your experiences of being disabled in Kingston back in the early days

The only useful legislation was the Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970. This came onto the statute books over two years after the formation of KCIL. The main focus in those days was on access as Kingston town centre and other areas of the Borough were extremely inaccessible. Wycliffe Noble who founded KCIL was an architect and spent much of his career focusing on environmental barriers that affected disabled people. His specialty was housing and we spent time studying and working on how KCIL could make a difference. There was also nowhere that disabled people could get information about any issue that affected their lives.

I attended the first 'day centre' (in effect, one room) in a converted private house in New Malden. Space was at a premium, the place was far from hygienic and we spent our one afternoon a week making cane baskets and soft toys. I was permanently bored and we all moaned about working conditions. Finally, I suggested my usual ploy to try to get

change, and that was to write a letter. The group wanted me to write it, which I did, and I signed it - that was my mistake.

Too little consultation and involvement! The letter produced an instant response and I was called before the Medical Officer of Health to answer for my indiscretion. I told him that while he had comfortable working conditions, that included an oak desk and carpeting, disabled people were working in dirty conditions. He came out to where the group were sitting and they all denied they had anything to do with the letter. They were obviously scared that the two hours a week that they were able to leave their homes would be taken from them. I left the group and two weeks later, the mud path that had caused people to fall was cemented, new tables were installed and chipped crockery was replaced. So began my political awareness.



### How have things changed for disabled people in Kingston borough?

KCIL's Access Group worked hard to produce change, and eventually in 2003, the Borough finally appointed an Access Officer. Wycliffe Noble recognised the need for the Organisation to give information and despite a miniscule grant from the Borough we negotiated with the United Reformed Church in Kingston to provide office space. This was the beginning of their awareness of the wider community and we eventually had more office space within the building for many years. This opened up our organisation to the community. Previously all the administrative, day-to-day work, had been managed in my home. The International Year of Disabled People in 1981 gave many opportunities to give presentations and there were many meetings where disability issues began to be discussed.

Disabled people within KCIL brought a 'political' edge to the organisation that the Borough and community could not ignore. With disabled people working nationally and with Government, local groups began to take on the full range of issues and many changes slowly began to come to fruition, such as adult education, access to housing opportunities, health and social care advancements and particularly social care with the introduction of 'indirect' payments for which Baroness Jane Campbell and I wrote the Council's policy.

### **What can we as an organisation learn from this?**

Disabled people need to get involved if we want lasting change and improvements. Hard-fought-for improvements quickly backslide if pressure lessens. We must keep abreast of legislation and policy and make sure we get the most from it. We need to find ways to involve younger disabled people. They do not realise why their input is required because there is now better access and more opportunities, but we have learned through setting up 'Young, Disabled and Positively Artistic' that segregation is still a huge issue for younger disabled people. We continue to have many segregated schools in Kingston and there are other ways in which disabled young people are denied equality of opportunity. Disabled people need to understand the reasons why coming together is important and the benefits they can bring, not just for themselves but for the whole community. What benefits us, benefits everybody. We need to join with other organisations to work on issues that affect many different groups.

### **Tell me briefly about how you first got involved with KCIL and the work that you did for the organisation over the years?**

I think I have answered part of this question above. I spent a great deal of time fundraising, accepting speaking engagements, attending meetings and running the information service. When I 'retired' from work on health grounds I had

even more time to devote to KCIL. I have had most of the major roles within the organisation and came into KCIL at a time when disabled people were not on anyone's agenda, so it was easy to see the need and what was required. There was so much to do and one of my failings was not to give time to involve more disabled people. There were so many issues and many individual problems that people needed help to solve. This continues to be a priority today.

### **Why do you want to be a patron and how do you see your role developing?**

KCIL invited me to be Patron which came as a surprise. I believe organisations can benefit from 'Patrons' if they are used appropriately. Having Patrons who act only as a figurehead can provide focus for an organisation. However, I think the role has to have more purpose and I hope that I, together with KCIL, will work out the benefits the label will bring. I have always believed passionately in user-led, user controlled organisations, and KCIL is dear to my heart. I was there at the beginning and now as an older woman, I know there is still much to achieve. The work load is large, it requires working together to achieve change, so I hope the role and the person will bring some 'added value!'

Ann Macfarlane OBE  
October 2009

KCIL recognises that our achievements over the years would not have been possible without the hard work and commitment of those people involved in the early ground-breaking days of the organisation.

Ann mentioned some of them in her article but I would also like to acknowledge a number of other people that Ann mentioned with fond memories: -

Alan Pinn  
Bill Mutimer

Joyce Oliver  
Frank Speller

## Accessible Transport in Kingston A KCIL and Transport for All Event

On 10<sup>th</sup> September Transport for All, in partnership with KCIL, hosted an Accessible Transport event for residents of Kingston and Richmond. Faryal Velmi, Director of Transport for All, gave an overview of accessible transport across London and outlined the work that Transport for All are doing to ensure that the accessible transport needs of disabled and older people are integral to transport policy development across Greater London.

Theo Harris, CEO of KCIL, highlighted the fact that disabled people and older adults are least likely to have access to private transport, making the need for appropriate accessible transport a priority. She also talked about the fundamental requirements of a good transport systems being flexibility, punctuality, variety, comfort and the ability to guarantee a return journey (otherwise why leave home at all?).

**“I am missing Capital Call; I can’t use taxis as my wheelchair is too large,”**  
KCIL service user.

Many of KCIL’s users have previously raised their concern about the fact that the Capital Call service was able to meet all of their basic needs. The cars were much more comfortable; they could take longer trips and book a return journey at the same time as booking their outward journey. In addition, the service was provided by locally based private hire firms and so the company/driver was likely to know the individuals personally and be aware of their specific access needs.

With the recent loss of two very popular accessible transport services, Kingston Enterprise and Capital Call (as of the end of September 2009), many older and disabled people will find that they have lost some of these very crucial basic requirements. With the loss of variety of accessible transport many

disabled people and older adults are now no longer able to access as many local facilities or enjoy trips to the seaside as they did before.

**“I’m not happy with the Dial-A-Ride service and now with the loss of Capital Call I won’t be able to get out and about anymore,”**  
KCIL service user.

Recently, a service user and Capital Call member informed us that her experiences of using Dial-A-Ride have been so bad that she cannot contemplate ever using the service again. Also her ComCab Taxis arrive with so much already on the meter that she can not afford even the shortest journeys. At KCIL we are concerned that the lack of quality and affordable accessible transport now available in Kingston is likely to have a huge negative impact on the lives of many of our members and service users, with many of them losing contact with family and friends. Thus, it is increasingly likely more disabled and older people will now experience social exclusion.

The Dial-A-Ride experience is a huge issue locally, with one carer attending the transport event being appalled at having to wait over two hours for a Dial-A-Ride van to collect her teenaged child from school. A quote from a recent article in a West London newspaper shows that the Kingston experience of the service is similar to that in other boroughs, “A free transport service for people with a disability is failing its users by refusing one in every 10 requests, according to the latest figures. During April and June, Transport for London’s Dial-a-Ride service made 16,863 trips, compared with 21,017 requested.”

At KCIL we are concerned that accessible transport options in Kingston have been reduced. Furthermore, the accessible services that remain provide poor value for money or are of a very poor standard. Disabled and older people in Kingston want to lead fully independent lives and to do this many of them

will require greater choice and flexibility from the accessible transport services on offer.

Faryal Velmi was quoted by the Surrey Comet as promising, “.....when the Mayor of London draws up his strategy for accessible transport in the autumn, Transport for All will be lobbying for money for Kingston Enterprise, which stopped taking elderly people to shops and on social outings after a funding shortfall earlier this year.”

KCIL would like hear from people who use accessible transport services in Kingston. Is the current provision enabling you to get out and about in the borough? Can you travel further afield without having to pay much more than with Capital Call? Are you able to travel

to the airport or mainline stations from Kingston? Please let us know by contacting the KI editor at enquiries@kcil.org.uk or by phoning us on 0208546 9603.

**“We have heard about people being told to be ready by 5am for a 9am appointment,”** Transport for All on hospital transport in Kingston.

## Blue Badge Appeals in Kingston Borough

KCIL was recently invited to sit on the Panel that hears appeals from people living in Kingston borough who have been refused a discretionary Blue Badge for parking.

Following a government review of the Blue badge Scheme, in February 2009 Kingston council approved recommendations to introduce a new process for assessing entitlement to Blue Badges and a procedure for appealing against decisions to refuse applications.

There is a two stage appeal process when an application for a Blue Badge has been refused. The first stage is a review by officers who have not been involved in the original assessment. The second stage is an appeal to the Panel on which I sit (as the KCIL representative), whose terms of reference are to review the decision taken by members against an applicant's eligibility for a Blue Badge.

The panel is made up of elected members of RBK (Councillors). They consider each case and then agree on the decision by taking a vote. KCIL does not have a vote and my role is more as an advisor to the elected members. I can bring my life-time experience of disability and how it affects my ability to get around and relate it to the appeals that take place. In this way I can ask questions of those appealing that when answered will, hopefully, give an insight to the members on the Panel that make the decisions.

The first meeting took place recently and there were two appellants. One decision to refuse a Blue Badge was upheld by the Panel but the other one was overturned and this person will now be issued a Blue Badge. The next meeting is due this month and will hear another two appeals. I shall keep you updated in future editions of the newsletter of proceedings at these meetings.

Robert Reilly



## Who can claim Housing & Council Tax Benefit?

By Corinne Singleton, Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Anyone who has to pay rent or council tax for their home can claim. It does not matter if you rent from a Housing Association, the council, a private individual or company. Boarders, lodgers and people in hostels can also claim. However, if you are living with a member of your immediate family and paying them rent, you cannot claim Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit.

You must be on a low income to claim Housing and Council Tax Benefit, but you can claim regardless of whether:

- you are in work or not
- you are employed or self-employed
- you do not receive any other benefits
- you are single or have a partner
- you are a pensioner
- you have not paid any National Insurance contributions

### What happens if I get other benefits?

You can claim other benefits in addition to Council Tax and Housing Benefit. If you are claiming Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance (IB) or Guaranteed Pension Credit, you can get maximum Housing and Council Tax benefit.

Certain benefits for disabled people are fully disregarded as income. These include:

- attendance allowance
- disability living allowance care and mobility components

Other benefits, allowances and tax credits are taken into account in full when deciding your eligibility for Council Tax and Housing Benefit.

**Benefits Calculator** - Use our own online service at: [www.kingston.gov.uk](http://www.kingston.gov.uk), and select 'benefits' from the menu on the right hand side of the page to get an idea of how much Housing and Council Tax Benefit you maybe entitled to.

**To find out more about claiming call our Customer Services on: 020 8547 – 5198**

Phone lines are open between:

8.45am – 5pm (Monday to Thursday)

8.45am – 4.45 (Friday)

Or go to: [www.kingston.gov.uk](http://www.kingston.gov.uk) and select 'benefits' from the menu on the right hand side of the page for an online claim form and guidance.

**You can help ....**

**STOP**

**HOUSING  
BENEFIT FRAUD**

**NOW!**

**CALL OUR CONFIDENTIAL  
HOTLINE: 020 8547 5700**

# Appealing against my Disability Living Allowance Award

By Jane Young



Appealing against a Disability Living Allowance (DLA) decision is a nerve-wracking experience for anyone, so I thought I should share my recent success at the social security tribunal in Sutton. I hope this will encourage others

who might be contemplating an appeal against a benefits decision.

The background is that I have received Higher Rate Mobility Component (HRMC) of DLA since 1995. For several years I didn't dare to make another application to see if I could get any care component, just in case the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) decided to take away my HRMC and with it, of course, my adapted Motability car! However, last year, as my condition had deteriorated markedly, I decided that I should 'bite the bullet' and made a fresh application. At the time, Justine Hogg was working at KCIL as a benefits adviser, so I asked her to check my application form. She said it was well written and that in her opinion I should get the middle rate care component.

Several weeks after sending my application I received my award notice stating that I had been awarded HRMC again (thank goodness!) and the lowest rate care component, for an indefinite period. On Justine's advice I wrote to ask for the decision to be looked at again, but in April this year, the DWP replied to say that the original decision was correct.

Just before she left KCIL, Justine advised me to appeal. I went ahead with the support of a good friend who himself receives DLA and who I named as my witness. A couple of weeks before the appeal date I submitted my latest care plan from RBK social services and a supporting letter from my GP as extra evidence. The appeal took place on Monday 10 August at the tribunal offices in Sutton.

The Chair of the tribunal was a lawyer and she was accompanied by a doctor and a 'carer member' (disability expert). I was immediately struck by the informality of the setting (sitting at a table) and the kindly approach of the Chair, who took the notes. The Chair explained, to my great relief, that they were not going to consider the mobility component as this was not disputed. The Chair explained what was going to happen and then the doctor grilled me about my condition and my medication. At the time I was rather worried as I didn't get the impression that he was convinced about my clinical condition and my complex cocktail of medication, but I answered the questions as best I could.

After the doctor had finished grilling me, the disability expert talked me through the details of a typical day and night. Both he and the Chair gave me the impression that they were 'on my side' – for example, they were making suggestions about how someone might help me with some of the activities I find difficult. Finally, when they asked me if there was anything else I wanted to say, I asked my friend Adam, as my witness, to give his impression of how my condition affects me. The hearing was then over and we were asked to wait in the waiting room while the panel made their decision.

After a few minutes we were called back. In front of where I had been sitting at the table, there was a typed decision notice, saying that the tribunal had awarded me HRMC and the **highest** rate care component for an indefinite period! I was so stunned that I asked the Chair if she was sure (silly thing to say really, but I was really surprised!) and she reassured me that they don't make these decisions lightly.

Having considered the whole process, I can now see why the tribunal decision was so different from the DWP's original decision. The decision-makers at the DWP had taken the view that whilst I have difficulties during

the day and during the night, I do not need help from another person, apart from cooking a main meal, showering and dressing. The reason the tribunal awarded me the highest rate care component was that when questioning me they came to the conclusion that I need help 'frequently throughout the day' and for at least 20 minutes at night. Naturally I don't dwell on my problems, but when questioned closely my care needs became apparent.

It's interesting to reflect that there is a very high success rate among claimants who appeal and appear in person before the

tribunal. Certainly in my case I felt supported by the tribunal members in a way I didn't expect, and it was clear they wanted to come to the right decision for me and weren't thinking about 'saving money'. I would encourage anyone, who genuinely feels that their DLA award does not reflect their actual needs, to have the courage to appeal and let the tribunal members make their own decision on the correct level of award. I'm very glad I did – even though if I hadn't had my friend's support I would almost certainly have 'chickened out' at the last minute!

---

## Where is the nearest Blue Badge parking space?

The latest new development for all those people who are into having technology at their finger tips will be particularly useful for Blue Badge



holders. The Public Information Exchange (PIE) and a GPS (global positioning system) software developer have produced the first dedicated Blue Badge sat-nav solution for disabled drivers and their carers. The Blue Badge Nav (BBNav) includes all of the features found on a standard sat-nav but has been enhanced to provide detailed information to support Blue Badge holders.

### Key features include:

- Over 6000 points of interest with disabled access including accessible accommodation
- Over 10,000 Blue Badge and Red Route parking bays
- 3,500 disabled-accessible car parks
- On-street disabled parking bays
- Navigate directly to blue badge parking bays
- Find disabled accessible car parks

- Mapping showing council zone parking rules
- On map local council Blue Badge parking concessions
- Seven digit postcode routing
- Dedicated helpline support
- Blue tooth hands free for mobile phone users

### Extra features:

- Forum of Mobility Centres
- Shopmobility locations
- Accessible beaches
- Wheely boat locations

This has revolutionised parking for disabled people who also hold a blue badge as you can now programme your sat-nav to take you to the nearest "disabled" parking space.

The system needs to be constantly updated as "disabled" parking spaces do get reallocated or relocated and the producers need your help to keep the system up to date and accurate. Anyone can add parking spaces that are missing by going online at: [www.BlueBadgeParking.com](http://www.BlueBadgeParking.com).

Have you used the new BBNav or do you know someone who has? Have you tried to update information about parking spaces online? Please contact the KI Editor at the KCIL office if you would like to share your BBNav experience with other readers.

# The Big Care Debate

By Jane Young

Many of you may be aware by now that the Government has recently published a Green Paper on the future of social care, 'Shaping the Future of Care Together'. This has sought to kick-start a national debate on the key issues discussed in the Green Paper, which include:

- More people living longer and needing care in later life
- Rising expectations, as people demand greater choice and control in their lives
- Wide variations in the provision of social care offered by different local authorities
- Stretched resources used on people whose care needs are highest rather than on keeping people independent and well for longer
- Perceived unfairness that many older people have to use all their savings and sell their house to pay for their care
- Lack of support and advice for those funding their own care

The debate is running until 13 November 2009 and there are several ways of taking part. All the options for taking part in the debate are available at the dedicated Care and Support website: <http://careandsupport.direct.gov.uk/> and for those who don't use the internet the relevant documents can be requested by calling the Department of Health publications orderline on 0300 123 1003 or writing to: DH Publications Orderline, PO Box 777, London SE1 6XH. The documents available include the full Green Paper, an executive summary and an easy read version.

Having looked at the website myself and considered the different ways of getting involved, I've decided that the simplest way of telling the Government what you think is by using the online questionnaire at <http://careandsupport.direct.gov.uk/questionnaire/>. However, if you want to read

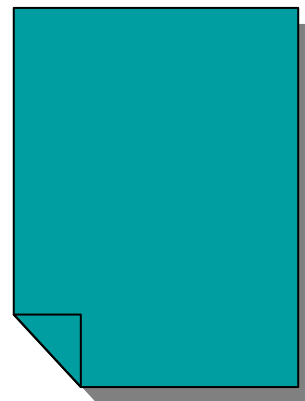
and comment on the document in more detail you can access the Green Paper online at

<http://careandsupport.direct.gov.uk/greenpaper/execsum/> (this link gives you access to all the Green Paper sections, not just the Executive Summary). Comments made on the green paper online are published, so you can see what other people have said about the different chapters.

As a disabled person in my late forties, I find some of the specific issues in the debate of particular interest. Of most interest is the idea of a National Care Service, which should go some way towards solving one of the most difficult problems of the current system of social care – that disabled people are unable to move house to another part of the country (for example, to be closer to their family) because there is no guarantee that their care needs will be met in their new local authority area. For this and other reasons, I personally am in favour of the Government's proposal of a National Care Service.

Although the Government is proposing a National Care Service, the funding of this is likely to be very different from the NHS. Many people are unhappy that the option of funding the national care service by direct taxation has been excluded from the debate. The Government's reason for this decision is that funding by direct taxation places an unfair burden on people of working age. As a disabled person of working age myself my view is that the option of funding social care by taxation should at least be considered. It seems that this view is shared by several people who have posted comments on the website.

There are several other proposals that cause concern. For example, buried in the Green Paper is a suggestion that some disability benefits (Attendance Allowance is used as an



example and Disability Living Allowance is included by implication) be integrated into a new care and support system. Although this sounds logical, we won't know until it's up and running how fair and flexible the national care service will be. For this reason my own view is that any integration of disability benefits into the new system should be delayed pending implementation of the system and further specific consultation. Several responses on the website indicate that people place a high value on a benefit which can be spent on anything and therefore enables people to find the best ways for them of meeting their disability-related needs.

There are many other issues raised in the Green Paper and there isn't room to discuss them all here. However, I would encourage everyone to take an interest in the Big Care Debate, as it could have a major impact on how disabled and older people have their care needs met in the future. Even if we have a change of government next year, the rising cost of meeting the care needs of older people in particular will ensure that this debate will still be relevant for some time yet.

### Update on 'Shaping the Future of Care Together'



The Secretary of State for Health, Andy Burnham, has made it clear that Disability Living Allowance for the Under 65s will not be affected by Government plans to create a National Care Service.

Speaking at the National Children and Adult Services Conference in Harrogate, Andy Burnham MP said: "I am encouraged by the response to our Big Care Debate and welcome the fact that other political parties are beginning to put their ideas on the table. There are big differences between what we are saying but we are beginning to create what I wanted to see - unstoppable momentum for legislation in the next Parliament.

"But, while the debate is moving quickly, I do want to stress that the door is wide open for discussion. We are still in a consultation period. No decisions have been made on funding options. We are still listening – about funding, about structures, and about how to build a forward-looking system of care.

"The important principle is that people receiving any of the relevant benefits at the time of reform would continue to receive an equivalent level of support and protection under a new and better care and support system.

"And let's not forget, everyone - regardless of wealth or asset base – will benefit from the protection and piece of mind that the National Care Service will provide."

### KCIL's AGM 20th October 2009

Close to eighty people joined KCIL's staff, volunteer and trustees to acknowledge and celebrate KCIL's achievements over the last year.

After the lively debates of the AGM business session, members of the Kingston Learning Disability Parliament gave an presentation outlining their work to bring about positive change to the lives of people with learning disabilities in Kingston. Theo Harris, KCIL CEO, then gave a preview of the new interactive website which will be launched early in the New Year. She also highlighted KCIL's most recent achievements and shared the organisation's plans for future service development.

The event ended with a brief presentation of the Mayor's Plan for London and a Call to Action. Consultation on the London Plan ends on 12th January 2010. You can read the plan and **have your say** by visiting: [www.london.gov.uk/shaping-london](http://www.london.gov.uk/shaping-london)



KCIL's AGM 2009

## Assisted Performances

October - December

**ROSE  
THEATRE**  
Kingston



### BEDROOM FARCE

Audio described - 31 October 2pm. Touch tour 12.30pm

Signed by Donna Ruane of Theatresign - 27 November 7.30pm

Peter Hall directs Alan Ayckbourn's legendary farce which shines a brilliant spotlight onto the trials and tribulations of suburban marriage.

### MISS JULIE

STAGETEXT Captioned - 20 November 7.30 pm

Audio described - 21 November 2pm. Touch tour 12.30pm

Miss Julie longs to escape the ties imposed by her position as the daughter of a Count. One midsummer night she embarks on a turbulent affair with her father's manservant, Jean, and finds herself caught in a desperate struggle.



### SKELLIG

Audio described - 5 December 2.30pm. Touch tour 1pm

Signed by Paula Cox of Theatresign - 5 December 2.30pm

David Almond's eerie and magical story comes alive on the stage which everyone aged 7 - 107 will want to experience.

### TREASURE ISLAND

Signed by Donna Ruane of Theatresign - 30 December 7.30pm

STAGETEXT Captioned - 8 January 7.30pm

Audio described - 9 January 2.30pm. Touch tour 1pm

The whole theatre will be magically transformed into a pirate's paradise for this year's family show.



## MALCOLM JOHNSON & CO



**ACCIDENT & INJURY  
SOLICITORS IN  
SURBITON**

Suite 13  
Claremont House  
22-24 Claremont Rd  
Surbiton  
KT6 4QU

**020 8399 5272**

[www.mjsol.co.uk](http://www.mjsol.co.uk)

[enquiries@mjsol.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@mjsol.co.uk)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



**Lexcel**  
Practice Management Standard  
Law Society Accredited



## Some Mobility Memories

### Jane Lawrence

The older among you (and I count myself as such), will remember with great clarity, and either affection or exasperation, the "Noddies" of yesteryear. They were those quaint blue (or green) three wheelers, which superseded the open black tricycles and which were supplied by the former 'Ministry of Health'.

The Noddy I eventually had (after much haggling with 'the Ministry' about whether I would be able to have anything at all), was an electrically powered AC. This had the staggering top speed of 10 mph (12 mph going DOWN Hammersmith Flyover!) and was powered by six 12 volt batteries and one six volt battery (for lights, horn, windscreen wipers etc.) During my five or so years of driving this vehicle I notched up some 6,000 miles, or approximately 600 hours of driving time!

Then, despite the disability lobby's best efforts and much campaigning to achieve true choice for disabled drivers, the Government of the day decided that it had had enough of the problems associated with supplying vehicles, and it announced in 1976 that invalid tricycles would gradually be phased out, and a Mobility Allowance would be payable to any person meeting the criteria. This of course was really great news for those who for one reason or another had not been able to take advantage of the trike, but was perhaps not such good news at the time for those who had never aspired to driving a four-wheeled car, but, nevertheless needed practical mobility.

In the Sixties I joined the then Disabled Drivers' Association, and more particularly the local Thames Valley Group of that Association. This DDA (not to be confused with the Disability Discrimination Act!) has been proud of its history of campaigning on behalf of those with impaired mobility. For the last 58 years, the Thames Valley Group has played its part in this history, hosting driving rallies, treasure hunts, inter-group activities etc., and doing all

in its power to help with campaigning, and keeping its members informed of everything going on in the world of mobility. Over the years, the emphasis has changed slightly,



A car like Jane's "Noddy Car"

from being clearly directed towards drivers, to including all those who use the roads and/or public transport of any sort. In other words, most DDA members saw the Association (and Thames Valley Group) as being the fount of good information for those with mobility impairments.

Sadly, a decision was taken several years ago to merge the Disabled Drivers' Association with the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club, and Mobilise emerged. Gradually the relationship between groups and the Board of Directors has changed and local groups have now found themselves marginalised. There is no longer room for integrated groups and Thames Valley Group finds itself forced into being an affiliated group with little official status. However, such is our pride in our own work that we have decided to carry on with a new name and a new constitution. Our Inaugural Meeting is on October 31<sup>st</sup> when, with the agreement of the Meeting, we shall become Wheels on Fire (Thames Valley). The name was chosen as it is the name of the group magazine/newsletter.

On a more personal note, I can report that that after taking, and passing at first attempt, my driving test in a Vauxhall Viva, with hand controls, I enjoyed many years of happy motoring. I went on to drive a Viva Estate (more practical than a saloon when I had a husband who was also a wheelchair user), a much loved Triumph 2000 estate which lasted us 17 years, and then my dream car, a VW Passat Estate. Although I no longer drive, I own and enjoy a somewhat elderly Mercedes Vito with tail lift, and enjoy motoring

with those friends who are not deterred by its size.

Finally and briefly, I need to flag up the enormous advances in public travel for the wheelchair user. To be able to get on to a train with other passengers instead of travelling in the guard's van with bicycles, day old chicks, barrels of tripe, etc., etc. is certainly more civilised, if somewhat more boring, and I

still have to pinch myself when airily boarding a bus to go into town!

Jane Lawrence was Chair of the Executive Committee of Kingston Association of Disabled People (the former name of KCIL) from 1997-2001

---

## KCIL Volunteer Photographer

When Dan Wilson asked me if I could help KCIL by taking a few photos I was happy to help. I know about the work KCIL does and was keen to help out a local charity. I was a little nervous as I don't have much knowledge of disability and wasn't sure what images there would be. Having had a discussion with (and a few suggestions from) the KCIL team I set out about town armed with my camera seeking to snap some images for their website.

rather than some poorer examples where they feel tagged on, grey concrete ramps hastily pasted onto the outside. I thought the entrance to the Guildhall and the winding ramp from the riverside to the top of Kingston bridge were two attractive examples.

I enjoyed taking the pictures. It was an education to walk around with my eyes open to these issues. I was happy to see how



The first thing that struck me was just how many examples of improvements to the environment made on the basis of accessibility there are - dropped kerbs, pedestrian crossings with visual, aural and physical cues, blue badge parking spaces, ramps, lifts, hearing loops and so on.

There were also, sadly, many inaccessible buildings, steep steps and cluttered narrow walkways. I was struck by how, when done well, accessibility is a feature of the entrance,

many developments there have been in opening up our town, but it was also apparent how much there is still left to do.

**The above article is by Helen Radford.**

**Everyone at KCIL would like to thank her for her excellent photographs (look out for them on the new website!) and this article.**

## Direct Payments News

**Kingston's Direct Payments Users' Group** met on Tuesday afternoon, September 8<sup>th</sup> 2009 at Kingsmeadow Function and Conference Centre, Jack Goodchild Way, 422a Kingston road, Kingston KT1 3PB.

Dan opened the meeting, saying that he always enjoys meeting Direct Payments users and learning from their experience of direct payments. He introduced a new member of the Direct Payments team, Tracy Fell-Smith, DP Outreach Worker. Like Dan, she had been looking forward to meeting Direct Payment scheme users. Tracy explained her role at KCIL and she invited anyone who had any problems managing Direct Payments to contact her by telephone on 0208 481 1445, by post at the KCIL office or via email: [tracyf@kcil.org.uk](mailto:tracyf@kcil.org.uk).

Also present at the meeting was KCIL's Chief Executive, Theo Harris. She introduced herself and spoke about KCIL's future plans and events such as the launch of KCIL's new website, taking place in the beginning of 2010. Theo also invited everyone to come and join KCIL for "Minced Pie and Mulled Wine Event" that will take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> December at the KCIL office (look out for the invitations which will be sent out nearer the date).

You can find information on the past and future events in KCIL's Quarterly Newsletter.

Also present at the meeting was a speaker, Graham Bentley, a support Broker from RBK's Personalisation Pilot Team. This team helps people set up their own Personal Budgets. A Personal Budget is money from Community Care Services (Social Services for adults). You can use this money to buy the support you need to stay independent, safe and well. You can choose to have this money instead of, or in combination with services such as Home Care or a day service.

Also attending were representatives from DomCare UK. DomCare Disability Services provides live-in/respite care & support (also

referred to as UK Holistic Care Packages) exclusively to adults aged 18-65 who are living with an

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) or with a Physical Disability (PD). These reps included Clare Kirkman who has worked in the health & social care sector for over 25 years. She has experience in setting up and owning a highly successful live-in care service which was eventually sold to a large PLC in December 2004. The sale of the agency allowed Clare the freedom to become a management consultant and commit her efforts to helping raise the standards of care services across the UK. Clare's presentation discussed her own particular approach to ensuring quality services (as documented in her book "How To Get Good Care Services: For Yourself Or Your Relatives").

Further Details of Clare and Graham's presentations are available from the Direct Payment Support Service. Please contact Dan or Maria.



### Happy 70th Birthday Kingston Citizens Advice Bureau

KCAB has been providing advice  
to the residents of Kingston  
for seventy years

KCIL has been working in partnership with  
the Kingston Bureau as part of  
the Kingston Advisers Forum  
and more recently on work looking at  
financial wellbeing.

We would like to wish the staff and  
volunteers of KCAB all the best  
for the future.

## Direct Payments: Reaching the Community

Welcome to our new staff member!



My name is Tracy Fell-Smith and I joined KCIL as the Outreach Support Worker in August 2009 as part of the Direct Payments Team.

My role is to support those of you who have any questions about your Direct Payments as well as introducing new users to the scheme. For example if you need help with recruiting a PA or have a general query please give me a call. If you know of any persons or groups who would like to know about Direct Payments please point them in

my direction and I will be happy to present or have a discussion about the benefits and processes.

In my previous life I was a Computer Trainer for Bupa Group spending the last few years training staff from the Care Homes business area. I am also a volunteer at Kingston CAB on a regular basis.

Although I have only started recently I have met several of you already and definitely looking forward to meeting many more. I am very excited about being part of the team and looking forward to ensuring your experience with KCIL is a happy and smooth one. I believe Direct Payments are the way forward as I am passionate about ensuring that everyone has the chance for independence, choice and control in their lives.

I look forward to hearing from you either by email [tracy.fell-smith@kcil.org.uk](mailto:tracy.fell-smith@kcil.org.uk) or by phone 0208 481 1445.

### **Do you have ME? Please take some time to take part in Richmond and Kingston ME Group's survey.**

Richmond and Kingston ME Group recently commissioned a survey to collect information about people with ME in the area. This information will be used in the Group's campaigning activities as detailed data will strengthen the case for support when approaching government agencies and other bodies.

Individuals with very severe ME can be talked through the survey over the phone in stages or a home visit can be arranged (although these are limited in number due to funding).

If you have any questions, contact Megan at [drarroll@simplyresearch.co.uk](mailto:drarroll@simplyresearch.co.uk) or 020 8707 2488.

Please click on the link below to access the survey:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s/114578/richmond-and-kingston-me-group-survey>

The deadline for completing the survey is 20th November 2009.

## Ofcom 2009 Access Services Review

RNIB has recently requested our help with their campaign to raise the level of audio description on TV to 20%. Audio Description (AD) is like a narrator telling a story, an additional commentary that describes body language, expressions and movements that someone with sight loss would not see, making the story clear through sound.

AD is available on digital television, on DVDs, in cinemas, galleries and museums as well as major sporting venues and exhibition centre. The current statutory level required by all broadcasters is 10% as outlined in the Communications Act 2003. The imminent 2009 Ofcom Access Service Review presents an ideal opportunity to push for an increase to 20%. Sky Television already provides 20% voluntarily, and on average other broadcasters provide 15%.

Ofcom have opened up a consultation to collect your views. This provides a major opportunity to improve the accessibility of TV programmes for thousands of blind and partially sighted people. Please respond to Ofcom outlining why you benefit from AD and why we need more! This consultation is open until 5pm on 12th November 2009.

### Options offered by Ofcom for the future provision of Audio Description are:

- Option 1.** No change in the existing provision. All channels (required to) audio describe 10 per cent of their transmission hours.
- Option 2.** An increase in audio description to 20 per cent for all channels required to provide access services.
- Option 3.** An increase in audio description to 20 per cent for the ten statutory Public Service Broadcasters. The 48 other channels required to provide audio description would continue to be obliged to audio describe 10 per cent of their output.

RNIB believes that Ofcom should implement **option 2**. This would result in all channels providing audio description on 20 per cent of their output. They also think raising the target to 20 per cent would significantly increase blind and partially sighted people's enjoyment of TV.

### What can you do to help?

1. Tell Ofcom which option you prefer (and why). RNIB recommends option 2 which is to increase AD to 20 per cent across all channels.
2. Tell Ofcom about your personal experience of AD on television, why you use it, how important AD on television is to you and why you want more of it.
3. Tell Ofcom about any other suggestions you have for the future of audio description and what they could do to improve the service.
4. Write to your MP to encourage them to respond to the Ofcom 2009 access services review and refer them to RNIB if they want to discuss this consultation with us in more detail.
5. Tell others, friends, family, societies and groups you belong to.

### How to make your views heard

You can fill in the online form by visiting <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/find> and then finding the relevant consultation "2009 Review of Television Access Services".

You can find out about other ways to respond to the consultation offline by contacting RNIB directly by telephone on 0207 391 2123 or via email: [campaign@rnib.org.uk](mailto:campaign@rnib.org.uk).

## How accessible was your holiday?

I really can't believe that summer is over and we are already well into October. Many of you have already been away on holiday this summer. However, some of you have yet to take your break, since the applications for the KCIL holiday grants continue to come in at a fast rate.

As for me, this summer I joined the increasing number of people that chose to take a 'staycation' - a holiday in the UK. My family and I spent our summer in Devon and Cornwall and apart from the [un]predictable weather we had a great time.

Whilst on my break, however, I got to see just how inaccessible much of the UK remains. In fact it suddenly dawned on me that many of the things that I liked about my holiday destinations - lovely cobbled streets, steep and winding narrow lanes, quaint little old fashioned shops etc - were all features that were likely to make these destinations inaccessible to many people with disabilities.

The most disturbing moment of my holiday was when I witnessed a young man in a wheelchair fall down steps outside a supermarket in Looe, Cornwall. Apart from the steps up into the shop, the young man and his carer were unable to shop there due to the narrow aisles inside. After helping to right the wheelchair and checking that the young man was going to be all right, I reported the incident to the manager of the shop. I was then informed that the local council had banned the supermarket from using a ramp at the front as the pavement was too narrow and using a ramp would mean that pedestrians would have to walk in the road, presenting a health and



safety issue. But what about the health and safety of people like the young man whose wheelchair had over turned?

Tourism for all and Visit Britain have just published Easy Access to Britain, a guide to properties and attractions offering special access facilities. This, as well as Motability's "Rough Guide to Accessible Britain" (FREE to Blue Badge holders by calling 0800 953 7070 or visiting [www.accessibleguide.co.uk](http://www.accessibleguide.co.uk)), is a useful tool to help you choose your holiday destination and accommodation.

Unfortunately, despite legislation, more work is still needed to ensure that once you reach your destination you can access the full range of services and facilities available to other non-disabled holidaymakers.

At KCIL we are keen to find out about your experiences when holidaying here and abroad. How easy was it to get around your resort? Do you think your holiday representatives had been trained in disability awareness or disability access needs? Did local shop keepers ensure that you were able to access their services? If you would like to recommend the most accessible resort in the UK, write to the Editor at Kingston Independent (address can found be on the back page) or email [enquiries@kcil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@kcil.org.uk).

Contact KCIL by 30th November 2009 if you want to be involved in testing our new website.

## A letter from the Public Carriage Office

Dear Kingston Capital Call member,

The operation of the Capital Call service within Kingston has been under review for the last six months and, as you have already been informed, the service will no longer be available for use from the end of the month (Sept 09).

The delivery of the Capital Call Service within Kingston has proven that PHV operators can offer valuable services to disabled and elderly customers; this is demonstrated by the fact that the providers who have been sending drivers and vehicles to you over the years with Capital Call are now also valuable providers to the Taxicard scheme of which you are also a member.

Your Taxicard service will continue to run as normal and journeys will be available through the usual Taxicard call centre and don't forget

you can also book online and track the progress of your taxi. The Computer Cab Taxicard booking line is 0207 763 5001 or go to [www.computercab.co.uk](http://www.computercab.co.uk)

Some of the car suppliers who have served Capital Call in your area are also suppliers to the Taxicard scheme and if you feel you have good reason to book directly with a PHV operator instead of through the call centre or online you should contact Taxicard customer services on: 0207 908 0435 giving your specific reasons and your request will be considered.

Thank you for your support and use of Capital Call over the last few years and we hope you continue to enjoy Kingston's excellent Taxicard service in the future.

Yours faithfully

Julian Fiorentini  
Mobility Programme Manager  
Public Carriage Office

**Kingston Centre for Independent Living**

Would like our members and service users  
to join us for

**Mince Pies and Mulled Wine  
(or tea, coffee & cakes)**

on

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009**  
Drop in anytime between 12.00 am – 2.30 pm  
KCIL, 31-35 High Street, Kingston, KT1 1LF

**RSVP: 020 8546 9603 by 25<sup>th</sup> November**

In the last 12 months DisabledGo–Kingston upon Thames has had over 27,700 users. In March this



year DisabledGo renewed the information available on DisabledGo–Kingston upon Thames. The Annual Renewal involved DisabledGo contacting all venues to ascertain whether their access had changed in any way. Any venue that reported a change to its physical access was flagged to be revisited by a DisabledGo Surveyor. 15 new venues identified by the group members at the last meeting were also added to the guide.

During the meeting the group gave feedback on the new website. The group alerted DisabledGo to a bug within the contact details displayed on the website and DisabledGo can now confirm that the bug has now been fixed. Other issues are currently being looked at by the IT team.

The group suggested that new venues and venues that have been updated during the renewal are marked for the attention of users. DisabledGo is going to look into this however we will be posting this information on the online steering and community forum for users to see. The group also felt that churches needed to be listed more obviously on the website. I can confirm churches are now found in the Public and Professional category under places of worship.

Input from the Kingston upon Thames Steering Group is much appreciated. If there are any comments you would like to add then please contact me Kimberley Dixon by email at [kimberley.dixon@disabledgo.com](mailto:kimberley.dixon@disabledgo.com) or by fax on 01438 842717.

The new website will have new features some of which are listed below.

- News system (either standalone or generated from Forum)
- Feedback system for every Access Guide
- Forum & integrated Visitor Login system
- Integral search functionality (including 'Find nearest', Postcode search, maps)

## Hate Crime Against Disabled People

I recently took a call from a Kingston resident who witnessed someone being abused because of their disability. Although my caller was responsible enough to intervene, we remain unclear as to whether this incident was ever reported to the authorities.

SCOPE's 2008 report "Getting Away with Murder" highlights the fact that 'hate crimes against disabled people are driven by the belief that disabled people are inferior; in some cases less than human, of no value to society'. According to the report 'hate crimes against disabled people are rarely recognised by the police and criminal justice system, and this fact allows some perpetrators to "get away with murder" '.

The report also showed that disabled people are four times more likely to be violently assaulted than non-disabled people. Yet evidence shows that many disabled people do not feel confident enough to report crimes that have been committed against them or do not report crimes because the fear that they will not be believed.

We want to support disabled people to report the hate crimes. This is because, if these crimes are not reported

- Perpetrators will get away with crime and continue to offend
- Disabled people will not receive justice
- The police will not have enough evidence to take action and we will be unaware of the true scale of the issue.

KCIL will be representing disabled people on the Kingston Hate Crime Task Group. We will work with RBK and other agencies to ensure that crimes against disabled people are taken seriously.

**YOU CAN HAVE YOUR SAY...**At our AGM Marion Todd from the Safer Kingston Partnership was able to gather information about crimes that disabled people in Kingston have experienced. She also asked for residents to look out for a survey and newsletter from the Safer Kingston Partnership about safety in Kingston. It will be circulated to every household in the borough in the coming weeks.

## Who's Who at KCIL?

Staff name	Title	Telephone	Email
Theo Harris	Chief Executive Officer	020 8481 1444	theo.harris.@kcil.org.uk
Robert Reilly	Office Administrator	020 8546 9603	robert.reilly@kcil.org.uk
James Yule	Newsletter Editor (Volunteer)	Via KCIL Office	Via KCIL Office
Maria Keskes	DP Assistant	020 8481 1446	maria.keskes@kcil.org.uk
Dan Wilson	Direct Payments/Support Services Coordinator	020 8481 1448	dan.wilson@kcil.org.uk
Sheila McLeod	DP Assistant	020 8481 1440	sheila@kcil.org.uk
Tracy Fell-Smith	Direct Payments Support & Outreach Worker	020 8481 1445	tracy.fell-smith@kcil.org.uk
Fernanda Matus	Project Development Worker (Brokerage & Support Planning)	020 8481 1442	fernanda.matus@kcil.org.uk
John Morris	DP Assistant	020 8481 1447	john.morris@kcil.org.uk
John Raitt	Book - Keeper	Via KCIL Office	Via KCIL Office
Jane Young	Information Assistant (Volunteer)	Via KCIL Office	Via KCIL Office

### Board of Trustees:

**Malcolm Johnson – Chair**  
**Nigel Tarrant – Vice Chair**  
**Lawrie Lee – Treasurer**  
**Gwen Symonds**

**Cllr Penny Shelton/Cllr Sue Baker (RBK appointees)**  
**Margaret Mattingly**  
**Asta Latim**

*Join us!*

**Don't forget to send your membership form back to KCIL!**

If you need help filling the form in, just give Robert in the KCIL office a call.

Kingston Independent is the quarterly newsletter of:

**Kingston Centre for Independent Living (KCIL),  
River Reach, 31-35 High Street,  
Kingston upon Thames,  
Surrey, KT1 1LF.**



**Kingston Centre For  
Independent Living**

**Tel: 020 8546 9603      Fax: 020 8546 7947      Web: [www.kcil.org.uk](http://www.kcil.org.uk)**

Charity number: 1123063. Company number: 06240260.

Articles, letters, news items, photographs are welcome and will be published at the discretion of the editorial team. The publishers, authors and printers cannot accept liability for errors or omissions. Any transparencies, prints or artwork will be accepted at owners' risk. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reported in any form without written permission of the copyright holder and publisher. The views expressed are not necessarily those of KCIL. Publication of an advertisement does not imply that approval has been given to goods and services. Printed by PDC Copyprint. © KCIL 2008.