

Brighter futures

WINTER 2011

Supporting children with visual difficulties

Welcome to
our winter
newsletter



Top author page 3

Budding bookworm

An avid reader of NBCS's large-print books is honing her skills as an online reviewer – in spite of having a visual impairment.

Fourteen-year-old Immie Godwin, of Beverley in East Yorkshire, who adores reading, dreams of becoming a professional book reviewer.

Now NBCS is helping her with the first steps of achieving her ambition, and she will be writing a monthly review of a title from our CustomEyes large-print books catalogue which now stands at more than 2,200 titles of popular fact, fiction and school revision guides.

Immie said: 'I've always been a book worm, I just love to read. Vampire fiction is my favourite and I love the House of Night books. I love to write too so I combined the two to



Fourteen-year-old Immie Godwin whose ambition is to be a book reviewer

make my book reviewing site. NBCS are being really helpful with this by allowing me to access books and suggesting titles for me to read. I just love reading!

Immie has set up a website of her reviews at [http://www.](http://www.notnoteworthynotes.blogspot.com/)

[notnoteworthynotes.blogspot.com/](http://www.notnoteworthynotes.blogspot.com/).

She is very involved in a number of national charities for VI young people as well as helping with the NBCS CustomEyes book programme.

www.nbcs.org.uk



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KEY SERVICES

Family support & information

Immediate and ongoing 'one-stop' emotional and practical support from first diagnosis

Educational advocacy

Expert advice and representation to ensure the child receives the most suitable education in the correct environment

Access technology

Personalised ICT, sensory and other specialist equipment to help children access up-to-date technology

Recreational activities

A nationwide programme of day and weekend family events, plus social, holiday and adventure activities

CustomEyes books

Large-print fact and popular fiction titles, annuals and revision guides tailor-made to each child's individual needs

Our mission is to enable children who are blind or partially sighted to achieve their educational and recreational goals

National Blind Children's Society: www.nbcs.org.uk

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Birmingham office: Shawton House, 792 Hagley Road West, Quinton, Birmingham B68 0PJ

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Freephone Family Support and Information: 0800 781 1444

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Star support

Bestselling author and former Children's Laureate Michael Morpurgo, whose hits include War Horse, has become one of NBCS's most prestigious supporters.

War Horse, now a runaway international stage success and about to become a blockbuster movie, is one of NBCS's most popular titles in the CustomEyes large-print books catalogue. It follows the story of a young horse plunged into the horrors of the First World War trenches.

Other Morpurgo bestsellers available include Farm Boy, Why the Whales Came, Cool! and Escape from Shangri-La.

Writing to NBCS Mr Morpurgo said: 'Do please use my name to support your wonderful work for visually impaired children – so vital. Bravo for all you do!'

Be an ambassador

Spread the word and enlist fundraising support for NBCS by talking about our work to local groups in your area – WI, Rotary, Round Table, Lions, schools, U3A, Scouts and Guides are some examples. If you would like to help please email volunteer@nbc.org.uk or call 01278 764 764.



Author and former Children's Laureate Michael Morpurgo whose bestsellers are available through NBCS CustomEyes large-print book service

Photo: Richard Canon



Seaside fun

We are pleased to announce the arrival of our new mobile home in the attractive seaside town of Southport at the Riverside Holiday Park on Merseyside.

This brand new, modern mobile home has been adapted for disabled use and access. It has a large living space, with dining area, kitchen, double bedroom with en-suite, a twin room, large shower room and a double sofa bed in the living room.

At the park there is a range of family entertainment, kids' clubs, arcades, a café, bars and lounges. There is a small shop on-site for essentials and fresh groceries.

With its historic pier, fair and amusement centre there is plenty to do in nearby Southport, including Splash World.

NBCS charges £50 for a week's holiday for a family of up to six.

This mobile home is available to book 50 weeks of the year, including Christmas and New Year. Booking starts annually on the first working day in January.

Go to riversideleisurecentre.co.uk for more information on the holiday park or


visitsouthport.com for tourist information.

NBCS now has two fully refurbished holiday homes – our first is in the beautiful surroundings of the Haven Burnham-on-Sea Holiday Village in Somerset.

Bookings for our holiday homes can ONLY be accepted by speaking to Hazel Russell or Lucy Brittain directly on 01278 764770. We are unable to accept email, text or voicemail bookings.

We request that families book our holiday homes a maximum of once every two years to allow other members the chance to enjoy a holiday.

Donate when you shop online

Sign up for the new **Give as you Live™**  with your favourite shops and brands, and the store automatically sends NBCS a commission at no extra cost to you. Even a few pounds can make a huge difference.

Heading in the right direction

NBCS is a leading partner in an important initiative aimed at helping parents and carers access the best possible information and support from the moment of their child's first diagnosis with a visual difficulty.

Starting Point – which has been compiled in association with RNIB, Guide Dogs, Sense, Action for Blind People, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust – is a guide for parents whose child is blind or partially sighted.

The website and accompanying leaflet have been developed in response to research into parents' priorities as they respond to the issues arising from their child's eye condition. The leaflet has been circulated to leading eye treatment and children's hospitals, as well as major hospitals with specialist children's eye clinics throughout the UK.



As one parent said: 'We wanted a map of the next few years. We really wanted to know what do we do next.'

The leaflet – which is also available to eyecare and medical professionals including ophthalmologists – introduces families to the help and support available to parents and carers of children with visual difficulties.

For more in-depth information go to nbc.org.uk/startingpoint or call our freephone helpline 0800 781 1444.

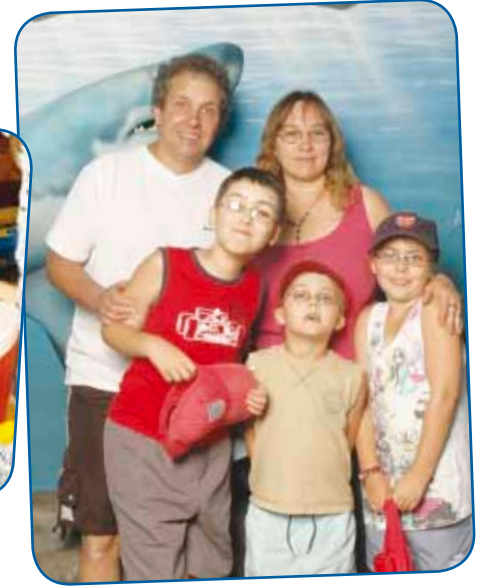
Thanks for joining our survey

A big thanks to all those parents who took part in our recent survey which is aimed at identifying the support needs of parents and carers during the early years after their child's diagnosis with a visual difficulty.

We hope the results will help identify any gaps in our current services as well as helping us to improve our existing ones and develop new and inspiring future projects.

We are now looking at the results, and will be selecting a random winner for a week's rental of one of our seaside mobile holiday homes.

If you identified yourself as someone who is willing to take part in a follow-up interview, you may hear from our researcher in the next few weeks for a chat about your experiences.



Days of adventure

We had another summer of fun days out – with lots of time to catch up with old friends and meet some new.

Forty lucky families joined us at Chessington World of Adventures in Surrey in July, thanks to the kind support of Merlin's Magic Wand. Fifty-one children with a visual impairment and their siblings had a very special day.

NBCS staff were on hand throughout the day, based exclusively in the Education Centre where we had a private area to chat to parents and enjoy a fun picnic lunch – it was great to hear about all the attractions the children had visited.

Outdoor playtime



In August we had another visit to the ever-popular Thames Valley Adventure Playground near Maidenhead in Berkshire where the children and

their families made full use of the specially designed games and activities, as well as enjoying their picnic lunches.

There were lots of tired but happy children going home after a wonderful day.

Talking to the animals

September's visit was to Drayton Manor Park and Zoo in Staffordshire – another perennial favourite with the children. As usual, Thomas the Tank Engine was high on the wish-list for the younger children and everyone loved visiting the animals, rides and other attractions.



A little goes a long way

As little as £3 a month can make a big difference towards the cost of providing family support, educational advocacy, access technology and activity events for the children. Email regulargiving@nbc.org.uk, call 01278 764 764 or go to nbc.org.uk/fundraising.

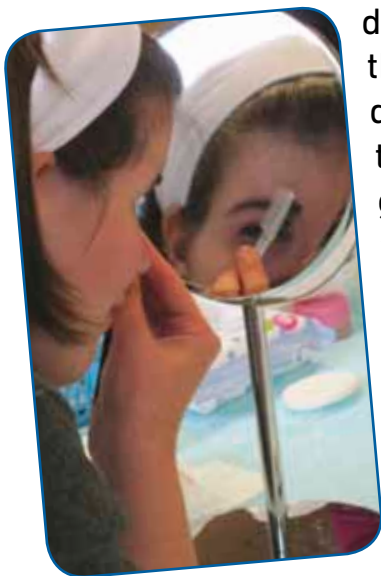
Looking great

NBCS held the fourth of our Cool Looks for Me beauty courses for young ladies with a visual impairment at our office in Highbridge on Thursday 18th August 2011.

The girls aged 13-18 had a wonderful time making friends and learning a simple skin care routine followed by a full make up application. They all received written

details of everything that they used on the day to enable them to follow useful guidelines in the future.

Afterwards they had great fun taking part in a photo shoot in the Customeyes book department.



Learning about dogs

There were more family guide dog experience days in Leamington Spa and Woodford Green.

Once again young people and their families had the opportunity to take part in practical hands-on sessions with a guide dog.

These days are an important part of introducing families to the possibility of bringing a guide dog into their lives, and letting them know what help is available to them.

For more information on the guide dogs training programme and future events contact Sally Freeman on 01278 764 764 or email sally.freeman@nbc.org.uk.

National Blind Children's Society

Party time



This year's Christmas party will take place at Bristol Zoo Gardens.

From 10am our guests will be able to explore the world-famous animal enclosures – including more than 450 exotic and

endangered species from Jock the silverback gorilla to Rocky the racoon.

After a festive lunch with lots of fun and party games the children might expect a surprise magical visitor from the North Pole!

Fairytale fun

Once again Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre is hosting our audio-described visit to the panto – this year it's Snow White with Linda Lusardi as the Wicked Queen and Sam Kane as the Prince – Sunday 22 January, 2012.

Soft play days

Preston's 'Soft Play Area within a Controllable Environment (SPACE)' is available to us on various Sundays throughout the year from 11.30am to 12.30pm. Dates for 2012 are: 8 January, 4 March, 27 May, 29 July, 30 September and 4 November. Booking is essential. Contact

Glenys Critchley on 01704 562750 or email glenys.critchley@nbc.org.uk.



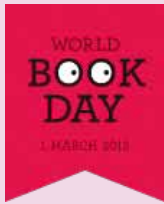
Holding hands

Follow us on Twitter @NBCScharity. We are hoping to have lots more followers by Christmas Eve using the tag #1000bychristmaseve.

Don't forget to like us on Facebook at NBCScharity where you can see general information, news and fundraising updates from NBCS.



World Book Day 2012



Thanks to the National Blind Children's Society (NBCS) children with visual impairment will be able to take advantage of special book tokens issued for World Book Day 1 March 2012.



All school-age children in the UK will be given a £1 token which can be exchanged for one of the specially published books or put towards the cost of any title of their

choice at a participating bookshop or book club.

Seven of these new £1 World Book Day story books are being republished for children with visual impairment in large print through NBCS's CustomEyes service, available from March 2012.

Touchy-feely furry friends

Beatrix Potter's much-loved stories about Peter Rabbit and his friends are now available in a tactile version accessible to children with a visual difficulty.



that the reader can have a sense of the pictures as well as the story.

For more information or to order copies go to fieldsmanbookshop.co.uk.



The coloured images are raised on special 'swellpaper', with the text in Braille, so

Seasonal favourites

Mr Men and Little Miss Christmas stories.



A Christmas Carol

by Charles Dickens



On Christmas Eve Scrooge sits in his counting-house with not a kind word for a soul, just wanting to be left alone until the 'humbug' of Christmas is over.

The Night before Christmas

by Clement Moore



A delightful poem that tells of the story of the night before Christmas, when Santa Claus arrives with his reindeer and clambers down the chimney to fill the stockings by the hearth.

The Snowman

by Raymond Briggs



Narrated entirely through pictures, it captures the innocence and wonder of childhood with its dreamlike illustrations.

Cheques bounce back

Plans by UK banks to phase out paper cheques have been put on hold so donations can still be made in the traditional way. Anyone wishing to donate should send their cheque to:

NBCS, Bradbury House, Market Street, Highbridge TA9 3BW





New to the catalogue



The Immortals

by Chris Riddell & Paul Stewart
Age 14+

This is the final tale in the Edge Chronicles sequence and it's a fabulous climax to the most original and dramatic fantasy series being written today. Set years in the future, this book is ideal for new readers to discover the series before going back to read the 'history' of Twig, Rook and Quint.



The Frankenstein Teacher

by Tony Bradman
Age 5+

Class F are given a very unusual teacher - Frankenstein's monster! But although he looks very scary, he has a very big heart, and the class learn to see the real person.



The Edge Chronicles 1-9

by Chris Riddell & Paul Stewart
Age 14+

The Edge Chronicles is a young-adult fantasy novel series consisting of three trilogies The Quint Trilogy, The Twig Trilogy and The Rook Trilogy.



Well Really, Mr. Twiddle

by Enid Blyton
Age 5+

Mr Twiddle is a kind old soul, but extremely forgetful, very lazy and quite silly. Poor Mrs Twiddle despairs her husband - he thinks he is having a lucky day when he finds a new suit under a bush.



Wasim's Challenge

by Chris Ashley
Age 7+

It is time for the school journey. Year Five are off to Snowdonia on a Challenge by Choice (CBC) week. Wasim Ahmed is going. He has his brand new kit and has been looking forward to it for months.



Million Dollar Mates

by Cathy Hopkins
Age 13+

Jess Hall's dad is the new general manager at Porchester Park, and is moving Jess, her brother and pet cat into a staff apartment there. Jess is dreading the move, until she learns they are strictly A-list only.



Toad Rage

by Morris Gleitzman
Age 9+

Uncle Bart reckons humans don't hate cane toads but Lumpy knows they do. He embarks on a dangerous but funny quest to show humans how nice cane toads are.



Angel

by L A Weatherly
Young adult

Willow knows she's different from other girls. And not just because she loves tinkering around with cars. Willow has a gift. She can look into peoples futures, just by touching them.

Parents in the picture



In 2010, Guide Dogs, with a collaborative group from The Royal London Society for the Blind (RLSB), Berkshire Sensory Consortium and the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP), developed a short Wellbeing course for vision impaired children and young people.

The programme, entitled Think Right,

Feel Good, was very well received and is now being rolled out nationally with a view to further evaluation. (copies can be downloaded from guidedogs.org.uk; or natsip.org.uk).

Guide Dogs are now into Phase II of this exciting project and are actively working with parents as partners in a course which explores wellbeing for families with children and young people with vision impairment.

The specific aim of the project is to raise awareness in parents and carers of the importance of the promotion of well-being in vision impaired children and how such well-being can positively affect children's life chances. In addition Guide Dogs would like to contribute to the development of parent 'well-being' groups around the UK.

The project group hopes that you might have already heard of the work Guide Dogs are doing in this area. If you would like to know more please contact Dr Alison Hood Alison.Hood@guidedogs.org.uk.

Great day out

Thank you for another lovely day at Drayton Manor. My children had a great time and I spent an hour printing out photos for them to take to school. A fun day indeed, thank you.

I just wanted to say a big thank you for such a lovely day at Drayton Manor - we all had a wonderful time!



Adventure time

One mum, Heather, took Zoe, Lizzie and Natasha to the NBCS day out at Chessington Zoo and sent us a long report of all the activities the girls tried - they especially loved the squirrel monkeys and the runaway train.

The family are looking forward to their next adventure with NBCS and all their friends.

Bryony's waggy best friend

Fourteen-year-old Bryony, from Wiltshire, was finding it difficult to get around school as her sight deteriorated – not good timing as she is now well into her GCSE studies.

But now her guide dog Sasha has changed all that, and Bryony's life has improved hugely.

She said: 'I had got to a stage where I had to feel my way down the corridors and my mobility was starting to slow down. I had a cane – a pink one which was pretty cool (pink is one of the few colours I can still see) but it was still hard to change subject classrooms quickly and keep up with everyone else.

'I didn't have the confidence to go out or catch a bus on my own, but this summer I trained with Sasha – a big commitment and hard work but it has been amazing. Sasha and I trot along the pavements now down to get the bus and bin days don't fill me with dread any more as I used to find them difficult to navigate round.

'My school has really welcomed Sasha and we whizz along the corridors. She likes the art department best so I have to be firm with her when it's time for maths!

'Now she's a normal part of school life and has completely changed my life. Not



Bryony and her buddy Sasha

only has she given me back my confidence but she's also an amazing friend. With my waggy best friend by my side I know we can cope with my sight loss together.'

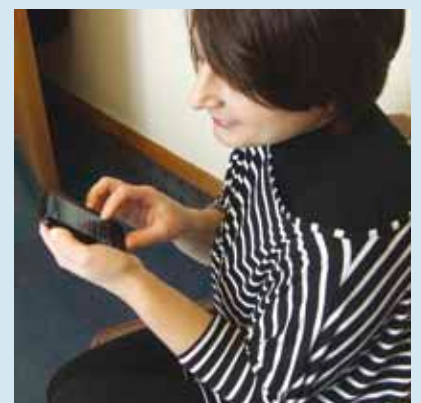
Through the NBCS access technology assessment programme Bryony also has the use of a specially adapted laptop with a video magnifier – something else to help her confidence at such a crucial stage of her education.

Easy as 1, 2, 3

To text a donation up to a maximum of £10

- 1 Text 70070
- 2 Key in NBCS00
- 3 Enter the amount you want to give

Every penny of your donation goes to NBCS
eg Text NBCS00 £10 to 70070



Little treasures

Every child benefits from lots of different sensory experiences – and for young children with visual difficulties this is especially important.

This is where the idea of 'treasure baskets' comes in. A concept developed in the US by Elinor Goldschmied, it is simple, fun, inexpensive and effective.

All you need is a shallow, sturdy basket containing a collection of everyday items, none of which are plastic.

Most of the objects are in everyday use by adults and are made of natural materials. The items in the basket vary in weight, size, texture, colour, taste, temperature and sound, and all the items are chosen to stimulate one or more of the five senses.

Children explore the treasure basket using their senses to discover what an object is, what it is like and perhaps what it does when shaken or manipulated.

Make sure there are no sharp edges, loose parts or toxic paint on any of the items.

For more information and ideas see nbc.org.uk/startingpoint/treasurebaskets for an adaptation of an original effective practice guide from RNIB.

Here are some ideas for suitable treasure basket items.

- spoon
- pastry brush
- wooden egg cup
- natural loofah
- cane coaster
- empty boxes, various sizes
- wooden and metal curtain rings
- glasses case
- leather bag and purse
- avocado pear stone
- bottle brush
- maraca
- velvet hair bands and scrunchies
- orange
- lemon
- shells





The cast of Cobham Players' production of Francis Durbridge's House Guest

Theatre group in the spotlight

A thriving Surrey theatre group has turned the spotlight on NBCS.

Cobham Players has been producing plays and pantomimes annually since 1948. At this year's sell-out autumn production of Francis Durbridge's classic thriller House

Guest, £1 for NBCS was added to the price of each ticket sold.

Cast member Brian Hulme said: 'It is good, while enjoying ourselves and entertaining people, to also be able to help those less fortunate than ourselves.'

Blindfold winners

Wellington College students Francesca Dennis and her friend Gabriella threw themselves wholeheartedly into their latest school project.

They decided to go 'blind' for a day, to try and live a normal day blindfolded, and so far have raised more than £2000 for NBCS.

What a starry duo!

Festive fun

Members of an arts group are spending the run-up to Christmas all dressed up in festive gear to raise money for NBCS.

The Big Arts Group will go round several Essex towns offering to pose for photos with shoppers in return for a donation.

For more information go to bigartsgroup.co.uk.

Help us to help you

Here are some ideas for fundraising events and challenges

Abseil, Aerobic endurance, Archery contest, Apple bobbing

Balloon race, Barn dance, BBQ, Bring & Buy, Basketball, Bingo, Bowling

Car boot, Car wash, Clothes swap, Canoeing, Cycling, Climbing wall

Darts, Disco, Dye your hair, Dominoes, Dance

Expedition, Extra hour of work, Egg & spoon

Football, Face painting, Fancy dress, Fete, Finger puppets

Game show, Guessing Games, Golf, Go-karts

Hopping on the spot, Head/beard shave, Haircut, Horse riding, Hula Hoop

It's a knockout, Ice skating

Job swap, Jogging, Jumble sale, Juggling

Karaoke, Kick boxing, Knitting

Lucky dip, Line dance, Lorry pull

Makeover, Massage, Marathon, Mountain climbing

Netball, Nearly New sale, Night walk

Open gardens, Orange race

Pub games, Parachute jump, Play your cards right, Pancake tossing

Quiz night, Quad bike, Quoits

Race night, Raffle, Rugby, Running, Roulette

Silent auction, Swimming relays, Snakes & ladders, Sponsored Silence

Talent show, Tombola, Treasure hunt, Teddy bear picnic, Trekking, Twister, Tennis

Uniform/workwear day off, Uno card game

Volleyball, Variety show

Waxing, White Water rafting

X Factor show, Xmas events

Yacht race, Yoga

ZZZ...bed push, Zumba, Zip wire

We have some items, listed below, which may help with your fundraising. You can order them by calling Karen on 01278 764765 or email events@nbcs.org.uk.

- Collection boxes & buckets
- A free T-shirt
- Sponsorship forms



- Laminated logos
- Information leaflets
- An NBCS 'Where do I come from?' soft toy game for the office or for a raffle
- A press release template to send to your local paper



Cash in hand

Please help us to keep our costs down by subscribing to our free newsletter by email. Send your email address to save@nbcs.org.uk and receive Brighter Futures automatically three times a year.

Campers' castoffs lead to riches

Pontins Holiday Parks are helping to open the door to a brighter future for the estimated 24,000 children in the UK who are blind or partially sighted.

The holiday park near Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset, is the first in the group to join our Rags to Riches campaign by donating its unclaimed lost property to NBCS.

For every tonne collected, we receive £500 through our partner care2collect, which sells on the goods – much of which would otherwise end up as landfill.

We make it very easy to join the scheme by sending out starter packs with bags and arranging collection – or filled bags can be dropped off at regional collection points.

Rags to Riches is part of NBCS's ongoing annual support of World Sight Day, which

aims to raise awareness of preventable blindness in children and adults.

Pontins Brean Sands Holiday Park leisure manager Chris Johnston said: 'We are delighted to support the National Blind Children's Society campaign. The work they do with children with visual difficulties and their families is fantastic.'

- To join Rags to Riches call 01278 764 764 or email enquiries@nbcs.org.uk.



From left, Chris Johnston and Rose-Marie Hooke from Pontins, Karen Burt from the NBCS, and Larry Franklin from Pontins.

New boxed babies

A fluffy panda is making its appearance this year. It joins the ranks of our hugely popular Baby Adoptable workplace



games – pick a place name for £1 and the winner who guesses where the baby animal comes from gets to take it home. A cuddly cow will also join the menagerie in 2012.

To order a Baby Adoptable for your workplace and raise money for NBCS call Rose Carberry on 01278 764 764 or email enquiries@nbcs.org.uk.

You can make a donation to National Blind Children's Society in the following ways:

Online at www.nbcs.org.uk by phone on 01278 764764 or you can send a cheque made out to the National Blind Children's Society with this form to: National Blind Children's Society, Bradbury House, Market Street, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 3BW

I would like to make a regular gift of £2 £5 £10 £20 Other £ _____ please send me a standing order form.

I enclose a donation of £ _____

Please send me information on Events Leaving a legacy How my company can help

GIFT AID I declare that I am a UK taxpayer and that I authorise National Blind Children's Society to reclaim tax on any donations I make from 6 April 2000 until further notice. *giftaid it*

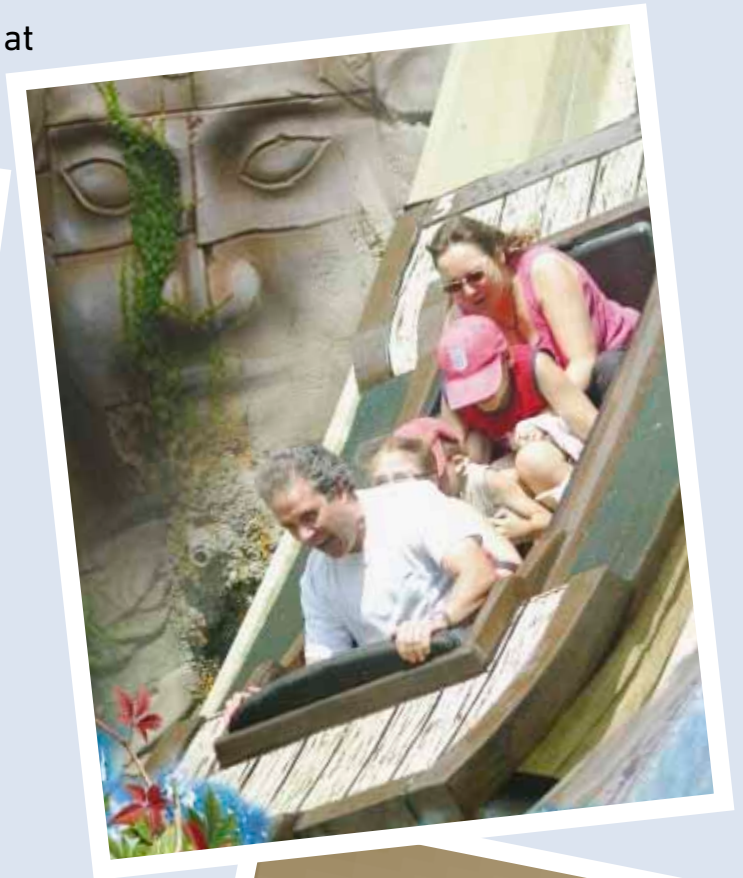
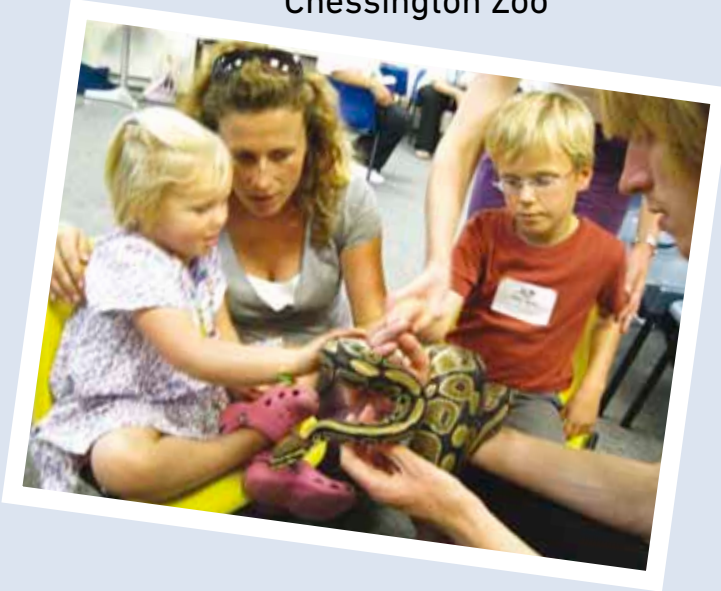
Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____

Address _____

Date _____ Signature _____ Postcode _____

Out and about having fun

Below and right: Fun times at Chessington Zoo



Below: Getting the look, at the Cool Looks for Me workshop in Somerset



Right: Hands-on experience with the Guide Dogs at Leamington Spa



Above: Charlie celebrates his birthday and winning a cuddly dog in the raffle at Drayton Manor Theme park