

Welcome to our March newsletter 2021. The news of the remarkable vaccine roll-out, means that most of our users will now have been vaccinated, and I am delighted to say that this includes our drivers. Now that the Government have shared their roadmap of how we will come out of lockdowns, we can now make plans for the Charity and put together our own roadmap on opening our services. As a charity not only do, we want to provide a safe environment for our users, but also as an employer we have a duty to ensure that our team can do their jobs without putting themselves at risk.

Last year, when some of our groups could meet, it was lovely to see how enthusiastic visitors were to see each other and have some social time. We are looking forward to welcoming you all back again, hopefully, very soon, as I have forgotten what some of you look like! We will contact all our groups and club organisers as soon as we have finalised our plans.

I know that some of the volunteers have quietly provided other support to their communities beyond their usual and forgive me whilst I thank them for the wonderful service they provide. They truly are the heartbeat of our Charity.

During this period, the Trustees have continued to look forward and ensuring we meet our corporate responsibility as a Charity. The AGM took place virtually on the 4th of March and let us hope our next AGM will be more traditional – there will be tea & cake!

Gail Reed who started with TASS as a volunteer and has been Treasurer for 3 years, recently moved back to her roots & family in Yorkshire. Gail was very supportive when I started in this role and I wish her all the very best for the future and the Trustees thank her for all the hard work she has undertaken, not just as a Treasurer but carrying out operational duties, this past year or so. Gail will remain a Trustee.

We welcome Matthew Hibbert on board as our new Treasurer. Matthew was ratified at the AGM and you can find out more about Matthew in our next Newsletter.

Looking forward to the future, we as a charity must ensure that we carry on delivering excellent services and that we remain relevant. What does that mean? As we come out of the pandemic us and other voluntary organisations will be called upon to assist those who need help for reasons other than what we have traditionally provided. We have a unique selling point (or two), in that we have a community transport scheme and the facilities at the Anchorage.

To guide us on our way, we need feedback from users, organisations, and volunteers who use our services. We will shortly have an online survey available and will send more information when it is live, so when you receive your notification, grab a cup of tea or the tipples of your choice and we recommend cake (always) it should take about 20 mins to complete. The survey gives you an opportunity to tell us what you think of the services we provide, and you get a chance to inform our future strategy.

You can do this survey anonymously or if you include your name and address you will be entered into our prize draw, closing date for returning the survey is the 17th May 2021. The draw will take place soon after and we will notify you if you win.

Best wishes to you all & see you soon, Paula x



Easthill Dartmoor, Spring 2019 - ©Paula Anscorb

A focus on Life stories & Befriending by Val Vines

We highlight one of our long-standing projects which quite a few of our members have taken part in. Led by Val Vines and Simon Thompson, Life Stories are just that, sharing memories of growing up in the surrounding area.

LIFE STORIES PROJECT



We were unable to have a traditional wartime Christmas lunch this year. The menu was to include, Mock Turkey Soup and Lord Woolton pie followed by fruit cocktail with evaporated milk. Trevor Kerswill who sadly died in 2020, was given a tin of fruit cocktail by an American soldier in 1944 as a child in the war. This was an unheard of luxury, however, his grandmother refused to accept it as it seemed to her like charity from the Americans. We have a lovely memory of Trevor arriving at our first Christmas lunch in American GI uniform. We hope to reinstate a Christmas lunch this year and to enjoy a fruit cocktail in memory of Trevor. Trevor recorded his own life story and a recording made in the 1980s of his Mother, I enjoyed hearing him talking about their life and typing the transcript from both fascinating stories.

Peter Nicholls and Roy Layzell's Sailor's Life Stories. Peter was a Royal naval surgeon during the war, then became the first Royal naval

surgeon to the Queen on the Royal yacht Britannia when it was launched. Roy served as a photographer in the Royal Air Force in Burma. Roy's son Martin who lives in Canada has produced a film which is now held in the Imperial War Museum. The showing of this film has been one of our most popular events. Extracts from both these life stories appear in World War 2 Tales from Tavistock book.



Lord Louis Mountbatten inspecting a Guard of Honour, Burma

Three clients reached 100 in 2020: Peter Nicholls, Fred Hammett, and Roy Layzell. Since he moved into residential care, Peter has been visited by John and Steve. Roy has been befriended by Steve since he first moved to Tavistock, 9 years ago. His daughter, very worried that he would be lonely in a new place, approached TASS for help, Roy also enjoyed TASS minibus trips. Since moving into residential care, 5 years ago, Roy has continued to enjoy outings with Steve. During Lockdown, Steve has been able to arrange for delivery of his favourite cake to him.

RAF veteran Roy Layzell gets Covid vaccine on 100th birthday.

He is among the million who have already had their first jab.



Roy Layzell receives his Covid Jab/Jonathan Swingler

A World War Two veteran celebrated his 100th birthday by getting a Covid-19 vaccination and a

traditional card from the Queen. Roy Layzell said the vaccine was “a good thing”. He added: “You don't get a 100th birthday every day”. Mr Layzell was a combat cameraman in the RAF. He now lives in the West View care home in Bere Alston, Devon, and received his vaccine on Wednesday, the same day as his milestone birthday. Some family members were able to visit him on the day whilst adhering to Covid rules. Mr Layzell, whose grandson Jonathan Swingler is a BBC reporter, added: “They were pleased to see me, and I was pleased to see them.”

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@NewsFrenchTony 02 January 2021.

In 2020 we looked forward to the launch of The Tavonians play, based on some of our life stories. Sadly, this had to be cancelled but the play was reworked so that it could be made as a radio broadcast.

We were also involved with Tavistock and Okehampton college students producing musical work based on some of our stories of local life. Now available online even though the concept itself had to be cancelled.

There were also plans to be involved with a project at Endsleigh hotel. Recording the memories of the last tenants and workers on the Bedford estate, maybe we will be able to restart this later in the year. If you know of anyone who lived or worked on the Bedford Estate, please let us know. We have one excellent account from Arthur Vigars of life changing on the farm, this can be read in Tales from Tavistock on Farming and Rural Life.

Our Befriending News

The befrienders have managed to continue with their voluntary work throughout the past year and have kept in contact with their clients by telephone, by socially distanced visits wearing PPE, and by sending letters, cards, and small gifts, such as favourite sweets or biscuits. All have made sure that their clients know that they are not forgotten. So, thank you to all the befrienders, we know that your efforts are very much appreciated. If you know of any isolated person who would benefit from befriending, please talk to them first and then pass their

contact details to us. If you, or anyone you know, would like to become a befriender, please get in touch with us and we can arrange for you to have more information. All our befrienders will tell you that they find befriending a great privilege, satisfying, and very enjoyable.

Thank you, Val Vines.

A Focus on Drop-Inn By Bryan Podmore

Our drop-ins are a valuable part of the service TASS offers, and a great way to meet new people, if you know someone who is new to the area or someone who you think would benefit in having something to look forward to please mention us, a warm welcome awaits. Bryan Podmore explains what the drop-ins do and the role they undertake beyond the drop-ins our volunteers have undertaken.

As you all know, TASS is a local charity with a large ‘to do’ list, aimed in supporting those who



Betty Walke Celebrates her 90th Birthday.

live in Tavistock and its surrounding villages. Included in that list is the aim ‘to support and help’ in the setting up, and running, of village clubs for the benefit of older adults, and over the years we have started and supported these clubs in 9 of our villages. At present TASS volunteers are responsible for 3 clubs - at Horrbridge, Mary Tavy and Milton Abbott.

I have been a volunteer at Horrbridge ‘Drop-Inn’ Club for the past 20 years, and I am still enjoying every minute of it. I have 4 volunteers with me – Jenny Edwards (also been here for 20 years), as well as Sue Chapman, Jan Willie, and Marilyn Darch, and together we welcome our members to the Village Hall on Thursdays between 10am and 1pm. We call the club ‘the

Drop-Inn' to indicate a place that is well known for its comfort, refreshments, and friendly welcome to all comers. And that description continues today. The members are supported in what they want to do and—whether it is a game of scrabble (other games are available), read the local papers, have a



Children from Horrabridge School entertain at the Christmas Party.

good chat or an occasional game of bingo - it is THEY who decide, and we help. Add to that the 3 or 4 trips-out through the year to the seaside or to a Pub lunch in one of our many beauty spots in the county, and add on the Christmas concert, you can see that we can be kept quite busy. Of course, the day would not be a success if there were no teas and biscuits in the morning and a light lunch in the early afternoon. I could add much more activities – but enough said for now.

Then came COVID.

This horrible little virus has become a bit of a game-changer regarding the Drop-Inn. Throughout the past year, we have had to suffer the closure of the Village Hall, as well as cancelling any outside activities. Our biggest loss in the year was having to cancel our party to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Drop-Inn club on 25th June. Hopefully, we will be able to celebrate this in June when we will call it the 25th plus one birthday!

The volunteers decided very early during COVID-19, that the main thing for us to do was to keep communication with our members until the pandemic was over. For the

past year each of us have been keeping contact with a 'group' of members and making sure of their safety and health. We have been helped by other volunteer groups in the village as well as friends and neighbours. Depending on the latest 'rules' our contact has been by telephone, or at the required distance, during the sunny months, and when allowed, the team of volunteers would meet (usually in Sue's large garden) and discuss the current situation as well as planning for the eventual re-opening of the Drop-Inn.

Hopefully, that will be soon, but whenever it does happen, I know that we at the Horrabridge Drop-Inn will be ready for it and look forward to welcoming everyone back. As you know, all our volunteers do their wonderful work for the pleasure of helping in the lives of others, and they never ask for more. We are so grateful to you all at TASS for 'doing your bit'.

*All take care,
Bryan Podmore*

Other news ...

Devon County Council in their bulletin of last Friday 26 February 2021 announced the availability of 2 mobile lateral flow community testing centres in West Devon:

From Thursday 4 March our second mobile testing centre will make weekly visits to:

- **Tavistock's Riverside car park** on Mondays and Thursdays
- **Okehampton's Mill Road car park** on Tuesdays and Fridays

These free rapid tests are recommended to be taken twice a week by anyone without coronavirus symptoms who must leave home to attend work or volunteer, and people who are in contact with vulnerable individuals. They are quick, easy to book and the results are back within an hour via text or email. If you test positive, you must self-isolate for ten full days to avoid transmitting the virus to anyone else. To book a test, go to;

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/document/coronavirus-testing-in-devon/>

Contacting us & General Information

During lockdown our opening hours have been limited. Please see information below, which services we are running and how to contact us.

Anchorage Centre

Chapel Street, PL19 8AG

Tel: 01822 616958

General enquiries, volunteering enquiries, Befriending, Outreach and Paula, lines are open Monday-Friday, 09:30-12:30 outside these hours please leave a message.

Our befriending service, outreach and hire of mobility equipment are still operating. Please call or email and we will do our best to assist you as quickly as we can.

Email:

befriending@tasstavistock.org.uk

enquiries@tasstavistock.org.uk

manager@tasstavistock.org.uk

Transport

Tel: 01822 617525

Transport, lines open Monday-Friday, 09:30-12:30 outside these hours please leave a message.

Our community transport is still operating. Our community cars are available for medical appointments and of course vaccine appointments.

All journeys for care home appointments will take place in one of our minibuses.

Email:

transport@tasstavistock.org.uk

Spiral Staircase - Shop

24 Market Street, PL19 0DD

We are pleased to say that with the plan for lockdown restrictions being lifted the shop will be open for donations on Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th April, 10-2pm.

The shop will then open for customers on Thursday the 15th April, Friday 16th and Saturday 17th, between 10-2pm and then every week at the following times.

Thursday, Friday & Saturdays

10:00 - 2pm

Rest-A-While

East End Stores, The Pannier Market

The opening times for Rest-a-While will be confirmed soon.

Please look out for posts on facebook and posters in the window at the Charity shop, the Anchorage and R-a-W for more information on all our services, clubs and groups.

Memory Cafe

Throughout the pandemic we have been keeping in touch with all of our members by regular phone calls from volunteers, weekly emails/letters, a monthly Newsletter and Zoom get - togethers. Through a Lottery funded project run by Memory Matters S.W. we have also been able to provide virtual Cognitive Stimulation Therapy to a small group of beneficiaries.

When the lockdown regulations are more relaxed and the weather warms up, we intend to resume our small outdoor meeting groups, then when government guidance allows, we hope to meet once more in The Anchorage Centre... we are all longing for that day!! Anyone who wishes to know more about the Memory Cafe can contact Heather on 0776 564 4843 or info@tavistockmemorycafe.co.uk.

Volunteering - make a difference



Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, get involved with your community & make a difference. We have various opportunities available. Please contact us to have an informal chat about what we do & how you can make a difference to your community. Becoming a volunteer has many personal benefits, but one of the most important is how it helps mental health. So, whether it's driving, admin, making refreshments or retail, we will have something which suits you. Call us on 01822 616958. Look out for an invite to our information session, where we open the doors on all our services.

Part-time retail Co-ordinator



An exciting opportunity working for us

Tavistock Area Support Services are seeking a permanent paid part-time Retail Coordinator for its Charity shop in Tavistock town centre.

This will be a part-time position to start, candidates with need to have some flexibility on working hours, depending on business needs.

We are seeking an experienced, reliable, personable and conscientious person to work alongside our staff & volunteers.

If you are interested in this position, please send your CV and covering letter for the attention of Paula Anscomb
TASS, The Anchorage Centre, Chapel Street, Tavistock ,
PL19 8AG

If you would like to have an informal chat regarding this role please call Paula Anscomb on 01822 616958.

Closing date for applications 31st March 2021

In memory of

We have sadly lost some founding members and friends of TASS, and perhaps have not had the chance to say goodbye in the way we normally would. We use this section as a tribute to them.

*Trevor Kerswill
Ethel Vanstone
Margaret Pierce
Yvette Griffiths
Molly Turner
Betty Burridge*

We send our thoughts & prayers to their Family and Friends.

Coming up in our May Issue...

- Meet the TASS team
- More information on our Groups & Clubs
- How we work with other organisations
- Our post lockdown opening times
- Our first Crossword – pens ready!
- An invite to our Meet & Greet session

Hold the press! ...

Here is a quick look at opening plans in line with the Government's 4 step roadmap. Lets hope this isn't subject to change. We will contact our volunteers & groups soon.

We cannot wait!

Step 1 From 8th March	Step 2 From 12 th April
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Office remains closed ✓ Transport operating ✓ Mobility open ✓ Befriending & Outreach remote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Charity shop opens ✓ Support groups back ✓ Personal care can open ✓ Review of opening hours
Step 3 From 17 th May	Step 4 From 21 st June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sports & exercise clubs back ✓ R-a-W can open ✓ Outreach fully open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No restrictions ✓ All clubs returned ✓ All support groups returned ✓ Business as usual!

Submit your article If you would like your article included in the next issue, in May, please email manager@tasstavistock.org.uk. If you have pictures, please include them. Articles ideally should be no more than 500 words and may be edited.