

Walthew House

Welcome to our May 2022 newsletter.

Having been delayed since 2020, we were delighted to finally hold our **‘See Hear’** exhibition in March. The event was a great success with over 30 exhibitors and more than 150 people attending on the day. The photos below show our Operations Manager Naomi, providing information in sign language, the upstairs hall packed with visitors chatting to exhibitors, visitors checking out the new equipment available and enjoying a brew and a catch up.



Walthew House is an independent local charity providing practical and emotional support to people with sight or hearing loss. Registered charity number: 1167749. Registered company: 09306241.

Local MP Navendu Mishra stopped by to meet exhibitors and visitors, commenting on social media, “Great to visit Walthew House to learn more about how they support people with sight or hearing loss in our town and across Greater Manchester.” He also took the opportunity to have a go at steel drumming and is pictured right with Janice, our Steelband leader.



We are delighted to have been chosen as the charity partner for **Stockport Beer and Cider Festival** for the next three years. This year’s Festival takes place on Thursday 16th, Friday 17th and Saturday 18th June at Edgeley Park. This is a great event with live music and over 250 beers, ciders and perries on sale. Walthew House was previously the Festival’s chosen charity between 2012 and 2014, raising more than £20,000 over the three years. The photo right, taken during our last stint as Festival charity, shows resource centre volunteer Graham Privett pulling a pint.



We are looking for volunteers to help behind the bar, sell programmes and help with fundraising. Contact our new Funding Manager Sarah Mollitt on the main office number, 0161 480 2612 or by email at fundingmanager@walthewhouse.org.uk for details on how you can get involved with this great opportunity to support Walthew House.

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Walthew House has a new group, the **Sensory Sports and Social Club**. The group started with the track-based walking group at Woodbank Park and has grown to include swimming, crown green bowls, acoustic shooting, 10 pin bowling, socialising and day trips. For more information on how to get involved contact George Sutton through the office. The photo below shows members of the group and volunteers at their regular Tuesday morning walk at the Stockport Harriers' running track in Woodbank Park.



We were delighted to be able to hold our **Blind Bowling** tournament again this year. Seventeen teams drawn from local companies and community organisations took part, with sighted participants wearing either a blindfold, or 'simspecs', which are glasses that simulate a range of eye conditions. The event, which raises awareness of the challenges of sight loss as well as funds for Walthew House made £1,245 was won by the team from Lynx Taxis, with second place going to the My Digital Accounts team. A special trophy, the David Le Poidevin Cup, awarded in memory of former Walthew House chair and founder of the bowling team went to Ehsan Shakeri

who achieved the highest individual score. The photos below show the Mayor of Stockport Councillor Adrian Nottingham having a go at bowling blindfold, and then afterwards presenting the trophy to the winning team.



We are planning to start **lip-reading classes**. Initially we will be offering a 10-week course, at a cost of £25 per person (£20 to Friends of Walthew), including refreshments. For more information, please contact George in the office.

John Walthew, (photo right taken from an oil painting) the founder of our charity was born on 16th June 1822, making this year the **200th anniversary** of his birth. Angela Kenrick, from Stockport Heritage Library, and also a volunteer with Stockport Talking Newspaper Association, has been meticulously researching his life and work.

John Walthew didn't come from a wealthy family, and by the age of 11



was working as a weaver in a cotton mill in Reddish. He attended Stockport Sunday School and the Mechanics' Institute, studying and working hard, becoming a bookkeeper at Howard's Mill, Portwood, before, in 1845, setting up on his own, running a few doubling frames (used to twist the yarn in the cotton weaving process) in Newbridge Lane Mill. In 1871 he was elected Mayor of Stockport and by 1881 he employed 465 men, and so was a major employer in the town.

John married Mary Steele in 1854, and their first child Louisa was born the following year. Louisa had sight loss from early childhood, prompting her parents to consider how many other blind people there might be in Stockport, and whether they could do anything to help. In 1866, John and Mary held a tea party for people with sight loss at Stockport Sunday School as a way to consult them on their needs.

By October of that year 40 or 50 people were meeting regularly at the Mechanics' Institute, which was on the site where Stockport Central Library now stands. Volunteers helped the young to learn to read and supported adults to improve their skills to help them into work and towards independence.

The following year another tea party consultation was held for people with hearing loss, so that both groups of people could be helped.

After a time teaching 'elementary education and useful trades' from premises on Wellington Road, new premises were built on St Petersgate, and opened in 1873. Young people with sight or hearing loss were taught reading, writing, arithmetic and 'some trade'. Adults were supported into work making baskets, rugs, brushes and other articles for sale.

We were fortunate recently to receive a visit from Alistair Wood who is a great great nephew of John Walthew. Alistair brought family photographs and Mary Walthew's 1874 diary of their trip to India, Australia and



Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Alistair is pictured above with Angela Kenrick and the bust of John Walthew in the boardroom at Walthew House.

There have been changes to the way **hearing services** are provided in Stockport, with a number of providers now contracted. The changes affect the adult hearing aid contract at Stepping Hill Hospital, and as a result the hospital will from 30th June this year no longer provide batteries at local libraries or through Walthew House. Stepping Hill patients, whose hearing aid is less than three years old will need to contact the Audiology Department on 0161 419 4183, text only on 07917073367 or email Audiology@stockport.nhs.uk. Patients with hearing aids provided by other contracted organisations should contact their provider directly.

Thank you to everyone who took part in our **Easter Raffle**. We raised £1,134. The winning ticket was drawn by luncheon club member Leslie (pictured right). First prize, an Easter hamper worth over £100, was won by Lynda O'Brien (pictured far right).



Brenda and Ron (pictured right), who organise our weekly Wednesday **table top sales** (other than the last Wednesday of the month) are putting out a call for donated items (not clothing please).

Come along and grab a bargain, 10.30am until 2pm in the main hall, or in front of the building if the weather is nice.



Please can we ask if you have a **Talking Book** on loan from the library service that is now overdue, that you please return it via Walthew House. These items are expensive and other users would like the opportunity to listen to them. Thank you.

Being a member of Walthew House is £10 a year and is a greatly valued way of supporting services for people with sight or hearing loss in Stockport.

We would like to ask you to renew your membership, take up membership if you haven't supported us in this way before, or encourage friends and family to help us by joining (the form to complete is over the page, but please ask us if you need more copies).

As a **Friend of Walthew House**, you are an associate member of the charity, have a vote at the Annual General Meeting, can nominate new trustees, or stand as a trustee yourself.

Members also get discounts on many of the events and activities we organise each year, so it can pay for itself in no time!

Membership of Walthew House 2022

- I would like to become a member/renew my membership of Friends of Walthew House. I enclose my donation of £10.
- I would like to make an additional donation to the charity. I enclose my donation of

Please make cheques payable to Walthew House and return to Walthew House, 112 Shaw Heath, Stockport SK2 6QS. You can pay by credit card or debit card by calling us on 0161 480 2612.

If you are a taxpayer Walthew House can claim tax back on your donation through the Gift Aid scheme at no extra cost to yourself.

Please tick the box if you would like to Gift Aid your donation.

First name..... **Surname**.....

Address.....

..... **Postcode**.....

Contact (telephone/fax/SMS/email)

.....

Please tick if you would like us to let you know about discounts on activities and events for Friends of Walthew House.