



December 2015

The turning of the year is always a time for reflection, and for me particularly so this year. So please indulge me by reading my reflections on page 6.

It has been a busy few months with getting the mobile technology resource ready to launch, recruiting for my replacement and having the regional events. So check out the latest on all these.

Finally, may I wish you all a very Happy Christmas, and thank you for making me so welcome in your organisations over the past 8 years.

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Trustees update

The Trustees met in September, and approved the following applications:

Migdal Or, Israel - a new Karten CTEC Centre at Migdal Or, Be'er Sheva, meeting the needs of people with visual impairments.

Bridge College, Together Trust, Manchester — an application for additional equipment for hardware, assistive technology and software. Some of the grant will be used for mobile equipment to enable tutors to meet the requirements of the CIF for recording progress and achievements.

Dyslexia Action, Leeds — an application for an upgrade to their current equipment, and to enable more off-site sessions.

Fife Society for the Blind, Kirkcaldy— an application for additional assistive technology for assessment and also for people to evaluate the products before committing to a purchase, plus editing and recording hardware and software to enable a blind member of staff to independently produce podcasts reviewing accessible games.

The Grange, Bookham — an application for equipment for a new centre, in what started life as a School for Stitchery and Lace. The centre will expand the use of technology amongst their clients, and support the business administration of various commercial projects.

New Bridge, Oldham— an application for equipment for a media centre in new premises in central Oldham. The current print equipment will be moved to the same location.

Orchardville— an application for equipment to upgrade the training resources in the Business Centre, focusing on mobile devices rather than PCs.

SeeAbility— an application for equipment for the performing arts area, and an upgrade to the sensory environment.

The next Trustees meeting is 11th March. If you want to submit an application, you should already be talking to Ceri or Debbie and working on a draft. **The deadline for finalized applications is 29th January 2016.** So if you're not already in discussion with us, please phone or email immediately.

Welcome to Dawn Green

As many of you know, we have recently been through the recruitment process to appoint the new Network Development Manager. I am really pleased to welcome Dr Dawn Green to the role. Dawn will be starting on 1st February, giving us a handover till my retirement on 11th March.

Some of you met Dawn at the regional events or have met her in other networks. She will introduce herself properly once she starts, but here is a little about her:

Until last year, Dawn was Principal at Landmarks Specialist College, a land-based College for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities based in Creswell, North Derbyshire. Dawn has worked in the Specialist College sector now for 13 years, prior to that she taught A level Biology and Chemistry in a general further education college.

Landmarks was fortunate to receive funding for a Karten CTEC centre which opened in November 2011. Dawn has a keen interest in harnessing technology to benefit individuals with learning difficulties in all aspects of their lives. In particular, Dawn is interested in promoting social networking opportunities to alleviate issues of social isolation often experienced by people with learning difficulties. However, it is critical that vulnerable individuals are safe whilst online and to that end Dawn has worked in partnership with colleagues in the East Midlands, LSIS and JISC TechDis to develop a range of resources and materials to promote e-safety.

Since leaving Landmarks, Dawn has developed her consultancy services, offering support to providers with quality improvement and managing behaviours that challenge. Dawn is also a Governor at Portland College.

Away from professional responsibilities, Dawn is kept busy by a number of interests. She is happily married with two daughters. Dawn has four horses and two dogs, plays the piano, and loves home cooking and baking.



I am really pleased to hand over to such a talented person, and look forward to seeing the new developments Dawn will bring about.

Regional Events, UK

In October and November we held the UK Regional Events. This year we decided, after feedback from the Network, that the events would be themed. Last year we presented the same event 5 times—this year they were all unique.

The plan was to have events which focussed on Sensory Environment, Print, Autism, Visual Impairment and Dementia. Due to no-one signing up, we had to cancel the Print event—a great loss, but we will hopefully rectify this in the future.

It is hard to summarise the highlights of these events in a few words, but I'll have a go! But at each of them, there was lots of enthusiasm and so many brilliant ideas. I will be pulling together the resources from all of the events in the UK and Israel, so that everyone in the Network will have access to all the links.

One common theme through the events was the launch of the Mobile Technology Resource—see Martin's article on page 6 for the specifics on this. Many thanks to Martin for the work he has done developing this resource. Please take a look and contribute some of the resources you use—or look to see what other people are using.

Sensory Environment: as well as hearing about good practice in the different organisations, we also had a presentation from Autism East Midlands on Brain in Hand, a system which helps people to manage events which may be challenging

Autism: again, sharing of good practice, but also a fascinating presentation by Rachael Moat called Objects of Intrigue. We learned how to use electronics to play music by putting our hand into a bowl of spaghetti hoops! A great way of encouraging people to explore their environment.

Visual Impairment: not only did we hear from attendees about what they were doing in their centres but we also got to try out some equipment! Wearing a 3D Virtual Reality headset was an amazing experience—and early testing indicates that people with impaired central vision can see much more clearly wearing these. We also had a presentation from GiveVision on wearable technology

Dementia: learnt loads at this one too! We heard about an app called See What I mean, which lessens communication challenges for people with dementia—very interesting. We also had presentations about a product called Alcove, which helps to maintain independent living, and learnt how to design a sensory space for people with dementia.

An enormous thank you to everyone who hosted us, gave a presentation or participated in any way.

Regional Event Israel

The first Israel Conference was hosted by the Ono College CTEC Centre and was attended by 25 people from the CTEC Centres around the country: Ono College, Chimes, CDB, IsrALS, and Yad Sarah.

We were honoured to have Tim Simon with us representing the Karten Network.

The goal of the day, was to familiarize everyone with what is happening in each of the other Karten Centres. Throughout the day the stress was put on the fact that being under the roof and warmth of the Karten Trust, gives us the possibility and the ability for cooperation and information transfer.

What was great to see was the diversity and use of different technologies for people of different ages and different limitations throughout life. For example, at Ono, one meets students with special needs with the aim to continue onward and return to work or find a profession, whereas at IsrALS we help maintain quality of life and enable basic communication with the family and the environment.

After all of the Centre presentations, there was the "hangout" video call with Ceri and Martin, in order for Martin to present mobile technology resources. Unfortunately, there was a technical problem and we were unable to amplify the speech adequately. Even with this glitch, Martin managed to get across how to use the resource and the fact that it is there for sharing each other's expertise.

At the end of the day there was a presentation by Mr. Haim Elbaz who underwent a computer-access assessment and training in hardware and software at the Karten CTEC in Petach Tikva a number of years ago. He talked about the process he went through and the fact that due to the efforts and solutions of the Karten CTEC he is now in his second year of studying Garden Therapy.

We finished with discussing the possible ways of cooperation and sharing and have already partly put these into practice.

We have opened a facebook group and Michel Keselbrener (Chimes) is setting up a forum to discuss "Technological infrastructure for organisations dealing with people with special needs ".

All in all, we had a very successful day.

Debbie



Mobile Technology Resource Launched

On the 20th of October at the first Karten Regional event held at Young Epilepsy the Mobile Technology Resource was officially launched.

The aim of the Mobile Technology Resource is to collate the training materials, user guides, apps that are used in one place – enabling people within the network to share resources. The hope is by doing this we prevent the same problem being solved over and over again.

There is also a hope that perhaps through sharing and seeing what others are doing it will spark ideas of other ways to use mobile technology.

The Mobile Technology Resource is a living and evolving resource. A place where members within the network will use, update and share the resources.

We received a lot of positive feedback and a number of useful suggestions during the regional events which are making their way into the Mobile Technology Resource. One of these was to send a monthly notification of what is new on the Mobile Technology Resource, this will be appearing your inboxes in the New Year.

So far 18 Apps, 2 user guides, and 6 links added to the Mobile Technology Resource. There has also been one comment posted on one of the apps. Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far.

The Mobile Technology Resource is only available people within the Karten Network and requires a username and password to login. Most people will already have a login, however if you don't or have trouble logging in please contact me (martin@karten-network.org.uk) or Ceri (ceri@karten-network.org.uk). We will also be introducing a read-only login for each organisation.

If you have not already done so you can access Mobile Technology Resource at: <http://karten-network.org.uk/mobile-technology-resource/> . Or you can visit the main Karten Network website, under the "Members" tab, click on the link to the "Mobile Technology Resource".

Should you need any help please don't hesitate to contact me.

We are looking forward to seeing the Mobile Technology Resource grow and develop and encourage you to use and contribute to it. I also welcome feedback on ways it can be refined and improved.

Martin Pistorius

Reflections on the Karten Network

I have worked for the Karten Trust Network for nearly 8 years, and many of you have heard me say that it is the best job in the world. I told Ian Karten that a few months after I was appointed, and my view hasn't changed.

I had previously worked in a successful Specialist College, so was used to the enthusiasm of staff and seeing the achievements of the learners. But magnify that 115 times and you will understand how exciting it is to be a part of the Karten Network. I get to visit you all—and you are always very generous with your time and show me what you're doing not only in the Karten Centre itself but in the wider organisation. I am privileged to see amazing work being done, and to meet truly inspirational people, both staff and clients. And it is such fun! I was interviewed recently by a client at Percy Hedley in Newcastle (it was filmed and is on YouTube) and he asked me what the highlight was of my time with the Network. Hard question... and one I've thought about ever since. I think the measured answer is being given access to so many organisations, and seeing so much good practice openly and generously shared. Not many of us have that opportunity, and for that I owe you all an enormous debt of gratitude.

I have cut a glass, made a pot, stroked an enormous snake (was that a highlight? I certainly felt I'd achieved something once I'd done it!), been taken on a fabulous tour of historic Belfast and visited amazing places throughout the UK and Israel.

And, of course, I'm the one who gets to phone you and tell you that your application for funding from the Ian Karten Charitable Trust has been successful. It makes me feel like Santa Claus!

So you see why it is a fabulous job—the best in the world!

However, every job has disappointments and regrets, so in the cause of fairness, I want to share a little of these too.

I put these comments of the context that I know how busy you are. But it saddens me when organisations who have had generous grants don't ever come to the regional events. Not only are they missing an opportunity to learn from the people there, but they are also failing to share what they know. Having seen people leave the events buzzing with new ideas, I know how valuable they are. But only if **you** come and share! In these times of funding cuts, this sharing seems even more important.

In the same way, the Trust has minimal requirements for reporting compared with others, but it can be challenging to extract feedback from centres on how the equipment is being used, what is successful and why. Again, a missed opportunity for sharing. It doesn't seem a big ask, given the generosity of the Trust.

So there you have it—my reflections on the Karten Network. Thank you again for your warmth and generosity—I have loved it and will miss you all.

Ceri Hibbert

Celebration at Portland College

A celebration event was held at Portland College on Thursday 7 May to mark 15 years' partnership with the Ian Karten Trust. Board members from both the Karten Trust and Karten Network were in attendance and also joined by a very special guest, Ian's great niece!



It was also wonderful to have David and Ann Amos present for the occasion as it was David, back in the year 2000, who requested a donation from Ian Karten to set up a CTEC Centre to assist the College's students with their independence by gaining new skills to communicate through ICT and to gain employment in Web Page Design.

Following the initial donation of £200,000 further funding has been given, over the years, to support several developments including the purchase of a Smartboard and Wii to engage students with exercise, a Soundbeam system for students to create music, a library centre for students to access information on demand and a variety of assistive technology equipment.



Most recently a donation has been made for our 'Wi-fi and Willies' scheme which has provided i-pads for students to take their learning out of the classroom. I-pads have been made available for students who are developing independence skills such as for travel training and when maintaining the extensive College grounds.



The day included a tour around the College for an opportunity to talk to students and see some of the equipment being used. Following this Tim Simon (Chair of the Trustees) gave a short speech before inviting David to cut the celebration cake.

Christine Price, Karten Network Director and formerly at Portland College

Karten Centre at Chimes, Tel Aviv

The **Aliza Begin Therapeutic Nursing Day Care Center** has been operated by Chimes Israel since 1992 under the supervision and support of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services and the city of Tel Aviv.

The Center sees itself as responsible for the care, supervision and advancement of its clients – to help them reach their personal potential, gain independence and integrate into society.

Today, we provide services for 50 clients; with moderate to severe intellectual and developmental disabilities, some requiring nursing care. Our clients have various genetic syndromes, such as Rhatt Syndrome, Down syndrome, Fragile X Syndrome and Angelman Syndrome. Some have communication difficulties, on the autism spectrum. Others have Cerebral Palsy and challenging behavior.

The Center provides para-medical and medical services, including gardening therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, movement therapy, art therapy and sports therapy. Concurrently, enrichment and social programs are also offered as well as programs for the personal advancement of each and every client according to his needs, aimed at instilling independence in them for their everyday lives, for example, improving and practicing walking skills, independence in eating, learning retention, personal hygiene and more.

Emphasis is also placed on integrating the clients in activities with the community inside and outside the Center, including joint activities with volunteers.

Thanks to the Ian Karten Charitable Trust, we were able to realize our plan for instilling assistive technology in our clients' individual habilitation plan. With this equipment we are able to offer more diverse options for productive activities, leisure and social activities.



Among the equipment purchased were touchscreen computers, iPads, switches and adaptor switches, mice and keyboards, smart TVs and software content (various applications and portals) as well as designated equipment cabinets and adjustable tables.



Work with the clients is implemented both on a group and individual level.

On the group level, we use iPads and smart TVs to expose the clients to a variety of content: from the center's Facebook page, news sites and current affairs, as well as photographs and content sent by their families. We also use different types of switches to enable operating shredders for paper recycling, juicers, SpinArt, mixers, etc.

Assistive technology is also used for group therapy such as speech therapy (using sound outputs), music, occupational therapy and more.

On an individual level our clients work at computer terminals that were installed in all 5 classrooms. The aim is to allow them to work in their natural environment while receiving the necessary assistance of the caregivers. At the same time, we recruited a number of volunteers who work with the clients to promote a number of specific skills. Even individual therapy sessions incorporate the iPad as a tool for treatment.

Implementation of these measures has opened the door to a new world of activities that were previously not accessible to most of the clients.

Omer Azriel, OT

Yifat Yogev, Director of Aliza Begin Therapeutic Nursing Day Care Center

Seeability campaign

The charity SeeAbility is calling on the NHS to bring sight testing into special schools in England after its research found 37 per cent of pupils have never had an eye test.

The figure is made all the more worrying as children with learning disabilities are 28 times more likely to have a serious sight problem compared to other children.

There are over 100,000 pupils in special schools across England, so thousands of children with disabilities may not be accessing the eye care they need.

NHS England doesn't encourage and incentivise sight tests to take place outside of the high street optician, but if it made a change to ensure sight tests were available in all special schools then it would be a much better place for children with complex needs to get these much needed checks.

If you agree, please sign SeeAbility's petition at www.seeability.org/petition

Ellie's story

Ellie is 9 years old, is non-verbal and uses a wheelchair. Ellie relies on her eyes to communicate by pointing using Eye Gaze. This is why looking after her eyes and vision is so important. Ellie was having to go to hospital for eye checks which she found very stressful. Now, thanks to SeeAbility, Ellie is having those checks in her special school.

We still need help with our petition. You could help in these ways:

- Tweet **#EqualRightToSight** to the world

[Print](#) off the petition and get friends or colleagues to sign

Email friends and ask them to sign (www.seeability.org/petition)

[Click](#) to send us your stories and experiences of sight testing

Every child has an **#EqualRightToSight** and with your help we can make it a reality.

Dates for the diary

The next Trustees meeting is on **Friday 11th March 2016** so final, completed application packs must be with Debbie (Israeli applications) or Ceri (UK) by **Friday 29th January**.

Contact us:

Ceri Hibbert: ceri@karten-network.org.uk
07530 702134

Debbie Ben-Tal: debbie@karten-network.org.uk

Angela Hobbs, Trustee: Kartentrust@aol.com
01590 681345

Martin Pistorius: martin@karten-network.org.uk

Dawn Green: dawn@karten-network.org.uk

If you have something for the next newsletter, or one of your clients would like to contribute a piece, please email Ceri up until March, and thereafter Dawn.