



March 2014

Another busy time for the Karten Network! It was wonderful to see so many people at the Regional events. If you missed them, do look out for this year's dates. They confirmed the value of networking: so much really valuable sharing went on, and everyone left with lots of ideas

Since the last newsletter, we have welcomed Debbie Ben Tal to the team—Debbie is doing the same job as me, but in Israel. I hope she enjoys the role as much as I do!

The Trustees are still meeting every March and September, so if you're considering submitting an application to the September meeting, please talk to Debbie or myself. The deadlines for submission are in the diary dates, so check them out.

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# Trustees meetings

In September 2013 the Trustees agreed funding for additional equipment at the following centres:

- Portland College, Mansfield—ipads and associated equipment to provide contextualised learning
- Meridian East, Norwich—updating of equipment for training
- Seashell Trust, Manchester—upgrades to PCs, assistive technology to enable access and an Omi-reflex system
- Derwen College, Oswestry— additional equipment for the print centre
- Treloar College, Alton—additional equipment for the print centre
- Aspire, national—updated equipment to Spinal Injury units
- Share Community—contribution to a immersive learning environment
- And a new centre at IsrALS, Israel—offering assessments of AT needs of people with Motor Neuron Disease in northern Israel

In March 2014 the Trustees agreed funding for additional equipment at:

- IsrALS, Israel— for equipment for an additional OT
- Homefield College - additional equipment for Sip and Surf in Loughborough
- QAC, Birmingham—updated equipment for the Media Centre
- Cedar Foundation, Belfast and Ballymena — updated PCs and ipads, with assistive technology
- Kisharon, London—upgrade to wireless system, ipads and charging unit

And a new centre at Chimes, Tel Aviv—a range of hardware and assistive technologies for a day centre.

# Regional Events 2013

As a result of feedback, the Network Board decided to move away from a national conference in 2013. There were concerns about doing this: would we be losing the sense of belonging to a single network? As it turned out, we found that the advantages far outweighed any losses: the intimacy of a smaller group of people meant that people were much more comfortable about sharing their experiences. There was definitely a buzz, and a sense of sharing and learning. We held 5 events:

- Seashell Trust in Manchester
- HE Academy in York
- Scope in London
- Momentum Skills in Glasgow
- Glasshouse College in Stourbridge

Many thanks to our hosts: we couldn't have done it without you! But great thanks are also due to each and every one of you who attended: the lively discussions and sharing would not have happened if you hadn't been there and prepared to join in. Sadly the session in Bristol had to be cancelled because too few people had signed up—was this because it was half term? Any feedback on how the format could be improved is very welcome.

Highspots for me? The excitement generated by you all when you talked about what you do in your centres; the tension of seeing whether the inflatable immersive learning space from 4D Creative would fit in a variety of rooms, watching people make music with Khorus—I could go on!

It has been decided to repeat the format this year—please see page 8.

# Welcome to Debbie Ben-Tal

We are really pleased to welcome Debbie Ben-Tal to the team. Debbie is based in Jerusalem, and will be looking after the centres in Israel. We have known Debbie for a number of years, as previously she has worked as an OT in Karten Centres at both Yad Sara and The Keren in Israel. I really welcome working with someone with those skills—Debbie ably fills the gaps in my knowledge as well as being a really nice lady! So welcome Debbie from the Network!



Debbie says: Just to tell you a little of what I do in my "*spare*" time.

## **ISRALS – The Israel A.L.S Research Association:**

<http://en.israls.org.il/>

Computer accessibility assessments for people with MND, aimed at finding the optimal solution for communication, both Low & High Tech. This project was funded by the Karten Network.

**Omer Center:** – An independent group of 7 professional S.P's & O.T's, providing assessments and solutions for AAC and AT for both children and adults.

**Ezer Metzion Charitable NGO:** <https://www.ezermizionusa.org/>

Director of the Israeli National Computer Accessibility Lending Centre established in 2013. Aimed at lending Assistive Technology equipment to people with special needs, from simple switches to EyeGaze Systems. The Centre sits within the department for lending out communication computers and voice output equipment.

**Netanya Home for adults with physical disability (Israeli Ministry of Welfare).** - Head Occupational Therapist.

All my positions complement each other, but the Karten Network pulls it all together.

I am incredibly proud to be part of the Karten Network Family and hope that I am able to do as good a job as Ceri (my mentor).

# Opening at Langdon College



Many congratulations to everyone at Langdon College, Salford on the opening of their Karten Centre last November! As you can see, the local mayor did a fine job of formally opening the Print Centre. The centre was only set up in the summer, but Chris Mayho, Principal, said that already the students talk about 'going to work' when they have a session at the Print Centre. The Centre is just a short walk from the College, which reinforces the idea of it being **real** work. We all look forward to seeing how the Centre develops, and wish them well.



# Visit to Israel

Tim Simon and I went to Israel in February for nearly a week. It was a very busy week: we visited our current centres and also visited organisations interested in setting up Karten Centres. And it was an ideal opportunity for Debbie and I to work together, making Debbie's induction into the job much less problematic than doing it by Skype!

Many of our centres in Israel were in a rehabilitation organisation called The Keren. Sadly, these centres were unable to continue functioning, so the main objective on our visit was to explore some organisations where we could potentially establish new centres. So it was a full week. We visited our centre at the Centre for Deaf Blind People in Tel Aviv, and saw the amazing work they do there: if you think you are good at multi-tasking go watch what happens! At the evening club one person was speaking Hebrew, which was being signed. All the participants sat in pairs, facing each other, with the sighted person facing the speaker/signer. This person then finger spelled what was being said into the hand of their partner. What amazed me was the fact that this was done with no breaks: all simultaneous translation! If you came to the conference in 2012 you will have met Yaakov—he is a tutor at CDB..

We also met with people from IsrALS—the organisation supporting people with ALS (Motor Neurone Disease as it is known in the UK). Equipment has been transferred to IsrALS to enable them to continue to offer assessments in patients own homes—and the Trustees have offered additional funding so that all areas of Israel can receive this service. The meeting was not without excitement: let's just say that Debbie's sat nav took us on a tour of the less salubrious areas of Tel Aviv, where 'night workers' were plying their trade... ! The Trust's Duty of Care means she now has a more reliable model of sat nav! We were also taken to the home of Dr Rahamin Melamed, who has had movement in only his eyes for many years. In that time he has written 14 books, and taught himself to paint using Photoshop—a truly inspirational man.

Since our visit, the Trustees agreed funding for a centre at Chimes, and we'll be telling you more about them in the next newsletter.

# Successes at Shaw Trust, Neath

## **MARVIS – “Coming here has expanded my horizons”**

Marvis has a physical disability, and uses a wheelchair to get around. She found out about Shaw Trust through a friend who had gone into one of the charity shops, and they arranged for Project manager Anne Thomas to visit her and discuss how Jigsaw could help.

Through the project Marvis has completed an IT course which teaches her to use an assistive computer programme. Marvis can no longer type due to her disability, so the programme enables her to speak to the computer and give it specific commands. There was nowhere else in the area that she could do this training. “It’s brought the world closer with the computer” said Marvis. “When you go on the internet you find out things quicker.

Through the courses you meet people.” Marvis visits the centre every Wednesday. “I’ve got to know people in the group well. Some of us still meet up once a month. I have made some good friends.”



## **PAUL THOMPSON– “It’s absolutely fantastic”**

Paul is diabetic and has had spinal surgery. He had a Stroke, followed by a heart attack. He became partially sighted after developing Diabetic Retinopathy and Macular degeneration. In 2011 his social worker suggested he join the Jigsaw Project. He also has alexia, which is caused when damage to the brain causes the patient to lose the ability to read.

Paul has taken many of the courses available through the project, including ‘Money Matters’, ‘Assertiveness and communications’ and the ‘Expert Patient Programme’. He has learnt to touch type, and Shaw Trust arranged a grant for him to buy a specialist computer programme for people who are visually impaired.

Paul really enjoys the social aspect of the courses, as well as the practical benefits. “I generally feel more included in society,” he said. “I get out once a week to go to the course. This may be the only time I get to go out in the week as I need to be guided at all times. It’s really good to go into a safe environment once a week. At the beginning my wife used to bring me, but I now come in on the transport which Jigsaw arrange for me. This gives my wife free time to go shopping and do chores, which is very helpful.”

Through the project, Paul has also found out about the help in the community which is available to him such as the cinema card, which allows a carer to go

to the cinema for free. “Things like this reduce the cost and make it more accessible” he said.

“I would definitely recommend the course” Paul adds. “The centre is brilliant. I plan to continue with the computer course and get better computer skills.”

### **JIMMY – Llongyfarchiadau to Jimmy!**

Jimmy had a stroke at the beginning of 2012 which resulted in severe memory loss and problems with his vision. He had to give up his work as a lorry driver and was feeling disheartened, with no idea of where to turn.

Meeting the staff at the Jigsaw Project run by Shaw Trust has given Jimmy a whole new perspective on life, allowing him to become fully computer literate and introducing him to the Stroke Association. “The courses are invaluable to me” said Jimmy, “I don’t have an obvious disability, but I’m hoping I can get enough training so that I can gain more independence than I have got.” Sup-



port for Jimmy has included help with the course as he himself admits that he ‘learns more slowly than others’, but with the patience of Shaw Trust’s staff, he is even managing to learn Welsh to add to his growing list of achievements.

He is immensely grateful for all the help that he has received and says, “If I met someone who was thinking of joining the [Jigsaw] project I would say ‘Yes! Do it!’. If they can’t help you here then they will find out who can and how to get there. I think it is an absolutely brilliant organisation.”

### **SUE PROSSER– helping to regain her confidence**

Sue joined the Jigsaw project in 2009. She had been working as a Ward Manager at a local hospital, when her eyesight became blurry. “At the time I was totally devastated, not knowing where to turn” said Sue. “It was about three months before I saw a social worker who referred me to the Jigsaw project.” Sue found that the support and help of both staff and clients helped her to get her confidence back, adding: “Knowing you are not alone and being able to share each others problems has been a real help.”

Sue has attended in courses in keyboard skills and touch typing, email, using the internet and the ‘Expert Patient programme’. “These have all been invaluable to me, and without the help and support from the staff at Jigsaw this wouldn’t have been possible.”

**Congratulations to all at Shaw Trust in Neath—staff and clients!**



# Regional events 2014

Following the success of the regional events last year, the Network Board have decided that we should follow a similar format this year. So in October and November a regional event will be coming to a location near you!

We have already discussed a theme, and the focus this year will be 'Using mobile devices'. So, have you some questions you would like answering: something you want to introduce with tablets or any other mobile devices but not sure how to go about it? Then send me those questions, and we'll make sure they are addressed. Or perhaps you have something you would like to share so others in the Network can benefit from your experiences—again, please let me know.

I have already had one centre offer to host a regional event: thank you Cedar Foundation in Belfast! Could you host one? What we would like to try this year is to offer work experience to a client at each centre where we have an event. They would work with me to make all the arrangements for the day: getting menus and costs from Catering, liaising with the facilities team—all those jobs which a person on the ground perform much better than I can sat at my desk. And for the individual, they would be getting experience requiring communication and organisational skills but in an environment that is familiar.

So please get involved with the regional events. Let me know if you have anything you would like to have included, or if you could host the event. But most of all, please look out for the dates, and come along—and bring your colleagues!

# App of the month

I love it when I visit centres and see that some of you have picked up on one of the Apps of the Month! Have you an application which you use with your clients—and it really works? Then please share.

The app can be for any device, any platform, any price. Just email me a paragraph with details of how you use it, and I'll publish it.

It's nearly the end of March and I haven't received any suggestions, so I think I'll have to get my thinking cap on...

## Jiscmail

In collaboration with Jisc TechDis, we recently set up a Jiscmail list for the Karten Network. This means that any of you can contact the whole of the Network—ask a question, share information or publicise events—just with one email. And then we can all follow the thread of the conversation. Some of you have already used it, and I hope to see this used more for centres to support each other.

If you haven't received information about this, or aren't sure whether you've been added to the mail list, please email me and I can get it sorted.

# Dates for the diary

The next Trustees meeting is on **Tuesday 23rd September** so final, completed application packs must be with Debbie (Israel) by **Friday 1st August** or Ceri (the rest) by **Friday 15th August**. If you intend to submit an application please talk to us now so we all have time to get everything ready. You will need the guidelines and a spreadsheet to populate with the equipment list, and we will also need to schedule a visit.

Dates haven't been confirmed for the 2014 regional events yet, but will be in October and November, so please keep a lookout for the dates and book in!

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

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