



BRITISH WIRELESS FOR THE BLIND FUND

KEEPING BLIND PEOPLE IN
TOUCH WITH THE WORLD



9



YEARS

1928-2018

AVAILABLE IN OTHER FORMATS

Foreword

Margaret Grainger
CEO

Welcome to British Wireless for the Blind Fund's 90th birthday Impact Report.



This year is particularly special for British Wireless for the Blind Fund as we mark our 90th birthday. On 20th June 1928 our founder Sir Ernest Beachcroft Beckwith Towse, a blinded Boer War veteran, recognised the isolation that often accompanies sight loss and how radio can help ease the sense of loneliness. To this day ensuring visually impaired people feel connected to the world around them remains at the core of our values.

If I can take you back to last year's Impact Report you'll remember that we were excited about the imminent launch of our very first smart device Bumblebee. Well, we aren't ones for standing still here at BWBF and, following extensive feedback and user testing, we will be launching Bumblebee Version 2 in 2018. Version 2 has some amazing user-led improvements and additions that will continue to make a difference to the lives of its beneficiaries.

This summer also saw the arrival of the latest specially adapted set from Roberts Radio, Opus. With ten pre-sets, USB playback and recording and Bluetooth streaming from your smart device Opus will, I'm sure, prove to be another very popular addition to our range.

On the subject of popular additions we have also expanded our team at head office; welcoming new members to our technology and accounting teams, and new trusts and communications officers.

This has been an exciting year full of new ventures and positive change behind the scenes. We have some exciting plans for the next twelve months and look forward to sharing them with you all as they happen.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank every one of our supporters, volunteers, donors and partners for helping us reach our 90th celebrations. Together we can continue to be there to support many more generations to come.

Margaret Grainger

From our Chairman

Daniel Smith

Chairman of BWBF's
Board of Trustees



Almost 90 years ago to the day the first ever British Wireless for the Blind Fund trustee meeting took place in central London. Today I

am immensely proud to be leading the group of people currently dedicated to looking after this well-established and well-loved charitable institution.

As we reflect on our rich history of supporting visually impaired people we are reminded of our family of generous supporters who enable us to continue our work improving the lives of so many across the UK.

As much as we pride ourselves on how well we look after our beneficiaries we also hope that our supporters and donors feel equally valued and cared for. This year we welcomed changes to data protection laws allowing people increased control of their contact details and how they are used.

This past year we have reviewed all our printed literature and our communication activities, and have renewed our database system in order to comply fully with all changes. Most importantly we want to ensure we are doing the best for everyone we contact. As always, if you have any feedback for us we should very much welcome it.

This year, more than ever, I want to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has played their part in helping us reach our 90th year.

To those who have already been involved with us for years and to those who are about to join us in our future endeavours – we thank you for your trust and support.

A handwritten signature in dark purple ink that reads 'Daniel Smith'.

'My radio from British Wireless makes my life easier, in-touch and more fulfilling' Michael Norman

WHAT WE DO



Providing adapted radios to blind and partially sighted people has been at the heart of British Wireless for the Blind Fund for 90 years.

Every year, around 3,000 people across the UK with visual impairments are given specially adapted equipment on free loan by BWBF; a commitment made in 1928 and proudly continued to this day.

Many registered blind and partially sighted people live on a very limited income and the cost of a specialised radio is often more than they can afford.

Our service is available to those who are registered blind or partially sighted and in receipt of a means tested benefit, ensuring we help those in greatest need. Today, there are approximately 40,000 of our sets in use throughout Great Britain.

BWBF has a variety of modified radios to meet the wide range of differing needs experienced by our visually impaired recipients; including a multimedia player, a simple DAB set and an app called Bumblebee.

Having an adapted radio that is easy to use and suits the individual user's daily needs is essential. For people who have lost the ability to see, radio becomes a lifeline to everything that is going on in the world. From national and local

news to weather and entertainment; just listening for a few hours a day helps prevent the loneliness and isolation that sight loss can bring.

With the passing years BWBF has continued working hard to ensure people with sight loss stay connected to the world around them. And, with the 2 million people registered blind in the UK set to grow to 2.25 million by 2020, the demand on our services can only continue to grow.

Each year BWBF needs to raise over a million pounds to keep supporting blind and visually impaired people, providing audio devices and developing new technology. We receive no government funding, so this work can only continue thanks to the kindness and generosity of our supporters.

Every penny donated goes towards continuing the work we have been so proud of over the last 90 years - and we hope to continue for many years to come.

OUR RADIOS

British Wireless for the Blind Fund provides specially adapted audio equipment to visually impaired people across the UK.

Opus

DAB/DAB+/FM
RDS/Bluetooth
portable digital
radio.



Duet 2

A portable Roberts
Radio product.



Bumblebee

Bumblebee is an easy
to use app, specially
designed to unlock
the digital world for
those with sight loss.



Concerto 2

A unique and versatile
Roberts Radio
multimedia player.



Play

An ultra-compact
and portable
DAB/FM radio.



... MORE THAN JUST A RADIO

WHAT OUR RECIPIENTS SAY

"I find it good company. I put it on first thing in the morning before the kettle goes on."

Mrs Jean Skinner

"I feel that someone out there cares about me enough to bring the whole world into my home at the touch of a button."

Mary Field

"It is always there, tuned into my favourite stations – like a faithful friend providing company, entertainment and comfort in a dark, dark world."

Joan Lewis

"It helps to lighten up my dull life considerably. Listening to my audio discs takes me into new, exciting and interesting worlds; thus helping to pass the time so happily. Thank you so much for my MP3 player!"

Miss Agnes Bryden

"Listening to the radio is a lifeline for me. I cannot read or watch TV, or do my puzzles anymore; but the radio keeps me in touch with the outside world."

Mrs Irene Phillips

"It's more than a friend dropping in. You feel part of life again. Thank you so much. Bad days can be good."

Mrs Lythgoe

"I have been in a care home for several years and my Concerto 2 set is one of my most treasured possessions. Every day it provides me with many happy hours of entertainment. I would miss it greatly."

Miss Geraldine Holloway

"It enables me to listen to audio books. As a bookworm, losing my vision, I thought books would be closed to me."

Mrs Rosson

"It has given me my freedom back. I now feel part of the community again."

Jess Edwards



"Whichever room I go to, I take my radio with me. I listen to music, discussions, sport and news. Who needs TV when your own personal radio is the best?"

Robert Collings

"I can use my imagination instead of my eyes when I listen to radio programmes. Plus I love to listen to music and can sing and dance, which makes me feel so happy. I couldn't cope without my radio. Thank you."

Sandra Collings

"I may be unable to see the beauty of our glorious world, but with the assistance of BWBF it unfolds audibly, clearly; every aspect of life. So I may not have usual capability but my mind remains active."

Wendy Sibley

"When your eyesight goes dim and images of life begin to fade, you rely on your hearing to reinstate the beautiful images of life within your mind. Hence the joy and blessing of the radio."

Kevin Diggins

"No matter if you have full, partial or no sight whatsoever; whenever you listen to the radio we are all in the same boat. We are all reliant on the voices speaking to tell us the information so we can 'see' what is going on."

John Hearn

"I could not live without it. It's a lifeline for my dark world."

Jean Williams

"It gives me a window on the world."

Rashmi Shah

"It is so easy to use with the bright yellow buttons. The sound is great."

Derek Evans

"It is my companion. We go to sleep together and wake up together."

Mrs Myles-Abadou

"My radio is the clock, calendar and newspaper that I can no longer see."

Mr Rapschutz

WHAT DID THE TEAM GET UP TO LAST YEAR



British Wireless Patron Shaun Williamson popping in to wish us a happy 90th birthday!



Our Regional Development Manager Stephen Poole receiving some very generous support from Waitrose in Formby.



David Beard and Ademola Afolabi from our Technical Support Team getting feedback on Bumblebee from Paralympian Souleyman Bah.



The team at the launch of our new product Bumblebee at the 2017 Sight Village, Birmingham.



Victoria Fox of BWBF Direct showing our Bumblebee device to the Lady Mayoress of Peterborough while visiting Deafblind UK Headquarters.



Meeting with Newcastle United's Head of Welfare and Equality, Steve Swinyard, to donate 10 free Play radios for their VI fans to use when at matches.



Thanking one of our many volunteers Stephen Reynolds for all his amazing help in the Technical Team.

On behalf of our beneficiaries we would like to thank all of our partners for their support.



THIS YEAR WE CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF THE NUMBER 90!

With no government funding it is only thanks to the kindness of the public that we can continue to support blind and partially sighted people across the UK.

For 90 years British Wireless has enabled thousands of visually impaired people to stay connected with the world around them.

Making a donation towards our work means together we can make sure we are here to support people with sight loss for the next 90 years.

A BIRTHDAY GIFT OF £90 WOULD...

- Provide ten recipients with headsets to use with their adapted radio
- Repair or service three of our much-loved sets so they can continue to bring joy into the homes of our beneficiaries
- Pay for 3 months of travel expenses for our office volunteers who provide us with vital administrative support
- Allow 3 Bumblebee users to have speakers free of charge to use with their device
- Enable us to deliver, set up and maintain the placement of a free radio to a visually impaired person anywhere in the UK

Turn over to see how you can help us in our work...

Quite simply, a birthday gift of any amount will help us alleviate the isolation and loneliness often felt due to sight loss.

Losing your sight can bring new challenges and difficulties to everyday living, often leading to feelings of seclusion and isolation.

Without any government funding BWBF relies solely on the generosity of the general public. To find out all of the ways in which you can help us continue to provide blind and partially sighted people with a vital link to the world please visit our website: www.blind.org.uk

Here are a few ideas for now...

Make a donation

There is a form you can use on pages 11 and 12 including more details about how to support us this way.

Turn your used stamps into funds

Stamps need to be cut out with no more than 1cm of envelope remaining around them. Then just post them to us and we'll do the rest!

Buy a radio

Our commercial arm 'BWBF Direct' donates 100% of its profits back to the charity so when you buy one of our radios you are also supporting our charitable work.

See our range at www.bwbfdirect.co.uk

Donate your shares

If you have shares which are uneconomic to sell, you may wish to consider donating them to ShareGift, the share donation charity, mentioning you support British Wireless.

Leave a gift in your will

Leaving us a legacy is a special way to help ensure we are here to support people with sight loss when they need us for years to come.



I would like to support British Wireless so it can help visually impaired people for the next 90 years by making a donation.



I enclose a cheque for £

(made payable to British Wireless for the Blind Fund)

or

Please debit my: Mastercard Visa (Please tick)

For the amount of £

Card number

Start date / Expiry date /

Security code Issue number (if on your card)

ACCOUNT HOLDER DETAILS

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

or

If you would prefer to make a regular gift to us, you can request a Direct Debit form from Julie Hocking on 01622 427632 or by emailing julieh@blind.org.uk

Alternatively you can simply download the form from our website - www.blind.org.uk/support-us/make-a-donation/set-up-a-regular-donation/

Please make me a Friend of British Wireless with this gift.

Please turn over >

MAKE YOUR GIFT WORTH EVEN MORE

giftaid it

If you would like to make your donation go 25% further through allowing us to claim Gift Aid, simply sign the declaration below. Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give, we get an extra 25 pence from HM Revenue & Customs.

Simply return this form and we'll do the rest!

I am a UK tax payer and would like to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in future or have made in the past 4 years.

I understand if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify BWBF if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay income tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid declarations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Signature

Date

Our promise to you - BWBF values its supporters.

We would not be able to continue our work without you.

It's important to us that you feel informed about our news, future developments and fundraising. We want to share with you how your amazing support helps to change the lives of visually impaired people across the UK.

If you do not wish to be contacted, or you would like to change how we contact you, let us know at any time using the following details –

mydata@blind.org.uk, 01622 754757, 10 Albion Place, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 5DZ

We respect your privacy and remain committed to ethical and responsible fundraising and communications. Your details will be stored securely and we will never sell them. However, from time to time we may need to share your details with trusted partners authorised to work on our behalf such as our printers or agents (e.g. your local blind association).

For further information please refer to our privacy policy –

www.blind.org.uk/privacy-policy/

Please return your completed form to our freepost address.

**FREEPOST RRXL-EAXXAXAT, BRITISH WIRELESS FOR THE BLIND FUND,
10 ALBION PLACE, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME14 5DZ**

THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

What is GDPR?

You may have seen the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) mentioned in the news recently, or perhaps other organisations have been in touch with you about your data.

Data privacy laws have recently undergone the biggest changes of the last 20 years. The laws needed updating due to the increasing amount of personal data being generated, largely because of advances in technology.

What does it mean for you?

Your privacy is everything to us and we want you to enjoy every bit of communication that we send to you. You will have more control over your personal data and how it is used. You get to decide who contacts you and how, which hasn't always been made completely clear previously.

What do you need to do?

If you are happy with how we contact you then you don't need to do anything. Of course you can change your mind about allowing us use your data any time by simply letting us know your preferences.

Your data is in safe hands with BWBF.

All companies, including charities, have had to review how they deal with personal data - and BWBF is no different.

We have:

- Reviewed our data and privacy policies
- Assessed how and what we communicate with you
- Improved our data security systems

You can find OUR PROMISE TO YOU and our contact details for all of your data queries on the form opposite.

**“The house is empty without my radio.
I like music and talks and everything is there
at the press of a button” Joyce McCoy**

THE HISTORY OF BRITISH WIRELESS

Earlier in the year, as we were preparing to celebrate our 90th birthday, we delved into the charity's archives in order to take a step back in time and better understand the story that created the charity we know today, and how we came to make it to our 90th year.

While rifling through our trove of memories we discovered a unique collection of forgotten treasures including, most remarkably, an original gramophone recording of King George V's first ever Christmas radio broadcast to the Empire in 1932. The recording had been presented to BWBF founder, Captain Beachcroft Towse VC, by the King himself!



Our invaluable archives show how the rich history of our charity has been so closely interwoven with the history of our nation, and we are proud to continue to support blind and partially sighted people across the UK so many years after being established.

We've come so far in the last 90 years; who knows what we can achieve for the blind community in the next 90.



Above: the original gramophone recording of King George V's first ever Christmas radio broadcast to the Empire in 1932

Right: How the *Kent Messenger* reported our finds!



FACTS AND FIGURES

Our 90th year has seen us go from strength to strength with another new set to add to our product range, a brand new version of Bumblebee and even more people benefitting from our support. It really has been a year to celebrate.

- We have issued **2,895** radios on free loan to visually impaired people across the UK.
- This has included **2,385** of our most popular Concerto 2 multimedia players, 322 Duet 2 digital radios, 70 Sonata plus internet radios and 118 other pieces of equipment.
- A total of **888** of the issued radios were refurbished or recycled. That's a massive 26% increase on the previous period.
- We have also continued to grow the number of Talking Newspapers on offer via our streamed service, with a fantastic **170** individual publications now available.
- The launch of Bumblebee saw **74** beneficiaries receive their new smart device and their feedback has helped us in developing Version 2 for release later in 2018.
- We are now able to offer over **250** live web pages on Bumblebee, ranging from news and current affairs to sport and entertainment.

Our finances

* last year we changed the start of our financial year therefore this column of figures represent 14 months

** additional expense due to in-house development of our new Bumblebee App

Income	*1 Nov 2016-31 Dec 2017	1 Nov 2015-31st Oct 2016
Donations	114,389	90,276
Legacies	781,859	1,165,046
Trusts and Foundations	342,070	283,281
Marketing Sales	246,499	241,985
Investments and Other Income	145,494	159,099
Total Income	1,630,311	1,939,687
Expenditure		
Grants	10,045	8,820
Costs of Further Charity Objectives**	1,332,364	699,360
Support Costs	436,493	388,606
Fundraising & Publicity	228,873	143,763
Marketing Expenditure	230,574	238,192
Investment Management Costs	23,160	22,553
Governance Costs	32,616	34,992
Total Expenditure	2,294,125	1,536,286
Excess Income after Expenditure	-663,814	403,401
Gains and Investments	180,623	395,791
Total Surplus for year	-483,191	799,192

90
YEARS
1928-2018



How to contact us:

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10 Albion Place,
Maidstone,
Kent, ME14 5DZ**

Tel: **01622 754757**

Email: **info@blind.org.uk**

Web: **www.blind.org.uk**

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Available in other formats

Registered charity number: 1078287

Scottish charity number: SCO41582

Print and design by Captiv8. www.captiv8uk.co.uk