

# DABhand



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# Latest News

Firstly, a belated **Happy New Year** from everyone at Ipswich DAB – let us hope that it will be peaceful and healthy for us all.

Ipswich DAB was founded in 1973, so 2013 is to be a very special year for us as we celebrate our **40<sup>th</sup> anniversary**. We have designed the logo below to mark the occasion and this is now on our home page. We will be holding some events throughout the year to celebrate the occasion, beginning with **a quiz on 14 March at 7.00pm at 19, Tower Street** – watch this space for further events.



Secondly, welcome to our **new website** [www.ipswichdab.org.uk](http://www.ipswichdab.org.uk) which went live at the end of November 2012.

2012 was the busiest year ever for Ipswich DAB, with a very big peak at the time of the implementation of the Welfare Reform Act. Since September 2012, Advisers have attended more Tribunals as, following a change of venue from Kesgrave community Centre to Ipswich Magistrate's Court Witness Suite. They are now held on four days each week rather than one day a week, as was previously the case.

In addition, since the beginning of November our offices have been in a constant state of chaos. Firstly, the heating boiler had to be replaced and as soon as that was up and running, building work to ensure that 19 Tower Street is compliant with Fire Regulations began. Two of our three offices have had to be cleared for walls to be re-inforced and re-plastered, all doors into the corridor have been replaced and new closers fitted. All the doors are being painted with flame retardant paint and are wired to the fire alarm panel. While awaiting a wireless push button to be fitted for the Admin Office, a two metre deep hole appeared under the tarmac in the car park. No mediaeval kings were found but it was found necessary to dig up the car park again a few weeks later, because one of the rainwater drains had no piping to connect it to the sewers. In March they will start re-wiring the building in phases.

**Advice on fuel bills and other money matters** - the weather has been very cold, with ice and snow. It is important that we all keep warm and eat well. Hats, gloves and scarves are a must when we go outside. Many people with disabilities are concerned about how they are going to pay bills, especially heating bills. If you are worried about this or other money matters do contact Ipswich DAB as we have two new Advisers with us each Wednesday, who give advice on these issues.

**Power cuts** – unfortunately our power cables, especially those on overhead pylons can be affected by snow and ice and high winds at this time of the year. UK Power Networks are the company that look after these cables and have to go out and repair them when something goes wrong. They are concerned that people who are vulnerable during a power cut get the help they need. Examples include people who are dependent on electricity for medical equipment such as oxygen, nebulisers, dialysis, sleep apnoea, hoists, stair lifts or have medication that needs to be kept in a fridge. Also, people who have chronic health problems, mobility problems and other disabilities or who are frail.

You need to join the Priority Customer Register and Ipswich DAB has the forms. You can also join by e-mail: [prs@ukpowernetworks.co.uk](mailto:prs@ukpowernetworks.co.uk)  
Or by telephone: **0800 169 9970**

When you join you will be given a priority phone number that you can contact to report a power cut (or get updates) without being held in a queue. UK Power Networks, once they know of a power cut will try to contact all registered customers in the affected area. However, you will need to use an ordinary landline telephone, as cordless phones do not work during power cuts. UK Power Networks work closely with the British Red Cross who will visit to offer help during adverse weather or if the power cut will last for several hours. They may set up emergency centre where people can be taken to keep warm and get hot drinks and snacks.

Finally, once the repairs to the electricity cables have been completed, people on the Priority Service Register will be contacted to make sure that individual homes have been restored. This is because trip switches can be affected as the power goes off and need to be reset when it is restored. However, these are usually situated in places that are awkward to get to, such as the cupboard under the stairs.

**New outreach service** – Ipswich DAB serves an area that as well as the Borough of Ipswich, covers Kesgrave and south Suffolk from Shotley westwards to Hadleigh. Early in 2013 we will begin holding weekly outreach sessions in Brantham so as to make it easier, and less costly, for clients in south Suffolk to access our services.

The outreach has been made possible by a grant from the Facilitation Fund managed by the Cabinet Office for Disability Issues as well as support from the Lord Belstead Charitable Trust, the Scarfe Fund and Somersham and East Bergholt Parish Councils. We currently have funding for just over a year and continued funding beyond that period will depend on level of usage.

**Universal Credits pilot study** – Universal Credits include Working Tax Credits, Child Tax Credits, Housing Benefit, income based Job Seekers allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support. The scheme is due to be introduced to new claimants in October 2013.

As soon as information began to circulate, Ipswich DAB realised that this will not only be a huge change for our clients and Advisers in terms of the benefits themselves, but also in terms of the application method and our own methods of working with clients. Currently, most claims are submitted on paper forms filled in by Advisers by hand. Universal Credits have to be claimed online and an online account maintained, with claimants also receiving information in this access to a computer or the internet and 55 percent do not know how to use either or both.

In order to prepare ourselves and meet the needs of our clients, we applied through Suffolk Foundation, to the Improving Suffolk Fund for funding for Advisers to begin using online forms with some of our clients. This will enable both Advisers and clients to assess what their difficulties will be with the implementation of Universal Credits and what provision Ipswich DAB will need to make in order to continue to provide the same level of service to our clients. The study has the support of Ipswich Job Centre Plus.

**Dyslexia** — we have been working with clients with dyslexia for about two years, using the skills of an existing member of staff. In January 2013 we will be expanding on this as we have been funded for an eight month project by a European Social Fund East of England community grant.

**Research** – is listed as one of our primary activities in the Memorandum and Articles of Ipswich DAB but very, very little has ever been carried out. Now we are making up for lost time and two pieces of research are currently underway, both linked to projects detailed above:-

- The implementation of the Universal Credits pilot study and the analysis of the outcomes are part of a Master of Science degree supervised by University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth.
- Employment in a changing workplace and people with dyslexia, who completed their education before the 1981 Education Act introduced SEN (Special Educational Needs) provision in school, is the subject of a

distance learning doctorate being studied at the University of Exeter, funded and jointly supervised with University of St Mark and St John.

**New computers and network** — will, at long last, be installed after Easter. Funding for the computers came from the Advice Services Fund and for a new server by Suffolk County Council's Locality Budget. Our current computer network is ten years old and 'on its last legs'. Due to delays in the commencement of building work to make the multi-occupancy building where we are based compliant with Fire Regulations legislation, we have had to postpone the installation of the new computers several times – new computers and building work must not mix! We will have to close the office to both visitors and telephone enquiries for a day – so watch this space for details.

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## Universal Credits

From October 2013 the government will be phasing in Universal Credit (UC) .

This will be

\*digital by default (applied for online)

\* paid monthly

\* paid to one member of a household.

8. 5m people have never used the internet and a further 14. 5m people have virtually no ICT skills.

Monthly payments don't match common budgeting plans for the poor.

Payment to one member of a household will upset family dynamics.

The DWP say digital skills are a factor in around 72% of work and the government uses this argument to justify managing UC online.

The government says that advice will be available to help with family budgets.

It is intended that the switch to UC will be completed by 2017 at a cost of £2bn.

UC will result in a less clear division between unemployment and employment.

People will receive different rates as their hours of work move up and down.

Most tests that currently use hours of work will be replaced by tests of threshold amounts.

Disregards will be much larger for some groups.

Total amounts of benefits will be capped to the median level of earnings for those not in receipt of certain benefits.

There will be a Housing Benefit only cap, operated by local authorities, from April 2013 to be applied to those not yet moved to UC.

There will be transitional protection to prevent anybody getting a lower amount when transferring to UC. This protection would only end following a major change in circumstances.

The Act introduces a 'claimant commitment' with a formal statement of requirements and penalties. There will also be civil penalties for failure to disclose information, report changes and just plain negligence.

- \* CTC
- \* HB
- \* income related ESA
- \* income based JSA
- \* IS
- \* WTC

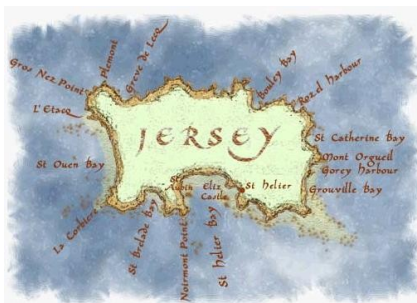
There will be a capital limit, subject to transitional protection, on those claiming tax credits when they switch to UC.

We will be aiming to make sure that the the DAB's computers meet the DWP specification to complete a UC application

By Andrew Stewart

We went by Condor Ferries from Poole, the disabled facilities onboard could have been a lot better by having proper wheelchair places, also the outgoing ferry disabled toilet was difficult to get into and a bit cramped, but the coming back ferry was easier. There wasn't even any Wi-Fi internet access on either ferry which surprised me.

We went back to Jersey to specifically to see their carnival called “The Battle of Flowers” which all started in 1902 to celebrate the Coronation of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, Jersey decided to hold a parade. The event was so successful that it was decided to repeat it the following year and a tradition was established. In the early days the floats were mostly horse-drawn and covered in floral decorations. The tradition was to tear a flower off





the float and throw it to a lady in the crowd. Flowers were sometimes thrown back and hence 'Battle' was born.



The above picture is of this year's winning float called "Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines" by The Optimists Club

The Parade was abandoned during World War 1 but revived in 1926. During World War II and the Occupation of the Channel Islands the Parade was again suspended. At the start of the 1950's a group of businessmen decided that a revival of Battle was long overdue as a focus for the community and an additional benefit for the emerging tourism industry.

The event has gone from strength to strength and in 1964 it was decided to drop the 'Battle' aspect of the Parade.

Competition is fierce, the larger fully floral floats of up to 45ft compete for the major award Prix d'Honneur. Islanders of all ages work unceasingly in the weeks leading up to Battle in warehouses and sheds all over the Island, patiently working with dried flowers and harestails (lagurus grass) making intricate patterns and designs.

The night before Battle the Island is 'abuzz' with many helpers working all night sticking the many thousands of fresh flowers on to their floats. The fresh flowers are predominately chrysanthemums with have been shipped in from the UK and Holland and asters that have been grown locally.



Not only is Battle one of Jersey's premier tourist attractions it is also a major community project where everyone gives their time freely to complete this amazing spectacle.

Miss Jersey Battle of Flowers was a local lass called Rebecca Houze and Mr Battle was Matthew Wolfenden who plays David Metcalfe in Emmerdale

We also had a look around St. Helier and other villages, we looked around the Jersey Pearl centre.

On a whole Jersey is very good for disabled visitors with plenty of disabled toilets just remember your RADAR key, our hotel didn't have disabled rooms as it was part of a package.

### **DAB's President carries the flame.....**



It was Olympic Torchbearer Kevin's 'moment to shine' as Ipswich celebrated 2 days of flaming fun on 5 and 6 June 2012.

The torch relay was the build-up to the worlds' greatest celebration of sport, the Olympic Games.

Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would carry an Olympic torch. Being selected to be one of 8000 inspirational people is indeed a huge honour,

(thoughts of not being worthy started to flood through my mind and whether my story/life the potential to inspire.)

There were 30,000 nominations, which were reduced to only 8000, not an easy job for someone. Then I received a letter stating, 'Congratulations Kevin. This will be your moment to shine'. The Torch Relay played an important role in getting the UK to celebrate the Olympic games. Three years planning of preparation and the torchbearers were the most important role in the relay, (so no pressure on me then!) The oldest torchbearer, Diana Gould from London was 100, the youngest Dominic Macgowan aged 12, and I was somewhere in between these ages.



My nominations came from Nikole Bomyer of Heath School, Kesgrave, my neighbour, who lives in my road, and John Stebbings from Ipswich Borough Council for my charity work and sporting achievements

My day to carry the torch duly arrived Friday 6 July 2012, in Ipswich at 6.47am - briefing at 5am!!! Clearly, I didn't sleep a wink, as in my information pack it stated 'the torch waits for no one'! Also how would I dare face people and say, 'Sorry I overslept!'

Friends asked, when I heard that I had been chosen as a torch carrier, 'When and where was my run, we want to come down and support you?' I replied '6.47am Northgate Street and the Buttermarket.' Silence then 'Maybe we will watch you online, it's a bit early'. But on the day ..... May I say, 'Thank you', to everyone who came down to support and wave. I was overwhelmed!

The event was militaryy organized, letters by e-mail, booklets explaining what was expected of me. The white official torch bearers uniform was couriered to me direct and it was a perfect fit! I was not allowed to wear anything on top of the uniform only extra layers beneath. Friday 6 July 2012 duly arrived it was raining hard at 3am. Oh, Lucky Kev!, but I'm an old sea dog sailor ,so getting wet is okay. I jumped into my van to arrive at 4.30am, to be met by John Stebbings, in the car park, with umbrella in hand. I was ushered into the shuttle bus to shelter, whilst the other seven torchbearers arrived at Christchurch Mansion museum for the 5am meeting.

Security checks were done and my driving licence shown. I needed an adaptor to carry the torch on my chair, in order that I could self propel the wheelchair myself. At the meeting we introduced ourselves to the other torch runners, all clad in their white uniforms. Hearing what they had all done to be chosen to carry the Olympic torch was really inspiring. Our numbers were allocated - I was number 002.

We were shown, the Olympic torch which was designed by the East London design company Barber Osgerby. The 8000 cut out circles represents each of the torchbearers. The circles ran the length of the torch, ensuring the torch itself didn't get too hot. The triangular shape of the torch was inspired by a series of 'threes':

- the Olympic values - respect, excellence and friendship.
- the three words that make up the Olympic motto - faster, higher, stronger,
- and the fact that the UK has hosted the Olympic games in 1908, 1948 and 2012 .

The torch is gold in colour and weighed about 1kg with the burner system fitted.

We had one last comfort stop before boarding the shuttle bus to drop us off at our 'kiss points' for exchange of the flame. As I was dropped off outside PJ McGintys, my nerves were settling, friends, family, all gathered around, the crowds were building, the church bells rang, photos were being taken. The crowd was amazing, cheering shouting my name and clapping. Everyone wanted to see and celebrate the flames departure.



The relay was amazing it was a once in a life-time experience for me, and the memories of the push will remain with me for the rest of my life.

A Security Team of police outriders and police who jogged alongside me in their grey uniforms. The prestigious parade attracted many onlookers and visitors, and there was some local disruption to traffic, and to avoid hold ups the police used a rolling roadblock to surround the torch.

After the event, the torch, which I had purchased for £199, was decommissioned, by removing the gas cylinder. It has been photographed many times from every angle, I now have it proudly displayed in my living room, on a special stand, in my home.

I really enjoyed the Olympic and Paralympic Games and was so proud to have played my part of getting the flame to the Olympic Games opening ceremony.

Thank you to everyone for supporting me on such an early, damp Friday Morning on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2012 I hope you all enjoyed the event as much as I did.

Kevin Curtis

## **FOLLOWING THE FLAMES.....**

I first saw the Olympic flame in Woodbridge, where I live, on 5 July 2012 – a very hot and sunny afternoon. There were crowds lining the route and numerous events in the gardens and premises beside the route – whether private occasions for family and friends, or the public barbeque put on by Notcutts.

The informality and very low level of policing was a pleasant surprise, no barriers to keep the public out of the way of the entourage of the sponsors' vehicles that preceded the torchbearer, or the torchbearer themselves. So long as the torch kept moving, members of the public could move around to take photographs and get really close to the Olympic flame when it was handed on from one torchbearer to another.



The weather was more typical of last Summer of the following morning when, at 6.40am, Judy and I joined an amazing number of people who had also got up early and turned out in the rain, to support Kevin as he took the Olympic flame on the second stage of its journey from its overnight stop at Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich.



In August the Paralympic flame visited Suffolk, arriving at Snape Maltings on 25 August 2012, a Saturday afternoon. It came to Snape Maltings so as to be on stage during a concert by the Paraorchestra that same evening. But many people, not attending the concert, gathered to await its arrival. The Paralympic flame was not carried by a torchbearer, but was in a Davey miners lamp.



Whilst the Olympic games began in Greece and the Olympic flame is brought from there, the Paralympics games began at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Buckinghamshire and therefore, the Paralympic flame is ignited in Britain. In 2012 there were four flames ignited by members of the Scout Association by sparking rocks at the top of the four highest mountains in Britain – Scafell Pike in England, Ben Nevis in Scotland, Mount Snowdon in Wales and Slieve Donard in Northern Ireland. The flames were brought down from the mountain in miners lamps, and toured the countries where they had been lit, until being united in London before being taken by torch to the official opening of the Paralympic games.

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## SAFER TO BE SEEN

Debut: The High Visibility Scooter/Wheelchair Bag

It is stylish and multifunctional. You no longer need to throw a high visibility tabard or yellow shopping bag across the back of the wheelchair. The 'Debut' has high visibility panels and wide reflective strips arranged strategically to command maximum awareness by the user in all seasons and weather conditions.

Made from heavy duty nylon the 'Debut' is robust and shower proof. It has a large top opening compartment and a front flat document pouch. Each is opened by easily gripped zips. Along each side there are sleeves designed to hold walking aids or an umbrella. There is also a further accessory available, separately purchased – a stick/crutch sheath – which inserts into the sleeve to hold and protect the walking aid at different levels.

The standard harness fits wheelchairs with or without headrests. It has adjustable straps fitted with slide and snap fasteners.

Our market research showed that 100% of users approached said the 'Debut' is a great bag and if they had a choice again they would choose it.

The price is £24.50 including delivery.

For more information please go to. [www.safertobeseen.com](http://www.safertobeseen.com)