



Face Blind UK

October 2015

Issue 2

October 2015

www.faceblinduk.org.uk

Face Blind UK : News

News News News News News News

Living with prosopagnosia

Face Blind UK

- Set up in 2014
- By & for people with prosopagnosia (face blindness)
- UK based
- A Community Interest Company
- Aiming to raise awareness
- Aiming to create a national network
- Aiming to provide information and support
- Join us now!

www.faceblind.org.uk

It's not all BAD! - Brain Awareness Day



Hazel & Jo at the BAD! Event

We're striving to raise awareness of face blindness, so were delighted to be invited to have a stand at Goldsmiths' Brain Awareness Day.

Two people with acquired prosopagnosia were on the discussion panel talking about their everyday experiences of being face blind.

This was Face Blind UK's first official outing Jo Livingston and Hazel Plastow (two of Face Blind UK's directors) manned the stand, signing up 9 new members.

We felt warmly welcomed and hope this will be an annual event for Face Blind UK.

Face Blind UK Open Meeting

Face Blind UK's first meeting was kindly hosted by Birkbeck. Twelve of us met on the hottest ever July day. The day included: an update on the organisation's achievements, an overview of current research and in the afternoon workshops. See www.faceblind.org.uk/news.



In July 2015 Face Blind UK celebrated its FIRST Birthday!

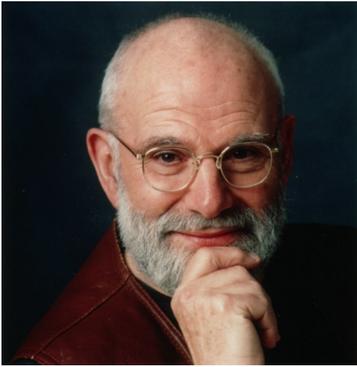
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Thank you, Thank you, Thank you

... for a most generous £50 donation from one of our individual members, and for donations from Caterham & Harestone Rotary Club, Alchemy Trust, Caterham Rotary Club and Limpsfield Rotary Club. These funds will keep the website running through next year and help us to provide new resources for members in 2016. Thank you for your fantastic support for exciting times.

Produced by and for people with prosopagnosia



Oliver Sacks -

Oliver Sacks left this world on Sunday 30th August, aged 82.

As a neuroscientist he wrote - "We see with the eyes, but we see with the brain as well", daring

to write sensitive narratives bringing discussions of consciousness into the public domain. He saw his work in terms of defining neurological experiences, and in so doing reassuring people affected that they were not going insane.

As a community those of us with face blindness owe Dr Sacks a great debt of gratitude. He was part of

the scientific body that explored and unpicked the brain's idiosyncrasies, but also crossed the doctor patient divide by talking of his own struggles to recognise faces.

He wrote about visual agnosia in "The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat" (1985), and in 2010 dedicated a chapter in "The Mind's Eye" specifically to face blindness.

In one of his last pieces he wrote of the 'Sabbath', "the day of rest ... and perhaps the seventh day of one's life as well, when one can feel that one's work is done, and one may, in good conscience, rest."

Rest in Peace.

Did you see?

Prosopagnosia - a short murder mystery



Short Film of the Week (June 2015)

Alfred finds his best friend dead in her flat and looks the perpetrator right in the eyes, but he can't recognize anyone's face.

He struggles to explain

the effects of being face blind and the impact it has on his ability to build relationships.

It's somewhat tricky for someone face blind to follow, but makes the twist in the tail even more unexpected.

Just 13 minutes long,

dramatised of course, but a very sensitive telling of the confusion and blunders that are day events for those of us with face blindness though luckily that doesn't usually include witnessing a murder!

Google search: **prosopagnosia thriller** or link to the website <https://vimeo.com/129415238>

TOP TIPS from ... a teacher with prosopagnosia



As a face blind teacher, my top tips include:

- ◆ Use name badges, maybe as an art project
- ◆ Encourage regular seating patterns

- ◆ Record details (discreetly) to help identify children
- ◆ Seek support from colleagues

But probably not a good idea to explain to a class of children that you have a problem.



Research Updates from: *America*

Letter from America

Harvard have produced a bi-annual newsletter on prosopagnosia since 2010, called:

'Face to Face'

This gives a layman's guide to research into face blindness and has features on the researchers themselves, from the UK as well as the US.

Back copies are all online at www.faceblind.org/links

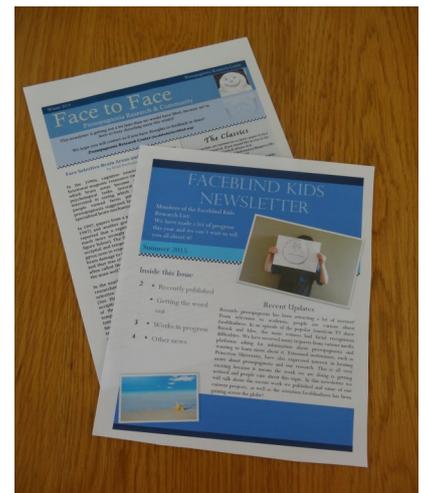
Another newsletter -

'FaceBlind KIDS'

is produced by Kirsten Dalrymple from the University of Minnesota. This provides an update on new publications and current research related to children with face blindness.

You can subscribe to each of these for free and don't forget you can sign up to have this newsletter emailed to you direct.

Contact: info@faceblind.org.uk



You'll find more information and web links to all these newsletters from www.faceblind.org.uk/news

Book Review: *Mapping Charlie* by Jane Meyerding

This is the first of a trilogy of novels, all set in Seattle and with a main character, Kay, who is both face blind and has Aspergers. In this first book she's caught up in the murder of a man she barely knows and her very literal answers make her a suspect, so she sets out to solve the crime herself.

Jane has both of the conditions she writes about so the descriptions of

the difficulties they cause are genuine. She explains in detail what they are like to live with and how, sometimes, they let her character succeed where a 'normal' person (neuro typical) would not have done.

Two other titles are 'Forest for the Trees' and 'Ambivalent Advocate'. Jane's books are self published and available from www.lulu.com

"thrilled to finally see someone like me in literature."

Amazon Reviewer

Tweets & Technology

We watch the web for items that may be of interest to people with prosopagnosia, and found some links to ways that technology might help people with face blindness.

These include face recognition Apps, a GPS alert for "Friend in the Proximity", and a project at Birmingham University developing a cane, for use by blind people, incorporating a



Follow us on Twitter

camera which draws on a database of faces to recognise people up to 30 feet away.

To keep track of events research and publications related to prosopagnosia follow us on Twitter [@faceblinduk](https://twitter.com/faceblinduk)



Face Blind UK

Face Blind UK is a Community Interest Company, set up in 2014.

It is a national organisation for people with prosopagnosia (also known as face blindness). This neurological condition affects over 2% of the population, approximately 1.2 million individuals across the UK.

The organisation is run by people with first hand experience of prosopagnosia. It aims to raise awareness and understanding of face blindness, and to offer information, networking links and support to people who have face blindness.

A Year of Achievement

In July we celebrated the first anniversary of Face Blind UK.

Achievements to date:

- ◆ Website launched and now up to 900 visitors a month
- ◆ Twitter @faceblinduk—100 Tweets & 70 Followers
- ◆ Media coverage: Huffington Post; Sunday Express; Chat Magazine; Daily Mail, National TV & Local Radio
- ◆ NHS recognition for prosopagnosia - GP: Read Codes
- ◆ 18 talks in 2014/15 to a total audience of 843 people
- ◆ A membership of 65 and growing

To book a talk, become a member or get involved, Contact Us at info@faceblind.org.uk



Letters to the Editor

We'd like to make sure that we give space for your own -



- ◆ Experiences
- ◆ Top tips
- ◆ Book & film reviews

So please send your comments and contributions to

info@faceblind.org.uk

We will collate these to put on to the website alongside this issue, or as an item for the next newsletter.

We're on the Web

www.faceblind.org.uk

Check it out,
join the mailing list email info@faceblind.org.uk and
let us know what you'd like to see on the website.

Conference Season!

Returning from the conference, SID was puzzled to find that everyone now knew his name



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Prosopagnosic Penguins

Produced by and for people with prosopagnosia