



Assistive Technology News

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Contents

Queen Opens Agnes Court	p1
Queen's Award Accolade	p2
NurseCall Link Installation	p3
Possum Service and Support	p3
Product News:	
Communication Aid - Jive!	p4
Controller - Lite+	p4
Exhibitions 2009	p4
Contact	p4

HM The Queen Opens State Of The Art Oxfordshire Service



Leonard Cheshire Disability Patron, HM The Queen, visited Banbury (Nov 2008) to

officially open Agnes Court, a new state of the art residential service for disabled people.

It was the first time in 50 years that the Queen had visited Banbury and she was met by thrilled staff and service users who were only too keen to show her around the new facility.

As part of the tour the Queen saw how Possum technology, fitted in all of the private rooms, helps service users live a more independent life. She also viewed a new IT suite and the specially adapted kitchens that enable disabled people to prepare their own meals.

Agnes Court was developed as a result of the re-provisioning of Greenhill House, formerly located in the village of Adderbury, three miles from Banbury. The new residence is easily accessible to Banbury town centre, shopping centre and other facilities enabling the service users of Agnes Court to live within the community.

Sue Northcott, Service Manager at Agnes Court, added: "It was a huge honour to have the Queen here. I was just bowled over by how approachable she was and how easy it was to be relaxed in her company. Everyone really enjoyed her visit – although I think some were a bit in awe of her as well!"

The Queen also met with volunteers and staff members, as well as other key people from the organisation, including Chief Executive Eric Prescott and Regional Director for the Central region, Mike Willis. She then, with Chairman Sir Nigel Broomfield, unveiled a plaque to commemorate the opening.



HM The Queen visiting service user Bruce Mason's room. Bruce demonstrated to the Queen the state of the art technology that each room at Agnes Court is equipped with and how it helps him to live a more independent life.

Photograph courtesy of Michael Dunlea



Queen's Award Success for 50 Years of Innovation
....see page 2



QUEEN'S AWARD ACCOLADE FOR LEADING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY COMPANY



We are delighted to announce that Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to approve the recommendation that a Queen's Award for Enterprise in the Innovation category should this year be conferred upon Possum Limited on Tuesday 21 April (Her Majesty's Birthday).

Founded in 1961, Possum Ltd, a successful UK company based in Buckinghamshire, has received the Queen's Award for Enterprise in the Innovation category for their Electronic Assistive Technology products. Recognised for its innovative technology, Possum designs, manufactures and installs electronic devices which work together to enable disabled or elderly users to control their immediate environment. Possum submitted the Primo! and Vivo! home control units, the Freedom remote control telephone/intercom system and the Guarded Plate Switch. These proprietary Possum products are designed and manufactured in Britain and each is highly innovative. One of the assistive technology products submitted is the easy-to-use wire-free remote control unit the Possum Primo! Dependent upon the ability of the user, this home control unit can be operated either directly from the touch screen or via a specialist switch activated by various means

including moving a hand, head, elbow or foot or puffing into a mouth piece.

Possum has a long tradition of innovation and a proud record of sustained investment in Research and Development and we were therefore delighted to receive the recognition of a Queen's Award. Possum is one of the few Assistive Technology providers to have received this award and this year's awards were conferred on 194 winners but only 49 companies out of 405 applicants received recognition in the Innovation category.

Philip Robinson, Managing Director commented: "We are absolutely thrilled and delighted to receive the Queen's Award for Enterprise in the Innovation category. Whilst this award has been conferred in respect of the Possum Primo! home control unit and other current products, we like to feel it represents recognition of the Company's history of innovation for almost 50 years. It also recognises all our hard work and dedication in

developing solutions which provide our disabled clients with greater independence and freedom".

Possum in the news.....

On the day of the award announcement BBC News Oxford visited both the Possum facilities in Aylesbury and Jonathan Hayes (a user of the Possum products) in his home.



BBC News Oxford Broadcast April 21st 2009



BBC News Oxford Interview with Jonathan Hayes

To view the footage (courtesy of BBC News Oxford) please see the Possum website on www.possum.co.uk



Possum Staff Celebrate The Award Announcement

Image courtesy of The Bucks Herald



Nurse Call

Accessible To All In Neurodisability Unit



Case Study

The Huntercombe Group Neurodisability Unit in Nottingham specialises in the provision of care for high dependency patients. The facility, working closely with Possum, recently installed a system to provide patients with access to the existing nurse call system to address the two main issues that had arisen:

- 1) Some patients could not operate the push button and were therefore unable to access the nurse call system.
- 2) When the nurse call system was activated, staff had to walk to the centre of the building (often walking past the source of the call) in order to see the display indicating the room in which the call had been activated.

Solution: Possum installed NurseCall Link modules into ten of the rooms allowing patients to access the existing nurse call system via a specialist switch. Possum also supplied a range of switches applicable to the requirement of each individual client. To combat the issue of the time wasted when seeking the source of the nurse call, the existing system has been linked to the portable Possum InfoPager providing the nurse with information on the room from which the nurse call had been activated.

Possum provide a range of solutions for accessibility in existing and newly built premises or facilities at the design stage of development. Post installation, Possum provides on-going maintenance and support for equipment and clients. If you would like further information or wish to discuss your individual requirements please contact us on:

T: 01296 461 000 E: sales@possum.co.uk



Example of a specialist switch supplied by Possum



Possum InfoPager displaying the source of the nurse call

Possum: Training, Service and Support

At Possum we are dedicated to making a difference to the lives of our clients, their families and carers. For nearly 50 years, Possum has provided a full and comprehensive range of services for all our clients and customers. Currently Possum's service provision supports thousands of users throughout the UK, giving freedom, independence and empowerment to people of all ages and with a wide range of needs.

The service provision, nationally, has over 35 directly employed members of staff consisting of:

- Devoted Product Specialists who have the knowledge, care and years of experience of supporting and informing clients throughout the consultation process.
- An extensive network of highly trained and knowledgeable field based Engineers who work directly with clients on a daily basis, providing practical advice, technical solutions and assistance on individual requirements.
- Dedicated Customer and Technical Services teams ensuring all our customers and their installed equipment are fully maintained and supported.

We have the combined expert knowledge and experience to offer advice on the most suitable options available for individual requirements, ranging from client assessment to planning and building adapted accommodation. For further information and an informal discussion or to arrange a demonstration, please contact us:

T: 01296 461 016

E: info@possum.co.uk



call today **01296 461000**

Possum Product News

The new **Possum Jive!** Communication aid

What are communication aids and what is AAC?

Communication aids are devices that produce speech with either digitised voice recordings or a synthesized voice. They can break down many of the barriers that exist and can lead, ultimately, to freedom of expression and independence. Augmentative & Alternative Communication refers to any means by which an individual can supplement or replace spoken communication.



Jive! is a totally new and proprietary handheld communication aid. *Jive!* offers a wide range of symbol and text communication, uses the incredibly clear Acapela voice synthesiser and introduces full infrared environmental control for the first time in an AAC device of this size.

Jive! features:

- Comprehensive message building
- Full letter, word and sentence prediction
- High quality Acapela speech
- Possum Environmental Control (ECS)
- Keyboard and PCS symbols
- Recorded speech and sounds
- Scrolling cells
- Free IDV4Life vocabularies
- Setup on device or PC
- Long battery life
- Cell magnification
- Auditory Prompts
- Configurable tool bars

The Possum Lite + Controller



The newly enhanced Possum Lite+ is an advanced home control device with a user friendly design, providing remote control of domestic appliances, social alarm triggers and voice announcement.

Newly enhanced features include:

- Recordable voice tags for personalisation of functions e.g. 'Phone Jim', 'Lamp On'
- Voice announcement both on or off the base station
- Improved InfraRed range
- Improved docking and charge facility
- Fully mountable with the facility to dock on the station when a mounting plate is attached

Contact us now for further information and a demonstration:

Exhibitions 2009

Possum will be exhibiting at many events including:



National Symposium, University of Leicester, 20 - 22 Sept



For further information on the events listed, please visit our website or contact us.

Possum welcomes any comments or questions you may have with regards to the content of this newsletter.

Please contact the editor on:
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