

A round-up of the eye related hot topics that have been trending on social media over the last few weeks.

#beeping #EasterEgg

Beeping Easter eggs allow blind and visually impaired children to participate in the quintessential Easter activity for children – the Easter Egg Hunt. It kind of takes the fun out of the hunt if you need to be led to the egg, then have your hand placed on said egg! Thanks to David Hyche, beeping Easter egg hunts are widely organised for these children [1-3]. Who is David Hyche? He was a special agent with the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, whose daughter was blind since she was four months old. He initially made them himself, and then recruited his colleagues and friends at bomb squads in Alabama. Then the International Association of Bomb Technicians and Investigators (IABTI) got involved, and now the eggs are available, subject to availability, for groups to request them for a hunt [4]. They also have instructions available online for how to make these eggs [5].

#CharlieandMaverick #AmosandToby

Charlie is a golden retriever who had both eyes removed due to end stage glaucoma [6]. His owners got a new puppy named Maverick, because they wanted their newborn son to grow up with a dog. Unexpectedly Maverick became Charlie's 'guide dog', as they noticed Maverick would help Charlie out and engage him in play when Charlie may otherwise not have been able to. For your daily dose of cuteness, you can follow them on Instagram @charlieandmav [7]. Amos and Toby are another such couple. Amos is a blind Staffordshire bull terrier who was rescued by Jess Martin, who works for the Cheshire Fire and Rescue service [8]. She already had a dog, a border terrier named Toby, but knew that it would be hard to rehome a blind dog. She decided to adopt Amos, and as it turned out, they became best of friends, with Toby defending Amos from other dogs, helping him find his water bowl, and being his forever companion for all doggie adventures [8]! If you need a pick me up, I recommend watching this über cute video of the two of them, linked below [9].

@sunglasscat

Her name is Bagel, and she has 514k followers on Instagram [10]. Her trademark bejewelled sunglasses are more than just a fashion statement. She was born without eyelids and is unable to produce tears [11]. Her owner rescued her from a shelter when she was just a kitten. Despite several surgeries to her eyelids, she was unable to protect her eyes, and her owner and her vet came up with the sunglasses solution to protect her [11]. Her owner, Karen McGill, put her on social media to show the world that even animals with special needs deserve loving homes [11].

#blind #Japanese #sailor

Mitsuhiko Iwamoto is the first visually impaired person to sail an 8700-mile non-stop Pacific crossing [12]. He did so with the help of a sighted navigator, Douglas Smith, who only gave him verbal guidance regarding wind direction and potential hazards, while Iwamoto steered the vessel [12]. This was his second attempt at the feat, having needed to be rescued on his first attempt in 2013 [12]. Smith himself did not have previous sailing experience and had signed up as he was inspired by Iwamoto's dream [13]. In Iwamoto's words, they demonstrated that the voyage was undertaken "not only for personal accomplishment, but to send a message that anything is possible when people come together" [12].

@UnusualFacts6 #astigmatism

Astigmatism refers to refractive error which is caused by irregularities in the curvature of the cornea and / or the lens, which results in distorted images, as light rays cannot meet at a common focal point. Commonly the analogy is that in the eye with astigmatism, the curvature is like a rugby ball rather than a football. Whether accurate or not, @UnusualFacts6 caused quite an online debate regarding how people with astigmatism see light rays coming from cars at night versus people without astigmatism (tweet linked below) [14]. Without reading all 1.5K comments, it seems a common reaction is something along these lines: "What? I thought that was normal!" [14]. Not having astigmatism myself, I cannot comment on whether the photos are accurate, but it serves as an interesting reminder that we often do not question what we perceive as being 'abnormal'.

#sweatbees #eye #tears

A Taiwanese lady attended the hospital with a swollen eye after tending to her relative's grave. It transpired there were four bees living in her eye and drinking her tears [15,16]. These 4mm Halictidae, or 'sweat bees' are non-aggressive bees that commonly nest near graves, which was presumably how they came into contact with this lady's eye. Professor Hong, who treated her, said she was very lucky she had not rubbed her eye and thus triggering the bees to sting her and release venom, which could have been blinding. She is expected to make a full recovery [15,16].

#permanent #undereye #concealer #tattoo

Cosmetic tattooing is not a new phenomenon. Microblading of eyebrows is as routine as getting eyebrows waxed or threaded. Other common procedures include tattooing pigment between lashes to give the appearance of thicker and more defined lashes, lip lining or lip tinting, and tattooing freckles on [17]. Nothing is off limits, and now people are turning to

tattooing away undereye circles and bags [18].

Rodolfo Torres (@rodolphotatuador), Brazilian tattoo artist, has pioneered this technique using skin toned pigments to camouflage undereye circles. However, Tracie Giles, permanent makeup artist based in London, does not advocate the technique [19]. She explained that over time the pigments were likely to rise in the skin causing discolouration, and tattoo removal would then cause the pigment to go black, notwithstanding the potential damage to the eye, due to the proximity of the pigment [19]. I know I will be sticking to my Touche Éclat!

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(All links last accessed April 2019)



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