



Modern-Eyes

Working together
WITH visually impaired people
FOR visually impaired people

THE MAGAZINE

April/May 2004

Sharing news, views, comments,
information and technology

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**Modern-Eyes: THE MAGAZINE
is available in large print or Braille, on tape or
computer disk, by email and on the website as a
Word file, webpage or pdf file.**

FROM YOUR EDITORS

Hello again, everyone!

A warm welcome to all the new readers who have joined us recently. We hope you are enjoying the magazine.

Easter has come and gone and so, hopefully, the better weather is on its way. Let's hope we get a good summer!

This month we have DAB radio information, the Telephone Preference Service phone number, some local news, a couple of breaks to book early for and much more.

And, so, it's time to get that kettle on again, put your feet up and read on ...

Viv and Sue

HOBBIES, SPORTS AND LEISURE**CHANGES AT DURSLEY LEISURE CENTRE**

Rip up the card, go plastic!

New plastic cards are about to replace the old-style session and monthly swim cards at Dursley Pool and Sports Centre.

Under the new streamlined system, just three credit-style cards will take the place of older cards.

Instead we are giving you the choice of three different monthly cards to access the areas you want to use. Each will carry a photo, expiry date and access area printed on them.

On arriving, all users need to do is show the receptionist their card. Early riser swimmers can just show it to the lifeguard on duty.

There are big advantages to the new system:

- Purchasing the first card takes just two minutes
- Renewing the card only takes a second
- Photographs are taken on the spot
- Users will save money by purchasing a monthly card rather than paying each time they arrive

The new cards will be on sale from 1 April 2004.

Elaine Booth, Duty Manager

Telephone: 01453 546 441

E-mail: elaine.booth@stroud.gov.uk

(Stroud District Council Email Alerts, 26 March 2004)

FEELING ARTY?

BlindArt Ltd is a company established to promote blind and partially sighted visual artists. They are looking for visually impaired artists to participate in various shows and exhibitions. So, if you are artistic and interested, why not give them a call or drop them a line?

BlindArt Ltd
22 Cadogan Place
London
SW1X 9SA

Telephone: 020 7245 9977

Email: info@blindart.net

VOICE OPERATED TAPE RECORDER

RNIB has introduced a new voice operated tape recorder.

Product code: DH184

Cost: £36.52

The Sony Voice Operated Tape Recorder is a compact recorder with clear sound quality. As the name suggests, recording is operated by your voice. Voice operated recording can be set to off to start and stop recording manually, to low to record for dictation or in a noisy place, and to high to record at meetings or in a quiet or spacious place. This product has a large speaker and built-in microphone. You can record at normal or double speed and playback speed is also adjustable. Volume can be off, low or high. Battery life is 16 hours for playback and 25 hours for recording.

Website: onlineshop.rnib.org.uk

Telephone: 08457 023 153

Minicom: 08457 585 691

Email: cservices@rnib.org.uk

Don't forget: all product orders from RNIB are now subject to a handling charge.

(Welcome to a World of ...
April 2004)

BRAILLE MUSIC

If you would like a piece of music transcribed into Braille, Ron Bayfield will provide this service for free.

(Although the service is free, you are invited to make a donation to St Dunstan's).

Telephone: 01273 416 544

(Welcome to a World of ...
April 2004)

BENEFITS AND FINANCE**HELP WITH GLASSES**

If your income is too high to get income support you may be able to get help with the cost of your glasses under the Low Income Scheme. If you qualify for this you get help with NHS costs, including glasses and sight tests. The extent of any help available is based on a comparison between your weekly income and your assessed requirements. The assessment is broadly based on the Income Support calculation and determines how much you should contribute towards your health costs. You must not have capital over £8,000 if you are under 60 or £12,000 for those aged 60 and over. A partner's income and capital is also taken into account if applicable.

If your income is equal to or less than your requirements you will be entitled to full help with NHS charges and get a certificate HC2. If your income is more than your requirements you may be entitled to limited help with NHS charges (but not with prescriptions) and will get a certificate HC3 which shows how much you are expected to contribute to your health costs.

The Health Benefits Division which administers the Low Income Scheme is undertaking a pilot for telephone claims to the scheme. Claimants can contact the service

Telephone: 0845 850 1166

A form will be completed for customers over the phone and they will be sent a copy to sign. The Health Benefits Division is also looking at making information available in accessible formats, so you should request information in your preferred communication format.

Please note that if you need glasses with 'complex lenses' you can get a voucher towards the cost.

This is given regardless of your income or benefit entitlement. Ask your optician or optometrist whether or not you need them.

CHIP AND PIN

You can ask your Bank / Building Society for a Chip and Signature Card rather than a CHIP and PIN Card if the use of PIN pads which are coming in everywhere are too difficult for you to use.

RNIB is recommending that you ask for a CHIP and Signature Card from your Bank or Building Society Customer Services before your present Card expires. If you get sent round the houses, can't get anywhere then do contact RNIB for assistance.

RNIB Helpline

Telephone: 08457 66 9999

(Soundings, April 2004)

HELP WITH HEATING

WARM FRONT

Warm Front is a government initiative providing packages of insulation and heating measures depending upon the needs of the householder and the construction of the property. The scheme offers

- Grants up to £1,500
- Packages of insulation eg loft and/or cavity wall insulation
- Draught-proofing
- Heating improvements eg gas wall heaters, dual element foam insulated immersion tanks, electric storage heaters

The grant is available to households who receive a disability benefit. Grants up to £2,500 – for households who are over 60 and receiving an income-related benefit are available. The grant provides insulation measures and, for those who do not have an existing heating system, a central heating system will be provided for the main living areas.

Telephone: 0800 952 0600

DOH ADVICE LINE

If you have heating problems there is a range of financial help available for certain people.

Telephone: 0800 085 7857

Website: www.doh.gov.uk/kwkw

RECYCLING NEWS!**RECYCLE YOUR SANDCASTLES!**

Householders are being encouraged to help turn sandcastles into animal bedding in a new campaign aimed at recycling tonnes of old Yellow Pages directories.

Under the initiative run by Stroud District Council and the Directory Recycling Scheme, which is sponsored by Yellow Pages, residents are being asked to recycle their old directory – featuring sandcastles on the front cover. They can do this when the new edition of the Gloucester directory with the famous Walking Fingers' logo on the front is delivered.

Residents can recycle their old 'sandcastle' directory in special Yellow Pages recycling banks located at 26 recycling sites throughout the Stroud District from 29th March until 30th May 2004.

Stroud District Council has been awarded a grant by the Directory Recycling Scheme to cover some of the costs of the campaign and all directories collected will be recycled into animal bedding by Excell, a Welsh-based company.

Councillor Mrs Dorcas Binns, Stroud District Council's cabinet member for the environment, said: "We are pleased to be able to offer new Yellow Pages directory recycling facilities across the Stroud District this year and encourage everyone to look out for the Yellow Pages stickers and recycle their old directory at one of the sites."

Richard Duggleby, head of external relations at Yell, publisher of Yellow Pages directories, said: "We place great emphasis on managing the impact of our business on the environment and we are grateful to Stroud District Council for making it easier for residents to do their bit for the environment with the provision of these directory recycling banks."

Further information can be obtained by contacting Carlos Novoth, Stroud District Council

Telephone: 01453 754424

Website: www.stroud.gov.uk Website: www.yellgroup.com

Directory Recycling Helpline

Telephone: 0800 671 444

Contact:

Councillor Dorcas Binns, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Rural Affairs

Telephone: (01453 833 466

E-mail: cllr.dorcas.binns@stroud.gov.uk

Carlos Novoth, Technical Contracts Officer (Refuse)

Telephone: 01453 754 424

E-mail: carlos.novoth@stroud.gov.uk

Adam Billiald of the Directory Recycling Scheme

Telephone: 023 8023 6806

(Stroud District Council, Email Alerts, 18 March 2004)

ACCESSIBLE LAUNDRY!

There are no washing machines being produced in the UK that could be classified as accessible to VIPs. Some are totally inaccessible, others have a few features that are really useful but overall it doesn't look good. However, many machines can be adapted to make them accessible.

HOTPOINT

Hotpoint now produces Braille control panels for its washing machines (and its dishwashing and cooking products too). The easy-to-use Braille has been made from hardwearing dots. They are also easy to use for sighted members of the family.

For laundry appliances, full instructions are supplied on audio CD or cassette. The Braille controls, fitted by service engineers, are free of charge.

To order, for a new machine or one already in use

Hotpoint Service
Telephone: 08709 066 066

When you call you will need to tell them what type of appliance you have, as well as the model number, required colour and whether you want instructions on CD or cassette.

For more information
Telephone: 08701 50 60 70
Website: www.hotpoint.co.uk

HOOVER

Product code: HF7130M
 HC6120M

Both these machines have option buttons which stay in when pressed and two dials – one for temperature and one for the programme.

Both machines are currently stocked by Currys.

DO IT YOURSELF WITH BUMP-ONS

You can, of course, create your own tactile markings.

Bump-ons – raised, self-adhesive bumps – can be used to mark the machine. They come in a range of sizes and colours and are helpful in marking equipment. For example, the on/off button of a washing machine or the different heat settings on an iron.

You can buy two different packs of mixed bump-ons

Product code: DL41

Cost: £2.34

which includes

- 7 yellow, round bump-ons
- 7 orange round
- 7 blue round
- 6 pink square
- 6 black square

Product code: DL42

Cost: £1.75

which contains

- 7 round yellow bump-ons
- 6 square black
- 7 large half-sphere clear
- 6 small half-sphere clear

Sheets of same colour/same shape bump-ons are also available. A full list can be found in RNIB's Keeping In Touch catalogue.

RNIB Customer Services

Telephone: 08457 023 153

Website: <http://onlineshop.rnib.org.uk/>

DIY – TACTI MARK

Another way to mark your appliances is with Tacti Mark. You can use Tacti Mark to draw your own markings. The nozzle has a fine point which allows accuracy and the product dries within hours of application.

Tacti Mark can be used on

- Clothing
- Paper
- Metals
- Plastics – not flexible plastic

Product code: DL40 –

fluorescent orange

DL40A – black

Cost: £3.95

The Tacti Marks are non-toxic
Available from RNIB – as above.

(All from
Welcome to a World of... - factsheet: laundry)

OUT AND ABOUT

PAVEMENT OBSTACLES – AN A to Z

Guide Dogs have launched a further campaign to raise awareness about the dangers to visually impaired people of street obstacles. This is an ongoing initiative getting the message across to retailers, local authorities, individuals and members of parliament about the problems caused by street obstacles. They have drawn attention to the Highways Act of 1980 and highlighting that the legislation is in place and by making use of this, many of these street obstacles can be removed, therefore, creating a much better environment for VIPs.

All public walkways are being targeted as these are often littered with obstacles. They have created an A-Z Guide of Street Obstacles

and this has been sent to all members of parliament and local highway authorities highlighting the problem. The idea is to make people aware of the problems that street obstacles cause VIPs. The A-Z Street Guide to Street Obstacles is free of charge

Telephone: 0118 983 8281

ROUGH GUIDE TO ACCESSING LONDON

This Guide lists the Capital's favourite 50 accessible venues voted by disabled people from throughout the UK.

The list is in categories:

- Sports and Leisure
- Eating and Drinking
- Shopping
- Places of Interest
- Entertainment

This Guide is FREE in standard print, Large Print, Audiocassette, Braille and Print and Audio Easy Read

Transport for London

Telephone: 0207 222 1234

GOOD NEWS FOR ASSISTANCE DOG OWNERS

The Private Hire Vehicles (Carriage of Guide Dogs) Act, which makes it illegal for private hire drivers and operators to refuse to carry guide and assistance dogs on request, came into force on 31 March 2004. The Act resulted from vigorous campaigning by Guide Dogs and other assistance dogs charities. The Department of Transport has produced an advisory leaflet for assistance dog owners about the new law.

Standard, large print, Braille and audio copies are available from their Free Literature Centre

Telephone: 0870 1226 236 Email: dft@twoten.press.net

HOLIDAYS, DAYS OUT and BREAKS**HOLIDAY COMPANIONS**

The costs to a visually impaired person for someone to accompany them on a holiday has meant that sometimes they have been able to afford to take that needed break. A bursary scheme recently agreed with the Respite Association, national carers' organisation and St Anne's enables a carer/friend accompanying a blind or partially sighted person, to pay no costs for accommodation and food. The only costs incurred might be travel from home to Clacton-on-Sea.

**St Anne's Hotel
26-28 Harold Road
Clacton-on-Sea**

For further information and enquiries in strictest confidence

**Kylie Moorhouse – Manager
Telephone: 01255 420 595**

KEYBOARD AND CERAMICS BREAKS

RNIB Palm Court Hotel, Eastbourne is hosting two very different weekends once again from 19 – 21 November 2004. Due to their popularity they are taking bookings now!

KEYBOARD COURSE (music!)

Designed for those wishing to learn the basics by ear, those with some experience and those who want to build on a previous course they have attended. Tuition will be in small groups with individual sessions.

Basic cost: £160

DISCOVERING CERAMICS COURSE

For beginners and those with some experience. Looking at techniques, clays, using improvised tools and leaf imprinting

Basic cost: £135

Simon Labbett

Telephone: 01423 503 957

AUDIO TAPES

YOUR VOICE IN EUROPE

European Unions Audio report “Your voice in Europe” is a free monthly tape which includes extracts from speeches and comments from MEPs from Strassburg giving an insight into the day to day workings of the European Parliament

in the May issue there will be information about voting in the European Elections on 10 June 2004.

To receive your FREE Tape

Telephone: 0870 242 3343

CALIBRE CASSETTE LIBRARY

Celebrating its 30th birthday Calibre started with ten members with 20 books on standard audio tape. Today it has 20,000 members and just under 7,000 taped books, all of which are totally unabridged – read from cover to cover.

Looking to the future, Calibre still wishes to meet its founder members wishes that the format would be open in that the taped books could be played on equipment that is readily available on the high street. It can now be envisaged that one day all audio books will be audible files and Calibre is looking at DVD as they can hold a lot of audio files.

Calibre Cassette Library is free.

Telephone: 01296 432 339

THE READER

The Reader Magazine is now produced in Audio form called “The Betty” – in tribute to Betty Ramsey who needed it in audio in order to read it.

It is a Literary Magazine including Poetry new and old, Short Stories or extracts from novels, Literary Essays and reviews. Reader Recommendations which are light reviews; people might recommend books that they have simply had a good time with! And in the “Learning Curve” section information about how to get into Courses.

The Betty is usually produced on four CDs or three Audio Cassettes three times a year.

Yearly subscription £13

Telephone: 0151 794 2830

Email: readers@liv.ac.uk

(All from Soundings, April 2004)

‘READING’ and ‘WRITING’

NEW BRAILLE WRITER

A new tool for writing Braille, the Jot-a-Dot, has been developed by Quantum Technology. This is a low cost, easy to use manual Braille-writer. Based on modern design and manufacturing methods it offers a range of features at a fraction of the price of traditional Braille writing technology.

Bromwyn Davies
Quantum Technology Pty Ltd
5 South Street
(PO Box 390)
Rydalmere
NSW
2116
Australia

Email: bdavies@quantech.com.au

Website: www.quantech.com.au

SCHOLAR DAISY PLAYER: LISTEN ON THE MOVE

Product code: DD03

Cost: £212

We have featured the Scholar before but it is now at a new price. It is similar in size to a personal CD player and not only plays Daisy books, but also audio CDs and MP3 CDs. The highly portable Scholar will provide instant access to specific page numbers and chapters in a DAISY structured book. Lightweight headphones are included, although it can also be connected to external speakers – not supplied.

The player runs on 4 AA batteries and has a sturdy, impact-resistant case as well as skip protection, ensuring smooth, uninterrupted reading. It is available from RNIB.

COMMUNICATIONS

PILOT SCHEME FOR TEXTING

A new pilot scheme is being run by Stockton Council, RNIB and Vodaphone. It uses the latest generation of mobile phones which can convert text to speech and assist VIPs whilst travelling on public transport.

It will give vital information, such as timetables and travel news. So watch this space!!

NEW DEAL FROM ONETEL

With this deal you pay £14.99 per month plus your minimum line rental charge from BT, which is £9.50 per month.

For this, you get unlimited local and national calls, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no limits.

There are exclusions. It does not include 0845 and 0870 numbers, international calls, premium line calls or calls to a mobile phone network.

Telephone: 0800 957 1111

MEDIA NEWS

DAB RADIO NEWS

Digital One, the national commercial digital radio multiplex operator is offering a free audio version of its popular 'DAB Digital Radio' magazine, especially for VIPs.

Produced by Sound Talking, for Digital One, the audio magazine includes information, profiles and programme listings for all of the national commercial digital radio stations.

Over 85% of the UK population can now receive the eight national commercial DAB digital radio stations

- Classic FM
- Core
- Life
- One Word Radio
- Planet Rock
- Prime Time Radio
- Talk Sport
- Virgin Radio

The audio magazine also contains features, an overview of some of the digital radios currently on the market and a chance to enter a competition to win a DAB digital radio. It is tone indexed to mark the start of each section.

Telephone: 0207 288 4600

“EVEN BETTER RADIO!”

DAB Digital Radio Magazine, produced three or four times a year, brings features of interest and discussions about digital radios that are on the market.

If there is a good response to this Audio version then Digital One will continue producing it.

Order your free copy from Digital One

Tel: 020 7288 4600

(Soundings, April 2004 and National Talking Express March 2004)

DAB RADIO IN BRAILLE

You can obtain a Braille pack all about digital radio.

Telephone: 08707 747 474

The information has been transcribed by RNIB and explains the advantages of DAB radio and has technical information, as well as consumer advice.

FREEVIEW BOXES

The standard Freeview boxes can now be obtained for as little as £59. These are NOT the special boxes – iPlayer – with audio description.

NHS DIGITAL TV CHANNEL

Britain's NHS is to invest 15 million pounds in launching its new interactive digital TV channel. You will be able to order repeat prescriptions and arrange doctors' appointments.

The TV channel will launch on Sky Digital in the summer and will be called NHS Digital TV.

There will be health information, an encyclopaedia of illnesses and conditions and healthcare advice.

The service will also be available on cable and Freeview by the end of 2004.

(National Talking Express
March 2004)

SKY DISABLED CUSTOMERS HELPLINE

If you telephone the Sky Disabled Customers Helpline, they will be quite happy to give you details of audio described programmes on Sky.

A CD audio version of the Sky Magazine is also available.

Telephone: 08705 66 33 33

IN THE KITCHEN

MICROWAVE OVENS

Are you looking for a combination microwave/convection oven? This one from Panasonic is fairly VI friendly.

Model No: NNA773S Combination Microwave
Cost: £249

This is one of eight products in the Dimension 4 range. It is available from John Lewis.

Features:

- 1000 watt
- Stainless steel finish
- 6 power levels
- Auto weight cooking/reheating/chaos defrost
- Child lock
- Built-in inverter technology for more even and constant cooking. This technology also reduces the weight of ovens, making for easier cleaning
- 1300 watt quartz grill
- 27 litre capacity
- Turbo bake
- Touch button operation
- 3-stage multi-stage memory

Measurements:

304 by 510 by 477 mm

At the time of writing, the cheapest price product was £189.99 (including free delivery and VAT) from Be-Direct

Website: www.be-direct.co.uk

Telephone: 0870 787 7867

Email: info@be-direct.co.uk

(Welcome to a World of ...
April 2004)

ANNOYING PHONE CALLS**TELEPHONE PREFERENCE SERVICE**

We have featured this before but people have been asking us for the information so we are putting it in as a reminder.

If you are having trouble with infuriating cold callers you can register with TPS (The Telephone Preference Service). This will put a stop to cold callers ringing at all times of the day. The service is free of charge.

To register

Telephone: 020 7291 3320

COMPUTING and the INTERNET**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

The National Talking Express has a new web address

Website: www.ntexpress.org.uk

VIRGIN BROADBAND

Virgin has drastically reduced the price of their broadband modems. Prices now start at £9.99. With this you get two filters. The modem becomes your property.

Added to this is a monthly charge of £24.99, with no limits.

There is no contract time and you can stay as long as you like. If you decide to change providers the modem remains yours.

Telephone: 0845 650 1000

(National Talking Express
March 2004)

SOFTWARE DAISY PLAYER

You can install Daisy player software on your computer for less than £40.

Product code: DD05

Cost: £30

The Easereader is friendly for people with sight difficulties, usable and visually appealing for the mouse user. This well-designed PC-based solution with good support is available from RNIB.

Minimum system requirements:

- Pentium 2, 400 MHz or faster processor
- Windows 98, NT 4.0, 2000, Me or XP
- CD-ROM drive
- Multimedia sound, speakers and microphone – for creation of audio notes
- At least 64 Mb RAM
- 50 Mb hard disk space
- 16 bit (65536 colours) or higher
- 800 by 600 minimum monitor resolution
- Internet Explorer 5.5

Easereader complies with international digital talking book standards.

Available from

Website:

www.onlineshop.rnib.org.uk/display_product.asp?prodid=2404&status=2

Email: cservices@rnib.org.uk

Telephone: 08457 023 153

(Welcome to a World of ...
April 2004)

A SITE FOR SORE EYES

This site is now updated weekly.

Website: <http://www.kenmatthews.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk>

FOR SALE

AUDIO TAPES

We have a large selection of audio tapes for sale at £1.50 each. If you would like a list

Sue

Telephone: 01453 757 047

Email: sue@modern-eyes.co.uk

DISCLAIMER

All information in Modern-Eyes: THE MAGAZINE is provided in good faith and is, to the best of our knowledge, accurate at the time of printing. We cannot take responsibility for any inaccuracies in material from third parties

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