



Modern-Eyes

Working together
WITH visually impaired people
FOR visually impaired people

THE MAGAZINE

Issue 61

August 2007

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 as a DAISY CD, on a data CD, by email and on the website as a Word file, zipped Word file, webpage or pdf file.

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FROM YOUR EDITOR

Hello everyone!

Well, July was a bit of a tough month for lots of you in the Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester areas as well as some parts of Stroud and Stonehouse. I hope you are now all back on drinkable running water and the clean up is going well. I hope not too many of you were actually flooded. It was certainly not the July we were hoping for!

This month's magazine has lots of different topics, as usual, including a really neat little MP3 player, news about accessible magazines for young people a competition for any entrepreneurs out there, good news for wet AMD and more.

So, get the ice cubes chinking – may be wishful thinking! – find a shady spot and read on ...

Sue

GOOD NEWS FOR AMD!

NICE BACKS DOWN THANKS TO CAMPAIGN!

Treatment for wet AMD

I have received this information from RNIB

You will be pleased to learn that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has announced a climb-down on its guidance for the new treatments for wet AMD (Lucentis and Macugen). Back in June it issued highly restrictive draft guidance and RNIB, the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, the Royal College of Nursing, the Macular Disease Society and many others expressed their outrage. Indeed all the hard work helped to produce over 13,000 responses - the largest number ever received by NICE!

This overwhelming surge of public opinion could simply not be ignored (see BBC Online: "Rethink over sight-saving drugs")

Website: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/6937448.stm>

NICE has gone back to the drawing board and is planning to issue new draft Guidance in the autumn with final Guidance for the NHS in 2008.

This represents a major campaigning victory so thank you to everyone, especially our members, who played a part in it. Whether you wrote to or emailed NICE yourself, or asked friends and family to - whatever you did you can be sure that together we made a difference.

That's the good news but the work has to go on and, in particular, we have to make sure that there is not an unreasonable delay in new guidance being issued. We are already working with MPs on this issue and the great media coverage secured by RNIB's External Communications team following NICE's change of direction is really valuable.

Once again, many thanks for your support.

NEW AUDIO DESCRIBED DVDS

NEW RELEASES

Recent audio described DVD releases:

- **The Reaping**
- **Breaking and Entering**
- **Venus**
- **Stomp the Yard**
- **The Hills Have Eyes 2**
- **Flags of our Fathers**
- **Letters from Iwo Jima**
- **Goal 2**
- **Ghost Rider**
- **Notes on a Scandal**
- **Music and Lyrics**
- **Epic Movie**
- **Rocky Balboa**

- **The Pursuit of Happyness**
- **The Last King of Scotland**
- **Deja Vu**
- **The Hogfather**
- **Numberjacks**
- **Eragon**
- **Miss Potter**
- **Stranger Than Fiction**
- **Night at the Museum**
- **Happy Feet**
- **Casino Royale (James Bond)**
- **The Prestige**
- **The Queen**
- **Borat**

A full list of over 200 audio described DVDs can be found on the website:

Website: <http://www.yourlocalcinema.com/ad.html>

ENTREPRENEURS WANTED**DISABLED ENTREPRENEURS SOUGHT**

Entrants are invited to enter a contest to find the UK's best disabled entrepreneurs. The British Chamber of Commerce, disability charity Leonard Cheshire and businessman Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou have launched the competition to find the person who can show barriers placed in their way have not stopped them in their quest for success. The winner will be rewarded with a cheque for £50,000.

Website: <http://www.leonard-cheshire.org/?lid=5087>

READING AND WRITING**MAGAZINES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Read about your generation.

Did you know that R N I B produces a range of magazines for teenagers?

They're bursting with fantastic features, from celebrities and music to real-life experiences and sport.

Not only can the magazines - which are available in Braille or by email - be purchased monthly, but subscriptions also make excellent gift ideas!

Missy

For girls aged 12 to 15

It includes a gossip column, real-life stories, celebrity interviews, horoscope, a problem page, and lots more!

Cost: 40p per issue

Vibe

For boys aged 12 to 15

It's packed with interesting articles, from features on up-and-coming sports stars through to stories, and the latest film and album reviews.

Cost: 38p per issue

Pure

For young women aged 16 to 19

It contains articles on love and relationships, fashion and beauty, plus real-life stories.

Cost: 40p per issue

The Max

For young men aged 16 to 19

Has it all. From what's new on the music scene to sports personalities and a problem page.

Cost: 40p per issue

DOLPHIN PENS

LIBRARY SERVICE PENS

I have been told by the Library Service that there are still a few Supernova pens available.

Borrowing a Supernova pen from the library is a really great way to try out the software to see how you get on with it and to help you decide if it is for you.

To borrow a pen, simply contact your local library and ask them to organise it for you. You will be asked to leave a deposit, which will be returned to you when the pen is returned.

PLEASE NOTE:

The library pens currently only work for Windows XP and 2000. They are not Vista compatible.

If you borrow a pen and would like an easy to use workbook to help you set up the speech and/or magnification, then do consider one of our workbooks: more details are available at the end of the magazine, or contact

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YOUNG CRITICS WANTED!**YOUNG FILM CRITIC OF THE YEAR COMPETITION**

Do you know a young film goer? Here is a really good competition for them to enter.

Competition! Young Film Critic of the Year 2007.

Young people with a hearing or visual impairment have a chance to win prizes for themselves AND their schools. And of course a chance to hold the awesome title: Young Film Critic of the Year! All you need to do for a chance to win is to write, type or voice record your own film review of any of this year's cinema releases.

Keep it short: 250 words maximum.

You can enter individually, or as a school group, as many times as you like (you can review more than one film).

There are three age categories:

- **7 to 11**
- **11 to 14**
- **15 to 18**

Nominees in each age category will be invited to an Awards Ceremony at London's Odeon West End cinema in October this year.

The winner in each age category will receive a Yamaha Home Cinema System as well as a prize for their school of an interactive white board and film resources.

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES:

Friday 21 September 2007!

How to Enter:

You can enter via the official website

Website: <http://www.youngfilmcritic.org/althowto.html>

Or download an entry form

Website: <http://www.youngfilmcritic.org/2007EntryForm.pdf>

(pdf format).

You can also enter by video message, Braille, voice message, podcast etc.

Just send your review to:

**ILM Education
21-22 Poland Street
London
W1F 8QQ**

You will need to include these details:

- **Which age category?
Junior Film Critic (7 to 11) or Young Film Critic (15 to 19, or 11 to 14)**
- **If you have a hearing or visual impairment:
Sensory Impaired entrant (7 to 11, 15 to 19, or 11 to 14).**

You will also need to include

- **Your name**
- **Age**
- **School and class**
- **School address and phone number**

Top Tips for writing the ultimate film review:

Write in the present tense

For example: 'the main character of the film is called', 'when the film starts we see'

Remember your audience and make it fun!

Just because you're writing a review doesn't mean it can't be fun to read. Make it as entertaining as possible for your readers.

Dish the Dirt

Don't be shy. Say exactly what you think (but say it well) tell the reader whether you loved or hated it - and why. We want to hear your personal opinion!

Don't tell the story

You only have 250 words so don't waste them telling the story - readers only need to know the outline of the plot and a little bit about the main characters.

Dust off your journalist's jotter

Take notes while you're watching the film if you can (write down memorable quotes, significant moments etc).

Make time

The best reviews are written whilst the film is still fresh in the mind, so do try to get your ideas down as soon as possible after seeing the film. Don't forget to re-read your review, edit it, produce a finished version and send it in with the form you have downloaded.

No cheating!

Make sure your work is original and not copied from another source in any way. The ruthless team of judges can spot copied work a mile off!

Meet your deadline!

Even the most famous and best paid film critics in the world have to get their reviews done on time so don't forget your deadline - FRIDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2007!

Good Luck!

HOLIDAYS

THEMED BREAKS AT THE CLIFFDEN HOTEL

Here are some Autumn breaks at the Cliffden Hotel, Teignmouth, Devon.

All prices are per person and include dinner, bed and breakfast and activities, unless otherwise stated.

Real Ale and Wine

With in-house tasting session

Dates: 22 to 24 September

Cost: £120

Theatre weekend

Take a trip to the Princess Theatre in Torquay to see 'Oklahoma'

Dates: 29 September to 1 October

Cost: £110

Country and Western

Traditional Country and Western music and line dancing

Dates: 5 to 8 October

Cost: £135

Games Weekend

A weekend packed with games and competitions both in-house and in the swimming pool

Dates: 12 to 15 October

Cost: £135

Activities Break

Fun and exhilaration with the opportunity to try something new

Dates: 20 to 27 October

Cost: £307

Note: **Activities to be paid for in advance!**

60s Weekend

sing and dance the evenings away to the sounds of the sixties

Dates: 9 to 12 November

Cost: £120

Theatre Weekend

Take in two shows at the Princess Theatre in Torquay; “The Hollies” and “Half Way to Paradise – The Billy Fury Story”

Dates: 16 to 19 November

Cost: £150

Teignmouth Jazz Festival

Whether you prefer New Orleans, Swing, Modern or Contemporary there will be something for all Jazz fans

Dates: 22 to 26 November

Cost: £160

Note: **Jazz**

Festival tickets can be purchased prior to arrival.

Pamper Yourself

Why not pamper yourself and relax before the Christmas rush

Dates: 30 November to 3 December

Cost: £140

Please note:

All trips and entertainment programmes are subject to availability

For more information

Telephone: 01626 770 052

Email: cliffden.hotel@actionforblindpeople.org.uk

GET SPORTY!

COME AND TRY ATHLETICS!

Free Athletics session for children and adults with a physical or sensory impairment

The session is part of a coaching course: Where experienced club coaches learn to coach disabled performers.

This session is open for beginners and experienced athletes.

Date:**Sunday 16 September 2007****Time: 1pm to 4pm****Venue:****Stroud High School****Stroud, GL5 4HF****For more information and to register****Anne-Dorte Andersen****Sport and physical Development officer for disabled people,****Active Gloucestershire****University of Gloucestershire****Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester****GL2 9HW****Email: aandersen@glos.ac.uk Telephone: 01242715201**

UPDATE YOUR SMARTPHONE

FREE SMART HAL UPDATE NOW AVAILABLE**If you are using a Windows Smartphone with Dolphin Smart Hal, there is a free update available for Smart Hal.****To update simply go to the Dolphin website and download the demo version. Follow the on screen instructions.****Provided you download it to the computer you used for the original download, the software will recognise your details and automatically convert the demo to a full version.****Website: www.yourdolphin.com**

SERVICES FROM RNIB**DEBT ADVICE**

RNIB can now give advice to blind and partially sighted people with debt problems. RNIB is now working with Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to improve the supply of free face-to-face debt advice for people with sight problems.

People can fall into debt through no fault of their own. Many people experience financial difficulties at some point in their lives, almost everyone owes money, bills are a fact of life, but sometimes you may feel like you are swamped with bills and can't see a way of paying them. Don't ignore the problem, seek help!

By working with CAB, we can offer free, confidential debt advice for blind and partially sighted people. The partnership with CAB covers ten areas of England. These areas are Gateshead, Bradford, Sheffield, Rotherham, Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Stoke-on-Trent, Wolverhampton, Walsall and Greater London. If you live or work in one of these areas RNIB can make appointments with a specialist debt advisor for you and home visits can be made. If you do not live or work in these areas we may still be able to help.

If you would benefit from this service or if you have any questions please contact the Financial Inclusion Project

Email: <mailto:debtadvice@rnib.org.uk>

Telephone: 08453 304 897

(Calls are charged at local rate)

THE 'HERE TO HELP' PROJECT

The other service we want to tell you about is the 'Here to Help' project, RNIB's partnership with British Gas. This scheme, launched in 2002, provides free home insulation, meaning cheaper fuel bills and warmer homes. Anyone who has sight loss (you do not need to be registered blind or partially sighted) qualifies. You will also be entitled to receive additional support from RNIB, including RNIB products, such as a big button telephone, desk lamp or talking watch, and Talking Books, all completely free of charge. Over 2,600 blind and partially sighted people have been helped by the 'Here to Help' scheme so far. RNIB has identified £3 million in unclaimed benefits and provided over 13,000 products and services to customers without charge.

If you own your home or you rent from a private landlord and your home needs loft or cavity wall insulation you may be eligible to have the work carried out free of charge, subject to a survey visit from British Gas. You or someone you live with must be on a qualifying benefit such as Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Pension Credit or Income Support. If your existing loft insulation is over 10 years old you could have it topped up free of charge. You don't have to be a British Gas customer or switch your energy supplier to qualify.

If you are interested or have any questions please contact RNIB's Here to Help team

Telephone: 08453 304 897

Email: <mailto:rnibhelp-project@rnib.org.uk>

Computing

DOLPHIN VERSION 8

If you have recently downloaded a demo of Dolphin V8 software and told it not to run at start up, you may find that the usual command to launch doesn't work!

Normally, if you want to launch Supernova once the machine is up and running you hold down left shift and left control and press S. For Lunar you do the same but press L and for Hal press H.

The same command for the demo version is to hold down left shift, left control and press D – for DEMO.

Once you unlock the software to a fully licensed version, the same command applies, ie left control, left shift and D. It does not revert to the usual command.

ZEN STONE MP3 PLAYER

I have discovered a really neat little MP3 player! It is about 3 cm by 2 cm by 0.5 cm and weights next to nothing. It is simplicity itself to use.

The Creative Labs Zen Stone is a really great little machine. It has a 1Gb memory and no screen so all the operations are tactile. This is not a specialist device but designed for the sighted sports market – joggers don't want to have to stop to operate their machine!

Description of the device

Holding the Stone facing you with the control knob to the right, feel along the top edge and you will find a headphone socket on the left

and a three-position slider. The slider allows you to set the device to shuffle or to standard mode.

Along the bottom edge you will feel, to the left, the USB connection slot. The USB connection allows you to load files to the Stone and also acts as a USB charger to recharge your device – a really great feature: no more running out of batteries!

Now feel the face of the device. To the right and centre you will find the control knob. This is a really simple control to use. There is a slightly raised knob, which is easy to feel. This is the on / off/ pause button. Simply hold down for a few seconds to turn on the device then wait a few seconds and off you go.

Hold the button down for several seconds when playing and the unit will turn off. If you just press and release the button you go into pause mode. Press and release again and the machine will start playing where you left off. When you stop the machine it will resume from where you left off each time you restart.

And don't worry if you are not sure if it is paused or switched off! After a short delay, the unit will automatically turn itself off if you leave it in pause and don't do anything with it. So you won't flatten the battery too much.

If you find the centre of the button and then feel to the outside of it you will feel a ring around the button. This gives you volume control and 'skip'. At the twelve o'clock position there is a tiny raised plus sign.

This is the volume up position and will turn up the volume when pressed. Pressing directly below, at the six o'clock position will turn the volume down.

Pressing at the nine o'clock position will skip you backwards through tracks or folders and pressing at the three o'clock position will do the same forwards.

And that's it!! It is as simple as that.

Paul bought me a Stone a week or so ago and I have fallen in love with it. It is so simple to operate and the perfect device for taking my music to the gym. I don't even have to take it out of my pocket to use it.

Transferring files

This is really easy. You can download a programme to create playlists and transfer music if you wish. The details are in the manual that comes with the Stone.

However, I have found transferring my music very easy. You can simply copy and paste the MP3 files to the device.

When you plug in the USB connector to the computer, Windows will recognise the Stone as a storage device and it will appear in the list in My Computer.

All you need to do is select your music tracks and then copy and paste to the Stone via My Computer or Windows Explorer, whichever is your preferred method.

Charging the device

As mentioned before, the USB connection cable connects the Stone to the PC and acts as a charger. Just plug the Stone into a free USB port and it will quietly charge itself. You should get about ten hours from a charge, which is pretty good for such a tiny device.

Cost

You should be able to find a Zen Stone from between £25 and £35. It is available from Currys and most similar dealers as well as from Amazon and other Internet outlets. Have a look around for the best buy.

My Stone is a black one but it is available in several colours including blue, some 'vibrant' pinks and greens and other colours. I only got the black one, as it was the only one left in Currys in Stroud!

Conclusion

If you are looking for a mainstream, easy to use, rechargeable and compact MP3 player, then the Zen Stone could be the answer. What I really liked best was it isn't specially designed for VIs, doesn't come at a premium cost and is easy to operate without sight. Transferring files doesn't require any of the frustrating software that doesn't always work with screenreaders and it is rechargeable.

The other thing I really like about the Zen Stone is that, unlike many other MP3 players, including some of the specialist VI devices, it is compatible with Audible so you can download talking books to it as well.

If you buy a Stone and would like the manual reformatted, let me know. We may have to make a small charge for this to cover the cost of materials.

Sue

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Email: sue@modern-eyes.co.uk

USEFUL WEBSITES

TNAUK'S NEW DOWNLOAD SERVICE

Audio Download service from TNAUK

This service will start with 50 of TNAUK's most popular publications and build up over the next few months to the full range of over 200 publications.

Subscribers will have the choice of either downloading the publications directly from the website, using a Podcast receiver, or streaming the publications online.

The streaming option includes a playlist interface so that navigation is possible between articles using your favourite media player. For an annual subscription fee you get unlimited access to all available publications.

For more information

Website: <http://www.talkingnewspapers.org/tnaservice/>

TRAINING PORTAL LAUNCHED

What is thought to be the biggest online training portal created to date for learning about assistive technology, featuring e-learning and live online tutoring, has been launched by the charity AbilityNet.

The AT training portal

Website: <http://www.abilitynettraining.org>

is based on the open source learning platform Moodle

Website: <http://moodle.org>

Courses available include:

- **General introduction to assistive technology**
- **Courses on healthy computing**
- **How technology can help people with dyslexia**
- **Access to mobile phones**
- **Courses on specific technologies such as the JAWS and Thunder screen readers**

One year's access to all courses currently costs £100 per user, and single courses can be purchased for £25, with online payment possible using PayPal. One or two courses, such as one on making your computer talk in Windows, are free to access.

EASY READ

A "View plain text" option link, enabling access to the text layer of electronic books has been made available on Accessible Google Book this month. The facility, on the Google Accessible Search project, was launched by search engine company Google allowing users of assistive technologies such as screen readers, speech output and Braille display to read the available online books

Website: <http://fastlink.headstar.com/googlebook1>

FACE BOOK SECURITY CHECKS MORE ACCESSIBLE

One of the world's largest social networking websites is to launch an alternative to security test captchas, inaccessible to vision impaired users because they use images of text and numbers. Facebook now allows vision impaired users to register their mobile phone number to verify their identity when registering a user account to receive a text message with a verification code. When the code is entered, the user's identity is confirmed and such security tests avoided:

Website: <http://www.facebook.com/>

LOOKING FOR AN ACCESSIBLE MP3 PLAYER?

Check out this website for a comprehensive list of accessible MP3 players

Website: www.hartgen.org

COMPUTER CLASSES

IT WORKSHOPS

Don't forget our workshops at Coney Hill. The future of the Stonehouse classes is at present uncertain as the Project has to move and we are not sure if there will be a home for us! We will keep you informed.

At present the Stonehouse class is full but we have spaces at Coney Hill on Tuesdays.

If you would like to come to a class, let us know and we will do our best to find you a place.

Telephone: 01453 757 047

Email: sue@modern-eyes.co.uk

Or rob@modern-eyes.co.uk

WORK BOOKS

If you are using Hal, Lunar, Lunar Plus or Supernova, you may like to know that we at Modern-Eyes have written some work books to help you get to know your software, set it up how you want it and practice a few exercises.

We have one for guiding you through the magnification and colour schemes and one for helping you to choose your voice, amount of reading and more. They are currently for Windows XP systems. Vista to follow when we have got to grips with it!

We also have books to help you get started with word processing and how to manage your files and folders on your PC.

The books cost from £7.50 each and are available in any format.

If you would like any of these books please contact us.

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DISCLAIMER

All information in this magazine is provided in good faith and is, to the best of our knowledge, accurate at the time of printing.

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