

# Working with RNIB

There are many hundreds of charities in Britain helping visually impaired people. Recent initiatives have strengthened co-operation between some charities to increase their effectiveness and reduce duplication.

National Talking Newspapers and Magazines (NTN & M) and RNIB have been discussing how we can work more closely together, and have agreed in principle that NTN & M should become part of the RNIB group.

We would keep our status as a separate registered charity with our own trustees, but would pool certain services, especially fundraising, marketing and promotion, to increase awareness and the impact of what we do. Potentially this could help promote our service much more effectively across all parts of the UK and raise additional sources of regular income.

We would work together with RNIB to develop technology and equipment to make it easier for visually impaired people to access a variety of services, including talking newspapers and magazines.

“We, like many small charities, need to ensure our future financial security, but there are other important advantages in working closely with RNIB,” explained NTN & M’s Chief Executive, John Kerby. “The challenges of increasing

subscriber numbers, adapting to technological change and securing the financial future are such that we are likely to be better placed to meet these if we work in partnership with a larger charity which has greater resources and a truly national reach.”

If approved, the agreement would run for a minimum of three years and a formal agreement is expected to be signed by the end of this year. We will, of course, keep you informed of future developments.



## New subscription charges

As from 1st January 2010, we are reducing the cost of subscriptions for all our audio CD format publications!

See page 2 for further details.

## New subscription charges - even better value for money

We now have an ever-increasing number of listeners who take their publications on an audio CD, and even more who are asking about this format, whereas the number of people who subscribe to audio cassette is decreasing.

Under our new price structure, the subscription will be the same whether you take an audio cassette or a CD. We hope that by bringing the subscription charges in line with each other, we can open up the world of recorded news and magazines to even more people who could benefit from our unique service. It's also a good time for more people to switch to a digital format, such as a CD, as the use of cassette tapes generally is declining and soon it may no longer be possible to buy cassette tapes or players on the high street. A weekly CD will now cost £21 a year (reduced from £45) and subscriptions for a weekly double CD will drop dramatically from £69 a year to just

£31, which works out as less than sixty pence a week!

Subscriptions for all audio cassette options will increase slightly. For example, from 1st January a weekly audio tape will cost £21 a year, instead of £19 and a weekly double audio tape will go up from £29 to £31 a year.

The revised prices will come into effect from 1st January for all new subscribers and current listeners will have the revised prices applied when their subscriptions come up for renewal. Any current subscribers who would like to change over from audio tape formats to CD between now and the 1st January can also benefit from the new price rate for CDs.

For more information just call our customer services team on 01435 866102.

## New website

### Same address, exciting new site

RNIB's new website gives you more information and is easier to use than ever before.

Join in our discussion forums, event listings, notice boards and subscribe to e-newsletters.

What are you waiting for?

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

**RNIB**

supporting blind and partially sighted people

Reg charity no. 226227



## Sight Village Success

“What a great service! I so look forward to receiving my CDs. You are all so helpful and responsive.”

These are just some of the appreciative comments we received from visitors to our exhibition stand at Sight Village in Birmingham this July.

The event, which showcases technology and support for people with sight loss, was a big success, and we had more visitors than ever making their way to our stand. As well as current subscribers taking the time to come along and say thank you, we spoke to lots of people who were extremely interested in becoming subscribers as well as representatives from various groups and organisations, such as associations for the blind, colleges and social services, who all thought our service would be of great value for their students and clients.

“Sight Village was a big success and it’s really important that we are there. It helps raise awareness of what we do directly to the people who could benefit from our service. It’s also very positive talking to current subscribers and getting their feedback on what we do. They really are very appreciative, and often commented on how much they look forward to receiving their publications and hearing the familiar voices of our readers. They also valued all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes in production and customer services,” said our Communications Manager, Cheryl Johnson.

“The event has also helped us to make useful contacts with other organisations, both at home and abroad, and has already resulted in a number of valuable promotional opportunities, including articles in Northamptonshire Association for the Blind’s newsletter, promotion through the Macular Disease Society and even an article for Guide Dogs in Australia!” added Cheryl.

The next Sight Village event takes place at Kensington Town Hall, London on 11th November

from 10am-4.30pm. Admission is free. We’ll be there and hope many of you will be too.

## Prize draw winner

Congratulations to Harold Armstrong of Solihull, Warwickshire, who won our Sight Village prize draw to win a year’s free subscription.

Eighty-five-year-old Harold, who has had glaucoma for 20 years, has decided to take *When Saturday Comes*, a monthly football magazine on audio CD as his prize. He was familiar with local talking newspapers but didn’t know about NTN & M until he talked to us at the exhibition. Harold used to play for Chelsea on the 1950’s but injury forced him to retire, so this publication will help him to keep up with his love of the ‘beautiful game’. He’s also planning to take a rugby title, another former interest, and has subscribed to the Daily Mail Digest as well. As he explains: “I think National Talking Newspapers and Magazines is a great idea. I wish I’d heard about you before. I can now keep up with previous interests and stay connected with the outside world through my subscription. I’m delighted to have won the raffle as I’ve never won anything before!”

Harold is actively involved with his local blind society resource centre in Solihull and recently produced a DVD about dealing with sight loss which was recently premiered at his local cinema.



*Cheryl Johnson, Nathan Langford and Thelma Hamilton at our Sight Village stand*

## Lord Lieutenant reads the news

Our vital service for VIPS received a VIP visit in the lead up to National Talking Newspaper Week in September.

The Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Peter Field, took to the airwaves, recording the Daily Mail Digest to help publicise our work and raise awareness of what we do. During his visit, the Lord Lieutenant also met some of our 200 plus volunteers.



*The Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Peter Field, reads with studio engineer Caroline Norman*

Mr Field said: "This invaluable service provides a lifeline to many blind and partially sighted people. Losing one's sight is a very isolating experience, but this service, along with local talking newspapers up and down the country, helps people stay in touch with news, views and current affairs. It's a much-needed and much-valued service."

## Thank you

To the many subscribers who contacted us with their ideas for a possible change of name and how we can get our service better known. It would appear that coming up with a catchy name that neatly sums up what we do is no easy task, but we've still got our thinking caps on and will keep you posted.

## Les Norris 1924-2009

Very sadly, one of longest-standing readers, Les Norris, recently passed away. Many of you will have been familiar with Les' characteristic voice as he first started to entertain our listeners in 1997. He regularly recorded Nature, The Times Educational Supplement and The News of the World, and often stepped in to record other titles. He was a popular and entertaining volunteer for NTN & M.

One of his closest colleagues, David Crowley, remembers Les with great fondness. "I recorded with Les every Thursday for some 10 years and in all that time I never heard him criticise anyone for anything. Instead, he kept us all amused by his jokes and wry, sometimes off-beat comments. His usual greeting was 'How very good to see you.' I hope and believe that he knows how very good it was to see him."

Many listeners have written in expressing their sadness at Les' sudden death and his friends and colleagues at the studios are missing a gentle, generous gentleman. He is very much missed.



*Les Norris (right) and David Crowley*

## Ready to make the switch?

Are you currently listening to audio books, newspapers and magazines on cassette tape?

Well, now is a good time to change over to digital. The use of cassette tapes is declining and soon it may no longer be possible to buy cassette tapes or players on the high street. Your choice of books and publications will also become increasingly limited. But the good news is that digital audio, such as CDs, is very simple to use. What's more, it offers:

- A much higher sound quality than cassette tape, providing you with a better reading and listening experience
- Some digital audio allows a whole book to be fitted on to one CD, memory stick or memory card for a computer
- It's simpler to use and easier to post- no more multiple cassette and bulky packaging
- You can borrow digital audio books from your local library or buy them from high street shops and other outlets
- Digital audio is very flexible – you can transfer audio files from a computer or other devices such as an Ipad

So how do you switch to digital audio? Ask the organisations that provide your audio books, newspapers and magazines what digital options they offer. You will also need to buy a player which meets your needs – high street shops and specialist suppliers offer a choice of digital players at a range of prices to suit all pockets.

Don't be put off if you're not used to technology. For practical impartial advice about switching to digital audio, just visit the Reading throughout Audio Website at [readingthroughaudio.org.uk](http://readingthroughaudio.org.uk) or you can give us a call on 01435 866102 and find out more about the digital services we offer and how these could work for you.



**Audio Brochure available on CD**

**Delicious meals with FREE home delivery**

Oakhouse Foods is your local home meals service, offering over 300 delicious frozen meals and desserts as well as a range of essential grocery items, all with free home delivery.

Our meals take just minutes to cook, so you can enjoy delicious food at home with the minimum of fuss, and with meals from just £1.99 it's great value too.

For your free winter brochure simply call us on the local rate number below.

**0845 643 2009**

**Oakhouse**  
FOODS

[oakhousefoods.co.uk](http://oakhousefoods.co.uk)

Great tasting dishes every time

## Christmas cards and 2010 calendar

With the festive season fast approaching, if you're stuck for a gift idea then look no further than our stunning new calendar for 2010. Including 13 high quality, full colour photographs of the British countryside and wildlife, it would make the perfect present for friends and family, or you may even like to treat yourself!

The calendar is priced very reasonably at £6.99, including postage and packing. And don't forget that our ever-popular Christmas cards are also available. This year, there are 12 designs from classic to contemporary, religious to secular.

Cards are priced at £3.50 to £3.75 for a pack of 10. To order either the calendar or cards, just call 01435 866102 or email [info@tnauk.org.uk](mailto:info@tnauk.org.uk)



*Just some of the fantastic images from our 2010 calendar*

## Lancashire Evening Post goes digital

The Lancashire Evening Post has teamed up with National Talking Newspapers and Magazines in a trailblazing service which will enable blind, partially sighted and print disabled people to read the newspaper by accessing it digitally.

People who cannot read a newspaper because they have a visual impairment or other reading difficulty, can now download a full-text version of the Lancashire Evening Post onto a computer and use screen reader software to listen to the paper in full. When the Lancashire Evening Post is printed, a computer file called a PDF is sent to the Newspaper Licensing Agency. This is then transcribed into a computer code which National Talking Newspapers and Magazines turns into a text-only version. This can then be easily handled by different types of screen reader software. The full-text version can also be transferred to portable text to speech devices, such as a mobile phone, so people can listen away from their PC.

"The Lancashire Evening Post is the first regional evening paper that we have teamed up with in this way. We are delighted that we can now offer the digital full-text service for the Lancashire Evening Post as it will help more blind and print disabled people enjoy the same access to newspapers and magazines as sighted people, helping them to achieve a level of independence and choice that most of us take for granted," said Bernard Moreton, IT Manager.

The importance of National Newspapers and Magazines is explained by local listener, Gail Guest from Leyland. Gail, who has a form of retinosa pigmentosa, a hereditary eye disorder, has been a NTN & M subscriber for 10 years: "I currently take two publications on CD, Dogs Today and Majesty Magazine. I thoroughly enjoy listening to my CDs and can't say enough just how valuable this service is. Now this new digital service is available, I will definitely consider adding the Lancashire Evening Post to my publications as I will be able to access it the day it is printed, straight from my computer."

**LANCASHIRE**  
**Evening Post**

## A familiar voice in a far away place

If you have a visually impaired English speaking friend or relative living abroad, why not mention that National Talking Newspapers and Magazines is not just available to VIPs in the UK, but all over the world! We have subscribers scattered around the globe, including Spain, the Netherlands, America, New Zealand, Canada and Australia. As is the case for many subscribers, NTN & M provides a lifeline to the outside world. As Joe Sherman, who lives in San Marino, California, explains: "I want to tell you again how much I appreciate your service and how important it is to me. This anglophile hopes that you will be able to continue for a long time."

Our digital full-text service makes it easy for subscribers who live abroad to access our service through the internet. Digital full-text publications can be delivered by email, downloaded via the web or sent on a CD-Rom. All people need is a PC

with screen reading software. The digital full-text service includes a wide choice of more than 70 titles for just one price and newspapers are delivered promptly on the day of publication, in some cases before they are available in newsagents in the UK!

For more information about setting up subscriptions for people living abroad or our digital full-text service, just call our customer services team on 01435 866102.

## Annual report

Our annual report for the year ending 31st March 2009 has been published. If you would like a copy please call 01435 866102 or email [info@tnauk.org.uk](mailto:info@tnauk.org.uk). The report can also be viewed on our website at [www.tnauk.org.uk/about us/html](http://www.tnauk.org.uk/about us/html)

## A guide dog could be for you...

**For thousands of blind and partially sighted people across the UK, a guide dog makes a big difference. You don't need to be completely blind to qualify for a guide dog and there's no upper age limit.**

Despite the training costs, it costs just 50p to have a guide dog, with all essential equipment provided by The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, including vet bills and dog food if people wish.

Guide dog owner Andrea Cooper says: "My life's been transformed. Everything used to be so difficult. I couldn't do anything on my own; now, everything's possible thanks to guide dog Cara."

If you have problems with your sight and you think a guide dog might help...

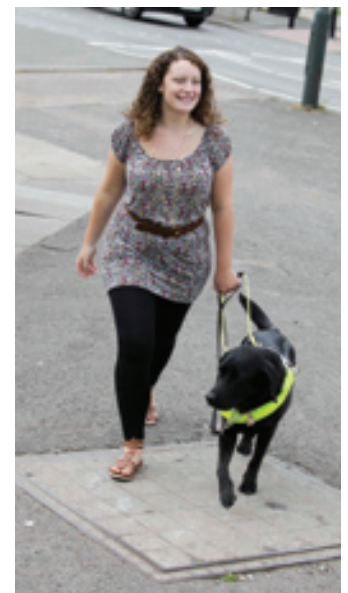
Phone: 0845 372 7499

Email: [guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk)

or log on to:  
[www.guidedogs.org.uk/enquiries](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/enquiries)



**Guide Dogs**



*Andrea Cooper with her guide dog Cara*

## Richard Lane



*Richard with his guide dog Simpson*

Richard Lane has been an NTN & M subscriber for several years. He recently interviewed our IT team as part of a special feature for BBC Radio 4's In Touch programme on how technological advances can help blind people

**NTN & M: Can you tell us how you came to lose your sight and a bit about your background?**

**Richard:** I became blind when I was 23, some 18 years ago, due to a hereditary condition which caused retinal detachment in both eyes. I'm currently a web editor for the Lancet, and also work as a freelance journalist part-time. In the past I've worked as a press officer for the RNIB and Guide Dogs. I graduated from Leeds University with a degree in Psychology and then started off my career selling ads for The Independent newspaper - well, you have to start somewhere! When I lost my sight, one of the first things I thought was, "here immediately is an area of my life that I'm going to be denied access to," because I'd become totally blind. I used to be a subscriber many years ago, getting newspapers on tape. Then I had a gap and came back, this time making use of NTN & M's download service. This is invaluable to me, especially in my line of work.

**NTN & M: How did you get to hear about NTN & M?**

**Richard:** I can't honestly remember, but I think it was as a part of that big learning curve you go

through when you lose your sight and talk to friends and organisations like the RNIB.

**NTN & M: What publications do you take and what do you enjoy about them?**

**Richard:** I enjoy all the titles I take. For both personal and professional reasons I subscribe to The Guardian, Daily Telegraph and the Times as well as the Sunday Times, Observer and Independent on Sunday. While I can choose as many daily newspapers as I want, I tend to read the Guardian and Daily Telegraph during the week as these titles arrive early - before 6am - so I can read them on the train up to London. I use technology all the time, and in the future I'd like to see NTN & M develop its electronic service so that publications can be downloaded straight onto portable devices like a mobile phone - I'm sure you will!

**NTN & M: How would you sum up what NTN & M means to you?**

**Richard:** Like many blind people, I would say that the service is unique and invaluable. I think when you lose your sight it's very important to take the view that you want to get on with your life in the same way as everyone else does. NTN & M helps me do just that. It's a very important part of my daily life being able to read the news on the move, just like a sighted person would do. You do a terrific job!

### Contact

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