

NYSTAGMUS NETWORK (UK) NETLETTER

November 2006

RNIB Campaign

As part of their campaign for changes to the DLA, the RNIB are organising a parliamentary lobby on 4th December. People are to assemble at Central Halls, Westminster in the morning, and will lobby parliament after lunch. If you plan to attend the Lobby please contact the RNIB Campaign hotline **020 7391 2123**. If you can't get to London on the 4th, you could write to your MP. The RNIB can provide a draft letter for you to use – call the hotline for more information.

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New forum at eyesmatters.com

As most of you will know already, the NN website has a forum – a sort of online discussion group all about nystagmus at <http://www.nystagmusnet.org/Forum.htm>. Now there's a more general online discussion group about visual impairment.

<http://www.eyesmatters.com/forums/default.aspx> is the brainchild of Tony Rucinski of the University of Wales Newport. Tony says he started the forum because "I always wanted a place where I could go for advice, help or just discussion about any aspect of my visual impairment and how it affected my life."

On eyesmatter.com you can discuss, for example, travel, school, work, access to audio books, adaptive equipment. You can even ask about nystagmus, although that's not the website's main purpose.

Nystagmus = most grief

Like many visually impaired people Tony has nystagmus as one of a range of eye conditions and he says: "Out of all the problems that my various maladies cause, I reckon nystagmus gives me the most grief - even though it doesn't actually affect my personal sight levels significantly."

And the reason that nystagmus is such a problem is mainly that other people "just don't get the wobbling eyes thing. Their natural response associates such things with 'shiftness' at best, or blatant substance abuse at worse - or even more scary still: 'Oh yea, like that bloke with a flute... now what was his name... ?' Aaaaaagh! Then there are all the other communication things associated with not being able to fix your stare, blah, blah, blah."

And a final observation from Tony: "If it weren't for the nystagmus, I could often have my sight condition completely undetected! Though I've no problem with people knowing or being aware, I just find it fun to see how far I can carry it off!"

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Theatre and Cinema News

Details of autumn and winter shows at the New Theatre, Cardiff is now available in large print, cassette, disc or Braille by calling: 02920 878 797 or by sending an email to: ntmailings@cardiff.gov.uk .

The UK FILM COUNCIL is conducting research into Film and Cinema Access.

For the chance to win £100 or free cinema passes, complete their survey at <http://www.lateralthinkers.com/mhm/ukfc2.htm> or over the phone, 0161 839 3311. The survey will be running until mid-November.

Recent audio described DVD releases:

Ice Age 2, The Lake House, The Thief Lord, The Poseidon, X Men 3 - The Last Stand, The Wild, Confetti, 16 Blocks, Scary Movie 4 Lassie, Eight Below, Pierrepont, V for Vendetta, Firewall, The Shaggy Dog, The Matador, Proof, Syriaana. Full list of all 150 audio described DVDs and further information about the availability of audio description at your local cinema go to: <http://www.yourlocalcinema.com/ad.html>

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Feel Your Way Around The Underground

Blind and partially sighted people will be able to feel their way around some of London's busiest Underground stations for the first time - thanks to a new initiative launched today by London Underground (LU), the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) and Describe Online.

Blind passengers will be able to receive free books of tactile maps, made up of raised lines, which are read by touch instead of sight, to help them find their way around Old Street, Westminster and Earl's Court Underground stations.

The maps, which are also available in large print for partially sighted people, were commissioned by LU from RNIB as part of a pilot project to provide information which sighted passengers take for granted. Currently blind and partially sighted people often have to rely on station staff to guide them around Underground stations. The

tactile and large print station maps were developed by RNIB with the help of 15 blind and partially sighted underground users who took part in research to specify their travel needs and review samples of the maps to evaluate their effectiveness. Station layout, including the location of the ticket office, manual gate, platforms, stairs, escalators, lifts and exits are all detailed in the plans. The plans are designed to be used alongside step-by-step online descriptions of stations.

Books of tactile and large print station maps can be borrowed from RNIB (0845 702 3153) and NLB (0161 406 2525) Braille libraries, viewed at the station, or obtained free of charge from London Underground's Customer Service Centre (0845 330 9880). They have been designed to complement detailed online station descriptions at www.describe-online.com

Passengers are likely to get most benefit from these if studied before they travel.

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Contributions

Please send contributions, ideas or links for the NetLetter to Gill Taylor at gill@taylors.uk.com.