**Tactile Times Newspaper**

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Issue number 1, Summer 2018

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Welcome to the first ever edition of the Tactile Times!

We are Ellie, Lexy and Theo, three young braillists who thought it would be fun to put together a free quarterly way for children and young people who are braillists, to share news, event information, tips, opinions and ideas. We hope you like what we have put together. Please send us any ideas you have for sections we could add. Also, we would love to include articles from our readers in the next issue. If there is something you really enjoy doing, or a place you had a good time visiting why not write a short article about it for the Tactile Times? Or submit your favorite joke, or a puzzle.

We are really excited about the Tactile Times being a way for more and more of us braillists to keep each other up to date so if you know someone who might like to get a copy too, recommend it!

Some navigation tips: We have put a line of 10 +’s between sections. We have put == before each article so you can search for == to find the beginning of articles and +’s to find sections. Each section heading is also numbered.

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1. **News**

== VICTA events

Next Event is a Family Day at The Imperial War Museum at Duxford on the 23rd October 2018 see victa.org.uk for details and application.

== British Blind Sport Have a Go days

Email: Alex Pitts for more information: alex@britishblindsport.org.uk

Sussex on the 12th August 2018

Newcastle on the 31st August 2018

South Wales, 29th September

== Guide Dogs events

Guide Dogs have some summer family parties, a family weekend and a Guide Dog experience day coming up in the next few months. Go to guidedogs.org.uk and the details and application forms are listed under: services we provide, children and young people’s services, recreational activities. Or contact recreation@guidedogs.org.uk to find out more

== Look UK Events

Find out about their mentor scheme for young people with VI.

Also they are holding a Fashion advice event for VI 11-29 year olds at John Lewis in Birmingham on the 29th August. Contact them on 01432 376314 or **info@look-uk.org**

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**2. Fun things to do**

== VICTA Family weekend

What is a VICTA family weekend?

I recently went on a VICTA family weekend and I really enjoyed it! This family weekend was at Norfolk Lakes, a place quite near Norwich. VICTA family weekends normally start on a Friday evening and end on a Monday morning. The accommodation is quite basic because the thing that makes VICTA family weekends fun is all the activities and making new friends. The activities I did included Climbing, Canoeing and Caving.

5 Highlights of the VICTA family weekend I went on this year were:

High ropes — I really enjoyed the high ropes course at the VICTA family weekend this year, the course included swinging platforms, a v shaped net and a rope ladder.

Giant SUP (Giant stand up paddle boarding) — I really enjoyed Giant SUP. Mostly it was because everyone jumped into the water at the end and I pulled Jamie (a VICTA volunteer) into the water with me.

Canoeing — As you will have probably guessed already, I jumped into the water as well. My canoe also capsized.

Fancy dress party — I really enjoyed the fancy dress party which always happens on the Sunday evening. I won 2nd prize dressed as a Leopard in the grass.

Pin badge — At the end of every VICTA family weekend (after you have given in your questionnaire) you will get a pin badge with something on it to do with the theme of the weekend, for example this time the theme was safari and the pin badge had an elephant on it.

I also met some really interesting children and I have kept in touch with some of them too.

I recommend going to a VICTA family weekend but you will have to wait until next year. You need to apply in the winter if you want a place on the Spring or Summer VICTA family weekend next year. To apply go to www.victa.org.uk and click 2019 activity calendar.

Written by Theo , age 11.

== Science Museum VI Discovery Days

Do you like Science?

If you do, I think a great thing to do would be to go to a Science Museum VI Discovery Day. These days involve some workshops to do with Science and the theme of the day. Every Science Museum VI Discovery day has a theme. I really enjoyed the last Science Museum Discovery day, and the theme was Mary Shelly’s book, Frankenstein.

Highlights of my last Science Museum Discovery day:

Making a model of a imaginary creature - I really enjoyed imagining a creature and then making it out of plasticine and other things in one of the workshops.

Seeing a static electricity making machine – I felt a machine that makes static electricity called a Van der Graaf generator, we also heard the crackle of the static electricity it made.

Coin Squashers - At the Science Museum there are around 5 coin squashers and I really enjoy putting a penny in and turning the wheel to squash it flat with a pattern (something in the Science Museum) on the front and the Science Museum logo on the back. If you go to the Science Museum remember to bring a pound and a penny and look out for coin squashers. To find the exact location of a coin squasher go to www.pennycollector.com and click Locations at the bottom.

If you have time left over at the Science museum I would recommend visiting the Information Age Gallery where they often have an object handling station and some of the permanent exhibits have Braille explanations and models you can feel.

I think the Science Museum discovery days are good and I always find out new things, but I have found that occasionally the odd workshop is a bit rushed or could be a bit more accessible. To find out when the next Science Museum VI Discovery day is and to sign up email: familyprogrammes@ScienceMuseum.ac.uk

Written by Theo, 11

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**3. Technology**

== App review

Seeing AI

Rating: 4.5 stars

What is Seeing AI?

Seeing AI is a free app for iOS users that Microsoft have developed for blind people. It can read text, recognise people, tell you what is in a photo, scan barcodes and do a lot more. If you are a blind person who cannot read print and you have an iphone or ipad, I recommend you download this free app. I use this app a lot especially for reading signs or restaurant menus using the short text function and/or document function + reading handwriting.

 To get the app, open the App store on your iPhone or iPad and search for "Microsoft Seeing A I”

Channels:

Seeing AI has lots of different channels for different things, including one for short text and one for handwriting. I have included what each channel does below:

Short text — This channel is good for reading text on signs, letters and more. I can now tell which letters are mine on my own using the Seeing AI app.

Document — This channel is good for reading print documents. You can also email the document to yourself so you can keep it once you have scanned it into the app. This channel is good for restaurant menus, leaflets, letters and more. It has a really helpful feature that helps you line up the phone with the document.

Person — This channel can identify a person reasonably well. It often gets the age wrong by more than 10 years though! You can also add people to your phone’s memory and that way you can identify who is sitting round a table or is in a room, using your phone. This can be quite funny as well as useful!

Scene preview — This channel can identify scenes, for example if there was someone on a sofa looking at a computer in front of you, it would tell you that there was someone sitting on a sofa looking at a computer.

Handwriting preview — This channel is for reading handwriting. I use it for birthday cards, letters and more. It does not give camera guidance to help you line up your phone but hopefully this will come.

Colour preview — This channel will tell you what colour things are. Sometimes it gets the colour very wrong so I recommend you don't try and use it to make your outfit match.

Light — This channel will make a low pitched sound if there is not very much light and a high pitched sound if there is more light. This means you do not need to buy a light meter, you can instead use this app.

Currency — This channel can be used to identify euros, pounds and dollars + a few other currencies (only notes) but it will not work on certain iPhones with certain iOS versions.

Product — This channel can identify what product you place below the phone/iPad by reading the bar code of the item. It has beeps that will get closed and closer together until the phone/iPad is on top of the bar code. This is a great feature that helps you find the bar code to scan.

The screen layout:

In the Seeing AI app there is a button at the top of the screen which is the menu button. If you swipe right using voice over you will find the quick help button which is also at the top of the screen, this button gives you a basic description of the channel you are on. If you swipe right again you will find the take picture button which is only visible on certain channels, this button can be used to take a picture of the thing you are trying to recognize. If you swipe right again you will find the pause announcements button, this button will pause anything the app is reading or saying until you click it again, (it will be called resume announcements if the announcements are paused). If you swipe right again you will find a picker item called channel, you can swipe up or down to change the channel.

The menu:

Below I have put a list of the items in the menu and what they do.

Close button — This will close the menu

(NEW:) Browse photos — If you click this button it will bring up the photos that are saved to your phone/iPad. You can click on one of the photos and it will tell you what text, scenes or people are in the photo.

Face recognition — You can add people to a list of recognisable people using this feature, they can then be identified by their names in the person channel. You will need to take 3 pictures of them and then enter their name.

Help — This will take you to a help page in the app. This is useful for basic help with Seeing AI.

Feedback — This button will compose an email to the Seeing AI feedback email address. All you will need to do to feed back about the app is type in the subject and message in the Apple Mail app.

Settings — This will take you to a Seeing AI settings page which have various settings including what currency you want to recognize on the currency channel.

About — This will tell you the version of Seeing AI you have and will list the terms of use

If you do download the app then why not write in to the Tactile Times Newspaper and let us know what you've found most useful about this app?

To find out more go to seeingai.com

Written by Theo , 11.

== Smart Brailler

A Smart Brailler is an electronic brailler that talks to you. There is an audio tour that shows you all around the brailler. I like that it talks to you and it tells you what you’ve written. I like the American accent. It’s lighter to carry than the perkins. The battery looses 25% in 15minutes. Different people like different screens, it shows you large print or SIM braille. In large print seeable people can read the screen to read what you have written without being good at reading braille. It feels the same weight and it’s the same to press the keys as the perkins brailler.

Written by Ellie (aka Lelafa Foofeter Pupsicle), aged 7

⠐⠶⠐⠶ BrailleNote Touch Review

A general description of the BrailleNote touch

Hello, I'm Lexy and I'm going to give a review on the very exciting and complicated BrailleNote touch. The BrailleNote touch is a bit like an Apex, it is a machine with a physical keyboard like a computer. You simply type using the six braille keys with backspace and enter which are almost in the same position as a brailler although backspace and enter are opposite ways. It has the standard thumb keys and 32 little buttons just beneath the braille display.

Some new things on the BrailleNote touch

On the BrailleNote touch there are three other buttons. These are circle, the home button like on a tablet, a triangular button that is exit and a contextual menu button which is square. There are also two volume buttons on the BrailleNote touch. They are in the correct positions being the one at the bottom down and the one at the top up. However, on the BrailleNote touch unlike the BrailleNote apex, you have to install an app to record so I recommend for recording, you use an Apex.

Two impressive facts about the BrailleNote touch

Did you know that the BrailleNote touch can turn into a tablet so anyone sighted can help you if you get stuck just by a simple triple tap of the home button. Even better, you can use a mode called touch braille. This is where you can literally type braille on the touch screen and it will come up on the display. All you have to do is simply lift the keys up by two hinges on the sides of the keys and place your 10 fingers on the touch screen until you feel a short vibration. Then you can immediately begin typing so, if you are in an exam with others, you can type silently on the screen so you will hardly make any noise at all.

An overall view of the BrailleNote touch

I think the BrailleNote touch is a really fun and interesting piece of equipment with only the disadvantage of recording. My advice would be if you have a BrailleNote touch and are getting used to it just be patient and have fun and then you will have a useful and exciting BrailleNote touch that works as it should. So, have fun experimenting and thank you for reading, bye.

Written by Lexy, 14.

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**4. Sports**

== Goalball

What is goalball?

Goalball is a sport for blind and visually impaired people (in fact, anyone can play!) where everyone wears shades (blindfolds) and the ball has bells in it. Goalball first started in 1946 by Australian Hanz Lorencezen. A goalball court is 18 metres long and 9 metres wide. You play goalball in a sports hall with long goals at each end. There are 2 teams of 3 in goalball and you try and bowl the ball (which weighs 1.25 kg) into the other team’s goal. I go to a goalball training session every 2 weeks and I train along with the other children at the Cambridge Dons goalball club. There are also some national events and clubs compete in a league.

How to play goalball

In goalball there are 3 positions that you can be in, Left wing, Centre and Right wing. When the other team throws the ball you kneel down ready to defend. You need to listen really hard to know which direction the ball is coming from. Then you dive in the direction of the ball, you lie down on your side to defend the ball. It is a good idea to keep one arm protecting your face at this point! If you or somebody else on your team saves the ball you have 10 seconds for you, or one of the other people on your team to shoot it back. If the ball goes out of the court the referee blows a whistle and says "out". If you shot the ball out the ball will go to the other team. If you were trying to save the ball and it went off, you would get the ball back. If the ball goes in the goal the referee blows a whistle and the game pauses for a few seconds. After the game has started again one of the people on your team would shoot. This goes on until the referee says the game is over. Games last for 10 minutes.

I really enjoy playing goalball, especially scoring goals and diving to try to save the ball. It is great to play on a team with other people and work together with them. Goalball can be a bit crazy, but that is part of the fun!

To get involved near Cambridge contact warren.wilson@hotmail.co.uk or to find you're nearest goalball club contact enquiries@goalballuk.com

Written by Theo, 11

== Fantasy Football league

If you like football you might be interested in joining an online Fantasy Football league we have set up for tactile times readers. You would need to set up your own team for this year’s Premier league to join. You can do this using a free, accessible app and website. To get ststted go to fantasy.premierleague.com . To join the Tactile Times Newspaper league you will need this code: 164865-37046 . For more details about how to do this just get in touch by emailing tactiletimesnewspaper@gmail.com and we will send you full instructions.

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**5. Joke section**

Why was six scared of seven?

... because seven eight nine!

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**6. Flying Pupders**

== Flying Pupders

Flying pupders can transport you from place to place very fast! A flying pupder is a dog with cardboard or foam wings. Flying pupders eat normal dog food but you can actually get flying pupder food that is sloppy and you can pour it down it’s throat easily. Flying pupders really like that as they are really tired after a long day of hard work in flying. Sometimes flying pupders are puppy German Shepherds, usually they are Dalmatians and very rarely Labradoodles. All breeds of guide dogs can do it too (or assistance dogs). Flying pupders are usually very licky. Flying pupders wear harnesses with loops on. They are made from doggy cardigan material. The loop is for if they need to be grabbed.

Safety for flying pupders -

If you don’t have a launch pad and an emergency claw and you are doing a very long flight your flying pupder must always wear a cushion on it’s tummy to protect it, if it doesn’t have one it will die. An emergency claw is a helicopter with a clamp that grabs a flying pupder in an emergency. The clamp grabs onto them and their rider with the claw and pulls them into the helicopter. For example, if their wings get soggy and it can’t fly anymore. A launch pad is like a PE mat with a pole in the middle. It has a pole in the middle so if more flying pupders are on the launch pad too they can crowd around the pole with their rider to separate them out.

How to make a flying pupder fly -

If the wind is strong it will catch hold of the wings and it will lift the flying pupder up in the air. If there is no wind then the flying pupder cannot fly. Do not sit actually on the back of the flying pupder it will break it’s spine. You have to get on its back and squeeze either side of it so you are not actually putting your weight on it’s back.

Written by Ellie (aka Lelafa Foofeter Pupsicle), 7.

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**7. Games**

== Wordsearch

(hard copies of the wordsearch will be sent out to you if you get this electronically. You need to make sure we have your address though)

== C-race

This is a game using a Perkins brailler where the aim is to see how quickly you can do a line of c’s across a portrait page of A4 (32 braille cells). You do three attempts and take an average of your time. The current record is XXX. If you beat the record, send your time in and you will become the champion….until someone beats you!

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**8. Get in touch**

If you would like to send in a short article, joke or game or if you have not subscribed yet and would like to subscribe please do get in touch at Tactiletimesnewspaper@gmail.com

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