



Newsletter

IFLA Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities Section

LOUIS BRAILLE 200TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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The IFLA/LPD Newsletter is issued twice a year.

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The Newsletter is available on www.ifla.org

Welcome from Chair



LPD Chair Bente Dahl Rathje

A new name for the Section

As many of you may know, our section succeeded in changing to a more inclusive name - from Libraries for the Blind to **Libraries serving Persons with Print Disabilities**. LPD in short :-)

Our 'next' generation

I would like to welcome the new members of LPD warmly - and also a big thanks to the 'old' members taking one more term for their efforts working for the benefit of persons not reading printed text.

P3 Conference

No matter which organization you come from - I'm sure you would benefit from joining the LPD Satellite meeting held in Mechelen, Belgium:

www.debibliotheken.nl/P3IFLA2009

You'll recognise 3 important 'P's at this conference: **P**eople, **P**ublishers and **P**ublic libraries - do join us in Mechelen (and at IFLA Congress in Milan as well), and learn more

about the work in the LPD Section - and why each and all of us have engaged in the important task of giving all persons access to read.

My own organization

The Danish National Library for the Blind has changed name too. The new name is Nota - Danish National Library for Persons with Print Disabilities.

Motivating the name change is the happy fact that Nota is no longer a library catering exclusively to the visually impaired. Also dyslexic people and persons not reading printed text have access to Nota's extensive collection of books and magazines in audio and other alternative reading media.

At Nota, we see this as a pleasing development; we enjoy giving more and to more people!

Find Nota on the net: www.nota.nu

Best regards, Bente Dahl Rathje
bdr@nota.nu (new email address)

Louis Braille 200th Anniversary Celebrations

Braille 200 Celebrations in Canada

On January 4th, 2009 the world celebrated the 200th Anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille and his enduring gift to humankind of the braille system. The genius of braille

is that it has brought empowerment and freedom to blind persons worldwide.

In Canada a national program known as Braille200 was developed; information is available on the website at www.Braille200.ca. Dr. Euclid Herie, CNIB President Emeritus and Chair of Braille200 provided the Opening Address at the Paris celebrations in January "Six Dots that Changed the World – Louis Braille Remembered". The text is available through the website.

On January 16th, to kick-off a year of Braille200 celebrations, CNIB held a special birthday party commemorating 200 years of braille. Festivities included the public debut of "Merci Louis", a song composed and presented by award-winning Canadian songwriter Terry Kelly – copies of a commemorative issue are available for sale on Mr. Kelly's website (www.terry-kelly.com/). Canada also launched a Canadian braille textbook – the first in 50 years, "Celebrating Braille a Canadian Approach", authored by Myra Rodrigues, PhD.

Canada through Braille200, invites friends of braille in all countries to explore the website; discover excellent resources on the life of Louis Braille, his reading and writing system, braille competitions

for persons of all ages, and a great short film "Young Heroes" filmed just west of Toronto.

Margaret McGrory, CNIB

Braille Celebrations in Denmark

Danish festivities were kicked off on January 4th 2009 with an exclusive birthday concert in "Kildevældskirken" in Copenhagen the same day of Louis Braille's birth 200 years ago. The concert was well attended – the church venue was totally full (there wasn't space for one more guide dog!).

The programme was special for the occasion: it was wonderful organ music by (blind) composers: Ernst Bruun Hansen, Laurids Lauridsen, Jean Langlais and Louis Vierne, performed by (blind) organists: Willy Egmos, Kjeld Jensen and Thorvald Kølle together with organist Mads Høck. The well known actress Ghita Nørby entertained and read a fairy tale by H.C.Andersen.



Alexandra, Duchess of Frederiksborg, attending the birthday concert in Copenhagen

Alexandra, Duchess of Frederiksborg, and protector of The Danish Association of The Blind, attended the event. Afterwards the organizers hosted a festive reception for the audience, held in the crypt. Here the organist Lis Vibeke Wallin informed of the historical use of braille music. The whole concert was broadcast on The Danish Radio.

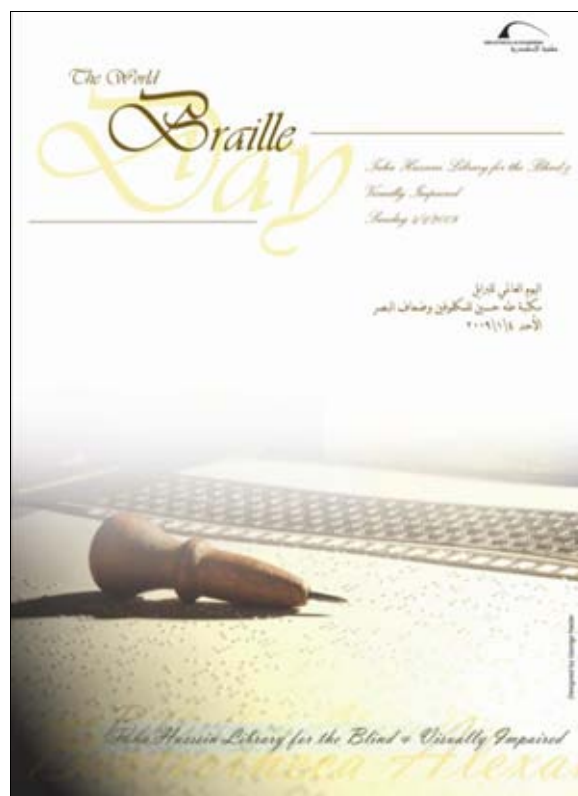
A full day seminar on braille in Daily Living took place at Synscenter Refsnaes, The Danish Centre for Visual Impairment, Children and Youth on April 14th. The programme consisted of lectures, demonstrations, film, and about history of braille as well.

Further information on the Braille200 anniversary celebrations planned across Denmark can be found by visiting www.punktskrift200.dk. This website, celebrating Louis Braille, is organised by Danish organisations, Institutions and associations concerned with braille and blind people. We all want to inform the public about braille as a modern written language that is very much alive and fit for the future!

Kirsten Broager, Danish National Library for Persons with Print Disabilities

Celebrations in Egypt

On the occasion of the World Braille Day, the Taha Hussein Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Bibliotheca Alexandrina organized an event on the 4th of January 2009.



Poster for the World Braille Day Event at the Taha Hussein Library

The celebration included the following activities:

A documentary film about Louis Braille, and the development of the braille way of writing. The film also included the development of the devices that are used for writing and printing in braille.

An exhibition at the bibliotheca Alexandrina reading area, this exhibition included the following:

- Part of the braille book collection available at the Taha Hussein Library for the Visually Impaired.
- Braille books printed by the Taha Hussein Library for the Visually impaired.
- A collection braille images available at the Taha Hussein Library.
- A collection of books that talk about Louis Braille and the methods used for teaching the blind and visually impaired, available at Bibliotheca Alexandrina.
- A display of the different tools and devices used for writing and printing braille; the slate and stylus, the Perkins braille, the Mountbatten brailier, and the Index Everest Braille printer.

Some activities included:

A brief introduction to the library visitors about the braille way of reading and writing.

- "Write your name"

For this activity the library visitors were given the opportunity to write

their names in braille using the Mountbatten Brailier.



A display of the different tools and devices used for writing and printing braille

The exhibition at Taha Hussein Library for the Visually Impaired at Bibliotheca Alexandrina was very successful; it drew the attention of the general public to the braille way of reading and writing.

Heba Kholeif, Taha Hussein Library for the Visually Impaired at Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Celebrating Louis Braille bicentenary in Estonia

In Estonia the Louis Braille bicentenary celebrations extend from January 4th to October 15th, 2009, organized by the non-profit organizations Jumalalaegas and Kakora, the Estonian Library for the

Blind and the Estonian Blind Union. Already in November 2008 Jumalalaegas and the Estonian Library for the Blind created the web portal www.braille.ee aimed at introducing braille, its creator Louis Braille and providing information about the events marking Louis Braille bicentenary including information days, exhibitions, a conference and an essay contest.

The World Braille Day has been celebrated in Estonia since 2004.

On January 4, the non-profit organization Jumalalaegas, in cooperation with several other organizations for the blind organized information days at the two largest shopping centers in Tallinn and Tartu. The main aim of these events was to draw public attention to visually impaired people whom we often do not notice among us and to inform about their everyday life and braille. The event in Tallinn was opened by the Minister of Social Affairs Maret Maripuu and in Tartu by the President of the Parliament Ene Ergma who both gave their opening remarks and answered questions from members of the audience.



Minister of Social Affairs learning braille

Participants had the possibility to write on the braille typewriter, make tactile drawings, walk with the help of a white cane, play chess and draughts with blind players, identify different materials blindfold, watch blind people use computer, take a relaxing massage offered by blind masseurs, try on special glasses deforming sight as the eye diseases cause and see their effect on vision.

The World Braille Day was turned into a joyful and festive occasion by music groups and orchestras of the blind from different parts of Estonia performing all day long in both shopping centres in Tallinn and Tartu. Beautiful handicraft items made by visually impaired brush-, basket- and rug-makers were exhibited.

Representatives of the Estonian Library for the Blind displayed audio, braille and tactile books and

introduced the Daisy player Victor Classic X Plus.

Various souvenirs were made and the special anniversary stamp was printed to mark the World Braille Day. The stamp was available for the collectors only on January 4.

For the second year in succession the Estonian visually impaired people have been successful at the Onkyo Braille Essay Contest. The award ceremony for the last year's contest took place at the World Braille Day event in Tartu. The Fine Work prize in junior category went to Mari-Liis Täht, a student of Tartu Emajõe School.



Mari-Liis-Täht reading a tactile book

With close to 10000 people attending the events in Tallinn and Tartu, the World Braille Day celebration in Estonia was a remarkable success that was also widely covered by media.

On January 4, visually impaired people got access for the first time

to the system for reading electronic texts by the computer created in the framework of the cooperation project between the Institute of the Estonian Language, the North-Estonian Society of the Blind and the Estonian Library for the Blind. Currently the system enables visually impaired people to read the Estonian language news in synthesized speech but in the near future access extends also to magazines, newspapers and books. The Estonian Library for the Blind is the administrator of the system with the responsibility to add new texts to it.

On January 4, the organizing committee of "Braille 200" announced the essay contest "Six dots" to popularize braille and show how braille skills influence visually impaired people's everyday life in Estonia and all over the world. The essays are evaluated in two age groups (younger than 18, older than 18). Awards will be given to authors of the three best essays in both age categories and their texts will be made available on the web portal www.braille.ee.

The first exhibition marking Louis Braille bicentenary celebrations was open at Tallinn Central Library's branch library at Nõmme from January 7-29 with a selection of braille books from the Estonian Library for the Blind and the tools for writing text in braille displayed.

Visitors could try reading braille books with the help of the alphabet. This exhibition was very popular among the students of a neighboring school who actively used the possibility to practice reading and writing text in braille. For most of them it was the first contact with the blind people's world.

On April 18, the Estonian Bible Society organized a conference in Tallinn which covered such topics as Louis Braille's life story and his creation of the braille code, the United Bible Societies' role as the publisher and distributor of the braille Bible, activities of the Estonian Blind Union and the Estonian Library for the Blind. Braille, audio and tactile books were also displayed during this conference.

On October 15, the exhibition "Seen-unseen world" will be opened at the Estonian Health Care Museum. It will give an overview of the work, life and studies of blind people in Estonia.

On the International White Cane Day the winners of the essay contest "Six dots" will be announced and it will conclude the series of events "Braille 200" in Estonia.

Priit Kasepalu, Vaiko Sepper, Marja Kivihall, Estonian Library for the Blind

200th Anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille in France

As the first Braille Library created in the world the AVH library had to do something special for Louis Braille's Birth anniversary.

We totally reorganised our services creating a new media library: the biggest change for our patrons is providing direct access to the document. If in Paris, you are able to come and choose - by yourself - any book, movie or music score, read them in the media library or borrow them. The idea is to offer services that are as close as possible to the services offered, in France, to sighted people.

The new media library has 300 m² freely accessible to our patrons, open 32 hours a week, with a team of 18 librarians providing advice and their expert point of view about reading with sight problems. Access to computers and other electronic reading solutions is also offered in this space.

We also reorganised our cultural actions in the library: we now have weekly conferences around books, cultural subjects, and cultural events, all linked with our collections.

Our distance users also benefit from these changes: we have totally reorganised our lending services and we make cultural

conferences accessible for them at a distance, using Daisy.

This new media library is the starting point of our work on new services including, of course, new ways of providing adapted materials to our patrons but also including cultural mediation and creating life around the books which is an important part of the library work.

Luc Maumet, AVH, The Valentin Haüy Association

Marking Louis Braille 200th Birthday in Israel

The Central Library for the Blind, Visually Impaired & Handicapped marked Louis Braille's 200th birthday by two major events on January 4th, 2009.

The first event was "Navigation in Braille" and took place during the day. The participants were blind braille readers with their accompanying persons. Four points in Tel Aviv City were chosen as starting points of a route prepared in advance. A series of instructions in braille were given to the blind navigator alone, making it his mission to instruct his accompany person along Tel Aviv streets. Along the route the blind navigator read out loud the descriptions and details of the buildings, monuments and typical flora characteristic to the site.

The participants expressed their pleasure and satisfaction at the opportunity of explaining to their accompany persons about the Tel Aviv sites they had visited.

The main event took place that evening under the patronage of the His Excellency the Ambassador of France in Israel. Among the many guests were the library readers, special education teachers Social workers, library staff, volunteers and friends of the Library.

The evening program included the screening of an animated short movie showing how the six points of braille makeup the Hebrew alphabet, a blind boy read excerpts from The Little Prince, eight narrators blind and sighted read a short story some parts of which were dramatized, a blind violinist and a sighted pianist shared the stage playing classical music, ten blind people wrote the answers to a quiz on Perkins Machines, and the evening ended with a lively sing-along from a booklet written in ink print and braille.

In his speech at the beginning of the event Uri Cohen the Library's Director pointed out that though not all blind people can read braille, the greatness of this invention is that anyone who wishes so can learn it. Louis Braille's Six Points, he said, are the incarnation of Louis Braille's spirit,

a person that changed the reality of his life and became a symbol for many blind people for ever.

Uri Cohen, Central Library for The Blind, Visually Impaired and Handicapped

Louis Braille Year 2009 in the Netherlands

The central theme of this year is: Louis Braille Year 2009: towards a society without any limits.

Most of these activities are organized by NLBB Vereniging van Leesgehandicaptten (the formal library for the blind, now an association of people with reading handicaps) with participation of Viziris and Oogfonds Nederland. Information about our and other activities can be found on the website, specially designed for this occasion: www.louisbraille.nl. On this website you can find more information on Louis Braille and his invention (in Dutch), a (inter)national calendar on all the activities, a film about the importance of braille in 2009, etc.

The idea of the Louis Braille Year was started by a group of braille readers (and members of NLBB) and NLBB gave them administrative and financial support to accomplish their ideas. Their most important purpose was to give more information about

braille and its importance to the blind.

Two ideas were:

Novel about braille

To write (and publish) a novel for the young people – age 8 till 13 – about braille and send it to all primary schools in the Netherlands. This project was given to a children's book writer (Rian Visser) who wrote the story called Letter in a secret language about a blind girl who meets a dyslexic boy at a fair. The last pages in the book give information about Louis Braille and his invention and there is a page in real tactile braille for the young people to translate. In the book itself are two cd's included, with whole story read by two young persons. The book will be sent to all primary schools in September after a special presentation in The National Book Museum where a group of blind children send their secret message (on an attached braille card) to the world by balloons. At the presentation the book will be available in all its varieties: in normal print, large print, in braille and as an audio Daisy book. The two print books are published by Delubas.

Audio Play

To write and produce a radio play about the subject braille. The story is called "Pointy" and tells about

the bad publicity of braille nowadays. Some people think that there is too much society money spent on braille as there are so little braille readers. "Can't they use talking books?" In the play the responsible persons at the Ministry for Libraries want to stop giving financial support for making braille books. A young blind student is going to investigate the Ministry of Information and Libraries and comes to a surprising conclusion. Even Louis Braille himself turns up in this story. The cd with the radio play is sent free of charge to all members of NLBB as a present on Louis Braille's Bicentennial.

Other activities developed by NLBB and the Louis Braille working group:

The whole year
Spreading braille alphabets in the country

Jan. – June
Exhibitions about Braille and its history in public libraries in The Hague

January 10th 2009
Opening of the Louis Braille Year 2009 by her Royal Highness Princess Laurentien (Patroness of NLBB) of the Netherlands.
Introduction to the activities of 2009 and performances of two blind artists, well known in the Netherlands. Princess Laurentien gave an impressive speech about

the importance of braille. Her appearance at this gathering – with more than 250 blind people – gave an extra importance to the fact that Braille is still alive in 2009! The event was reported in all sorts of media in the country.

March 26th
Braille Symposium focusing on the place, importance and purpose of braille in modern society. Different perspectives on the subject braille. From teaching braille to young children, teaching braille to older people, the quality of printed braille, the collection and choice in braille books in the Netherlands. The biggest producer of braille books in the Netherlands (Dedicon) gives its point of view on the subject.

In the afternoon the (blind) people could talk in groups about the subjects and conclusions. A special summary will be published (in January 2010) with the outcome of this day.

May 25th
Sending the audio play "Pointy" to all members of NLBB association.

June 1st
Closing date of the Louis Braille 2009 anniversary competition for the best short story or poem, theme: "Without braille (or written language) it would have been impossible...."

June 7th

Sending the book "The world of Winnie the Pooh" to all public libraries in the Netherlands on the occasion of The Louis Braille Year. This children's book contains braille and tactile images. The book also includes a cd with Winnie the Pooh stories read by Princess Laurentien. With the book comes a newsletter with information about braille for young children.

June 13th

Annual general meeting of members of the NLBB Association with special emphasis on the Louis Braille Year 2009. The members can meet the producers and actors of the radio play.

September 7th

Sending the book "Letter in a secret language" to all primary (and special) schools in the Netherlands.

October 1st

Symposium for employees and staff of public libraries organised by the NLBB and the Loket aangepast-lezen (National Library for the visually impaired and dyslectic) about lending braille books and building a collection in braille.

January 10th 2010

Closing ceremony of the Louis Braille 2009 year. On this day the results of the anniversary year will be presented. The volume on the outcomes of the Braille Symposium

will be presented and the winners of the Louis Braille 2009 writing competition will be announced.

Outcome of all the publicity on braille in 2009. Does the Dutch society look different (or the same) on the subject braille?

René Vink, NLBB Nederlandse Luister- en Braillebibliotheek

Louis Braille Anniversary Activities in Sweden 2009

The anniversary year began with a splendid article on the history of braille in a major newspaper "Svenska Dagbladet" on January, 4, by the former librarian Sten Gustavsson.

The Swedish Braille Authority and The Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired (SRF) have organized a competition in designing the best poster commemorating the creation of braille. The winning poster will be used during the anniversary. The competition has been very successful, it interested many students in design and art, and resulted in 40 contributions. The results will be published on the web (www.punktskriftsnamnden.se).

The Sweden Post is going to present new post stamps with real readable braille in May. In connection with this event an exhibition on braille and the life of

braille readers will be held at the Post Museum in Stockholm.

Other activities in Sweden in order to commemorate the birth of Louis Braille are locally organized celebrations and exhibitions by SRF. SRF and other interested parties, such as TPB and the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, have jointly produced a new braille alphabet leaflet for the anniversary.

The Swedish Braille Authority is also presenting the new standard for literary braille during the spring, a well chosen time.

Björn Westling, TPB, The Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille

RNIB Events in the UK

RNIB will be using the year not only to raise awareness of braille but also to encourage more people (particularly adults) to learn braille.

From January 2009, we will be aiming to raise general awareness of braille. We're compiling hundreds of stories of people whose lives have been transformed by braille.

On the 4th January RNIB launched an exciting new look website containing lots of up to date information, podcasts and videos.

We're putting together an educational pack for all primary

schools on the story of Louis Braille and the use of the braille code. It has been designed to complement key stage 1 and key stage 2 learning outcomes. This will be mailed out on the 26th January.

There was a high profile signature event at the beginning of March held at the Science Museum in London. David Blunkett, the patron for the year's celebrations attended the proceedings.

Two amateur radio enthusiasts have secured the call sign GB2HLB. They will be in contact with other enthusiasts around the world between the 26th December 2008 and 22nd January 2009. Once this is complete two more enthusiasts will run a similar campaign.

RNIB Cymru will be holding a children's essay competition. Children will be invited to write an essay with a welsh theme in either English or Welsh braille.

In Late Spring 2009, RNIB will be publishing the results of a major piece of research on the issues facing adults learning braille.

Two key products will be launched. The first, a grade one braille course is for both sighted and touch learners. The kit will contain braille writing equipment so that learners can immediately start to label things and write short notes. The second product is the innovative

'upward' writing frame which means that braille no longer has to be written using the reverse mirror writing method. The stylus makes 'upward' dots.

A book will be published in conjunction with the EBU. It will contain a selection of winning essays entitled 'How braille changed my life' It will be launched in June at the French celebrations in Coupvray (Louis Braille's birthplace).

The annual UK Techshare conference highlights the role of technology in the everyday life of people with disabilities. In September it will have a braille theme and it is hoped it will host the French traveling exhibition on Louis Braille and his legacy.

Other UK Activities

RNIB, Torch, Blind Catholics, Guild of Church braillists, St. John's Guild, and others are organising a Louis Braille thanksgiving service to be held at St. Martin's in the Fields, London on Saturday March 21st at noon.

The BBC world service broadcast a programme on the 2nd January 2009, highlighting the global reach and appeal of braille in its many forms. There were also sections on the life of Louis Braille and braille and innovation.

Traveleyes, a company specialising in holidays for blind and partially sighted people is organising a trip to France in May 2009 with a Louis Braille theme.

National Braille Week organised an international Chess tournament in Edinburgh which ran from the 2nd January to the 4th January 2009. All moves were recorded in braille. There was also a braille exhibition.

Helen Brazier, RNIB

Some International Events

The French organising committee (CINAL) held a 4 day symposium which began on the 4th January 2009 with a concert in Paris in the Notre Dame Cathedral. The conference was entitled 'Braille 2009 - 6 dot writing and its future'.

The Americans have produced a silver dollar featuring the face of Louis Braille on the head side. It will be available from 26th March 2009 and more details are available from www.braille.org.

CINAL are organising a second conference in June. It will take place in Coupvray and will cover independence, integration and access to knowledge. It will inform the 'Coupvray Charter' which will have 10 key political proposals. The activities will conclude with a concert it is hoped Stevie Wonder and Andrea Bocelli will star.

National Braille Press has produced a range of promotional items (lapel pins, notelets, bookmarks, key chains, poster) These are all for sale at www.nbp.org/ic/nbp/louis.

The republic of Ireland has issued a new 55-cent stamp in braille. The new stamp may be viewed or bought at www.irishstamps.ie.

The Australians are having a celebration on the beach with a 50 metre long braille sand sculpture in March. 'The spirit of Louis Braille will meet the spirit of Australia in the sand the sun and the surf'.

Does Braille have a future?

Braille is dead, long live technology, the better way to access information. Braille is cumbersome and difficult to learn. Most blind people in the UK don't use it, yet organisations spend millions preserving this near extinct format for a few privileged souls who persist in its use. The resources currently needlessly expended on braille production should be diverted in to making more information electronically available, benefiting thousands more people who would not have to undergo the trial of learning a system which has frankly had its day.

Is such a line of thought heresy? It may be somewhat disrespectful in

the bicentenary of the birth of Louis Braille. It is true that the poor availability of resources to enable people to learn braille is scandalous - watch this space for some very interesting and challenging research findings following an interesting project in the UK. It is also true that large organisations invest massive amounts in braille production but relatively little in the development and promotion of the code, so we should not be surprised if there are few opportunities for people to learn braille.

It is true that fewer people are learning braille, but this may be as much to do with opportunities to learn as any appetite for reading and writing. Braille has been associated largely with literature, but the inextricable relationship with literacy in its broadest sense is maybe not as clear. Technology can accomplish many tasks, but the ability to read and write is so fundamental to our interaction with the world in which we live, and braille delivers that for blind people. Whether it's playing a game of cards, or reading the essential label on pills in order to take the right dose, braille is sufficiently adaptable to enable people to live independently.

We should not look at braille and technology as entirely separate solutions to accessing information.

Braille, like audio or large print, is a medium that can work alongside technology to provide a gateway to an ever richer supply of information, often bringing a reader even closer to the author's intended purpose. An audio rendition of a poem can be truly magical as a performance, but nothing replaces the intimacy of reading a poem and indulging in your own interpretation - you are as close to the author's intent as it is possible to get.

Does the current situation in which we find ourselves where braille usage continues to fall, warrant killing off a system that has stood the test of time, been adapted to suit extremely varied reading and writing experiences, and enables thousands of blind people to access information throughout the world? We need to address ways in which we can enable more funding to support the teaching and promotion of braille, focusing not just on children but on adults who lose their sight and who could benefit from enough knowledge of braille to enable them to play cards, read a label or write a quick note. Will the next generation be looking back on an extinct system of reading and writing, bemoaning its loss? I sincerely hope not.

*Pete Osborne, Chief Braille Officer,
RNIB*

Planning Group for Milan

At the IFLA 2008 congress in Quebec, a planning group was formed to co-ordinate the Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities Session in Milan 2009. The Planning Group is made up of LPD Standing Committee members Jenny Craven, Margaret McGrory, Kari Kummeneje, and Geert Reubens.

After some discussion the following title was agreed on: Using Technology to Give the Past a Future: The Journey from Braille to XML. The idea behind this is to align with the overall theme for IFLA Milan 2009: "Libraries create futures: Building on cultural heritage" and also to celebrate the 200th Anniversary in 2009 of the birth of Louis Braille.

The LPD session in Milan aims to show some of the amazing developments in the provision of library and information services to people who are blind, visually or print disabled – starting with the more traditional braille services and moving on to present new and exciting innovations in technology, which are available to enhance access and to help achieve the vision of a truly 'Global Library' for all.

The session will include speakers from the Norwegian Library for

Talking Books and Braille, Vision Australia, and the DAISY Consortium. The session moderator will be Bente Dahl Rathje, Danish National Library for Persons with Print Disabilities, LPD Section Chair.

Further information about the conference, venue, and programme can be found at:
www.ifla.org/annual-conference/ifla75/

Planning a session such as this takes time, and it is vital to be as flexible as possible, as we rely on the hard work and enthusiasm of people with very heavy work commitments! Grateful thanks to the Planning Group and to everyone who has helped and agreed to contribute to the session, which we hope will be a great success.

The session will take place on Thursday 27th Aug from 10.45 – 12.45 (room to be announced). We hope you can attend and look forward to meeting you there!

Jenny Craven, Joint Information Co-ordinator and Treasurer, and Milan Planning Group member.



Putting Tactile Books on the Map

The idea of making richly tactile books for young children with little or no sight is not a new one. The need for entertaining books with tactile illustrations to entertain, motivate and inform children who cannot see has long been apparent. This has not, unfortunately, resulted in widespread availability of appropriate books.

As we celebrate the bi-centenary of Louis Braille, it is worth taking a look at the very youngest visually-impaired 'readers' to see how well their needs are being met. Many of the world's blind children grow up without braille or any other specialist tactile resources; others learn braille and perhaps encounter tactile maps and diagrams, without having ever experienced the fun of a tactile book. Even children fortunate enough to have access to a library of tactile books such as the Celia Library in Finland, the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind Library, the ClearVision library in the UK, or the Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille, have only a tiny number of 'picture' books compared to their sighted peers. But there are encouraging signs of increased interest in this topic, and increased production of tactile books for young blind children around the world.

Tactile books have illustrations designed to be accessed by touch. Some also include sounds – and even smells! At the simplest level the illustrations might consist of real objects or textures attached to the page; a young child will be able to recognise a simple object and begin to understand the role of illustrations in a story. As the child progresses, the illustrations will become more representational, imparting information through touch which the child cannot access by sight. Always, we hope, the illustrations will bring pleasure and help the child develop a love of books and reading. Young sighted children expect to find pictures in their story books and young blind children should be able to confidently expect the same.

Most tactile books are hand-made by individuals, and most are 'one-offs.' The major challenge is to design attractive and appropriate tactile books which can be produced in quantity and sold at an affordable price.

The most common method for producing simple tactile illustrations is collage, with objects, shapes and textures stuck onto pages of card. This is the method used by the Les Doigts Qui Revent sheltered workshop in Dijon, France www.ldqr.org. This workshop has produced copies of all the winning books in the Typhlo

and Tactus competitions; over the past eight years 7,604 collage books with print and braille text in seven languages have been made in this workshop, along with other tactile books for sale to schools, families and libraries.

Fabric books are also popular and have the advantage of being very durable.

Objects and textures can be sewn onto stiffened pages in such a way that even a very persistent child will find it difficult to remove them. A small South African company, "I Read with My Hands" www.tactilegraphics.co.za, was set up a few years ago to produce simple fabric tactile books which are sold worldwide. More elaborate fabric tactile books are produced and sold by Workshop BTB in Estonia.

ONCE in Spain produces many children's books with brightly coloured vacuum-formed illustrations. Tactile Vision Inc. in Canada sells little books with raised line illustrations www.tactilevisioninc.com. A children's publisher in India, Karadi Tales has recently published three tactile books, including the ever popular Very Hungry Caterpillar www.karaditales.com. Tactile books produced using a variety of methods are available for sale from

the American Printing House for the Blind (www.aph.org).

The Force Foundation in the Netherlands has in recent years been promoting tactile book design and production around the world. This has resulted in an increase in production in libraries in, amongst other places, Vietnam and Russia. A lot of tactile books are also produced in Italy and Japan, using a variety of methods of mass-production.

Typhlo and Tactus tactile book competitions were held every year from 1999 to 2007 and were open to the eight participating European countries which make up the Typhlo and Tactus organisation. This competition, along with the posters to promote it, the associated workshops, and the displays of books at prestigious mainstream book fairs, has done a great deal to raise the profile of tactile books in Europe and further afield. Smaller tactile book competitions have also been held in Czech Republic and Lithuania, and last year the UK's Tactile Book Advancement Group held an international tactile book competition with seventy entries from eleven countries. Photos of the winning books are displayed on the TBAG website www.tactilebooks.org.

The IBBY publication 'Outstanding Books for Young people with Disabilities 2009' features beautiful tactile books designed and produced in the Netherlands, India, France, Norway, Iran, Italy, Peru and Japan (www.ibby.org).

This gives some indication of the raised profile of tactile books; readers may well know of other exciting initiatives and examples of good practice in other countries. Let us hope that in the next few years all this activity will result in the increased availability of amusing, stimulating, educational and inspirational tactile books. Visually-impaired children throughout the world deserve nothing less.

Marion Ripley, ClearVision

Conference on Braille Music

The International Symposium on Braille Music Notes, with more than 60 participants from 16 countries and high-class workshops, was one of the highlights in the 5th year of the project DaCapo / BACH – Access to Braille Music. The conference, which was held in Leipzig, at the German central library for the blind (DZB), was an excellent opportunity for experts to meet and discuss the development of digital processing and new teaching concepts for braille music.

The symposium was opened by DZB's director, Dr. Thomas Kahlisch. Among the audience were representatives of the German Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs and the University of Leipzig, as well as numerous experts from all over the world. In his contribution Dr. Kahlisch emphasised that the DZB will continue its commitment for braille music transcription in future.

Afterwards, Matthias Leopold, the DaCapo project's technical manager, introduced DZB's manifold activities in this field. The focus of future developments will be on a more efficient computer-aided braille music transcription, more cooperation with commercial publishers of music books, and a network between libraries for the blind within and outside Europe.

Mona Sinno, a representative of the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, department Va1: "Equation of disabled people, basic issues of policies for the disabled", was impressed by the symposium's internationality, the great diversity of pedagogical and technical topics, and the high quality of the presented results.

The Chairman of the World Blind Union's Subcommittee for Braille Music Notation, Christian Waldvogel, stated the huge

importance of propagating braille music worldwide.

International participants introduced special aspects regarding braille music production in their respective countries, namely Italy, Japan, Poland, Germany, the US, and Sweden. Furthermore, new pedagogical concepts for teaching braille music from the UK, New Zealand, the US, Sweden, and Germany were presented and discussed. In four workshops the participants were given the opportunity to experience and apply these new concepts.

The cultural highlights of the event were a concert by Professor Holm Vogel (Institute for Sacred Music, organ) and guided tours of the impressive exhibition at the Museum for Musical Instruments of Leipzig University in English and German. This international conference marked the beginning of a long-term cooperation between the museum and DZB.

Members of the DaCapo team were delighted that the symposium attracted so many participants who made high-quality contributions.

The intention is to continue promoting an international network between libraries and schools for the blind in the near future. Regarding the training of teachers to use digital media, the cooperation will be intensified. Dr.

Kahlisch stressed the high importance of a public interest in the work of highly committed blind musicians and music students and introduced DZB's future projects for the promotion of braille music, in order to improve access to musical works for professional and non-professional blind musicians, especially for children and adolescents.

The symposium's results have been documented and can be downloaded from the DZB's website at: www.dzb.de/dacapo.

Juliane Bally, DaCapo team

Canada's Initiative for Equitable Library Access

An estimated one in three Canadians lives with a disability. For one in ten of them, it is a print disability. These prevent people from reading standard print due to vision impairment, a learning disability or a disability that prevents them from physically holding a book. Canadians with print disabilities require publications in multiple formats, such as braille, audio, large print and electronic text. They may also require assistive technology to meet their information needs.

Less than five percent of published materials are available in a format these Canadians can use. In 2007,

the Minister of Canadian Heritage asked Library and Archives Canada (LAC) to address this inequality by establishing the Initiative for Equitable Library Access (IELA).

IELA aims to create the conditions for sustainable and equitable library access so that Canadians with print disabilities can enjoy the kinds of public library services already available to those who read conventional print. It will result in a strategy to build nationwide partnerships and to support activities and services that will successfully meet the long-term library and information access needs of Canadians with print disabilities.

It is apparent that change is essential if people with print disabilities are to enjoy the same level of choice that most Canadians take for granted when it comes to accessing print materials. This change will also give Canadians with print disabilities a new level of hope that they can participate fully in the knowledge economy—a participation that will help Canada grow as a free and democratic society.

The IELA strategy will reflect consultations with many Canadians, from people with disabilities and their representative organizations to members of Canada's library community,

publishers, producers and others. Building on core IELA initiatives, such as the Internet portal, service models, standards and training materials and the electronic clearinghouse, the strategy will be a major step forward for Canadians with print disabilities. It promises greater choice and library service similar to citizens who read conventional print.

The IELA strategy is ultimately about people. It is about partnerships and building awareness of the need to work together to make equitable library access in Canada a reality. It is a process of change that will help enrich the lives of millions of Canadians, offer real choice to people with print disabilities, and help them to achieve their full potential as individuals and as citizens.

Fay Hjartarson, Initiative for Equitable Library Access (IELA), Library and Archives Canada

Please visit the IELA website for more information:
IELA-ISBE@lac-bac.gc.ca
www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/iel

Obituary

The St. Petersburg State Library for the Blind sadly announce the untimely death of their Director

Eugenia Viktorovna Shepvalova.

Eugenia Viktorovna Shepvalova served as Director of the St. Petersburg State Library for the Blind since 1987. She was co-chairman of the Russian Library Association section "Libraries, serving disabled persons" and a member of the IFLA Standing Committee of the Section "Libraries for the Blind" (after December 2008 called: Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities). In 2001 she was awarded the rank of "Distinguished figure in Culture of the Russian Federation". She will be missed and remembered forever.

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Julie Rae, General Manager, Vision Australia.

Geert Ruebens, Director, Flemish Library for Audio books and Braille.

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Courtney Deines-Jones, Principal and Founder, The Grimalkin Group.

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Beatrice Christensen Sköld.

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