

MIC-ING ABOUT

A QUEENSLAND NARRATING SERVICE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2016



Newsletter @ a Glance

VIP Bookclub April

News and Information

- Tablet for the Blind
- Kenyan App
- An LP for the Blind

Quality Assurance

- Narrator Workshops
- Exporting Files

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QUEENSLAND NARRATING SERVICE



VIP BOOKCLUB APRIL 2016



Please join us to hear Sally Piper, the author of *Grace's Table* on Monday the 11th of April, 2015 from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm.

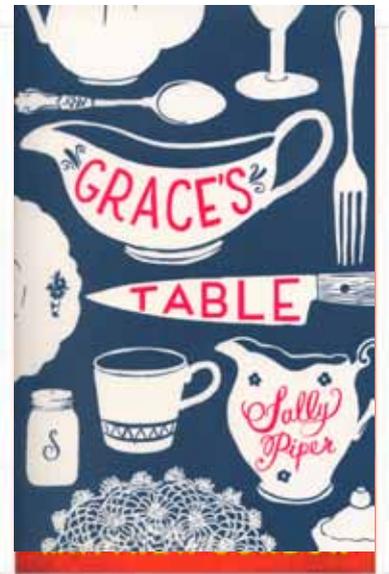
It will be held in the Community Meeting Room at the Brisbane Square Library in George St, Brisbane. A light early lunch will be provided.

Please RSVP to QNS by the 6th of April 2015 by phone P: 3324 0004, or E: qns@qns.net.au

Grace had not had twelve people at her table for a while. This wasn't the kind of family who shared regular Sunday meals. But you don't turn 70 every day.

As her friends and family arrive for lunch, memories are rekindled but not all of them are welcome. As the meal is served, it becomes clear that events of the past have left their mark on everyone at the table in vastly different ways. Grace is reminded that age is no guarantee of wisdom and there is much still to learn from the young at heart. As the family finally confront a shocking event in their past, Grace is forced to face her own shortcomings as a parent and wife and left to contemplate the ways in which grief and regret have resonated through her life.

This moving and often funny novel dissects the lives of women over three generations, explores the pull and power of memory and celebrates the triumph of endurance.



NEWS & INTERESTING INFORMATION

The World's First Tablet for Blind People

When Louis Braille invented the Braille system in the 1820s, it became a fundamental tool for literacy for the millions of blind and visually impaired people in the world. Unfortunately, these people have been left out of the digital revolution. Smartphones, tablets, and e-books remain inaccessible and mostly useless to the 285 million blind and visually impaired.

Blitab, a Vienna-based startup founded by three Bulgarians, is now bringing the tablet experience to blind and visually impaired people. The device is similar to an e-book, but uses liquid-based technology to create small, physical bubbles that rise and fall on the surface on demand to display the necessary text or graphics. The best part is that the user can insert a USB stick or a memory card with various types of text documents, such as a Word .doc or PDF and Blitlab will convert and display them in Braille. It can do the same with web pages and digital maps. In addition, the user can write and edit pages via Braille Perkins keyboard.

“Currently there are some solutions which are extremely expensive and they represent only one line [of braille],” says Slavi Slavev, one of the co-founders. “These devices were developed 40 years ago and because no one has offered any new innovations since then, that’s still all that’s on the market. ... [Blitab] is revolutionary and we want to solve a great issue, and that’s the literacy of blind people. The technology is quite scalable so we can output images and put any tactile relief representation like maps and graphics, such as geometric figures, in order to serve as an educational tool for blind people.”



NEWS & INTERESTING INFORMATION

A Kenyan App is being used to prevent Blindness

A smartphone app developed in Kenya makes eye screening as easy as taking a photo. The Portable Eye Examination Kit, or Peek, is now being rolled out at schools in rural parts of the country, where vision problems are common but opticians and reliable health equipment are rare.

Trials have been completed, and the app will now be used to screen 300,000 students in Trans-Nzoia, an agricultural county in eastern Kenya, over the next three years. As much as 80% of the county's 2.5 million people have eye problems that could lead to blindness, said Hillary Rono, an ophthalmologist in Trans-Nzoia, during a launch event for the app in Nairobi this week. Rono co-founded the company behind the app, Peek Vision, and he serves as its project leader in Kenya.

In the Peek test, the letter "E" is displayed on a phone screen in varying orientations. The patient points in the direction they see the letter facing and the test giver swipes in that direction, as National Public Radio explained in a company profile last year. If the patient can't tell which direction the letter is facing, the phone is shaken to indicate the letters weren't visible to the test taker.

The results are immediately available after the test. When impaired vision is detected, the school and the student's parents will get a text message asking them to take the child to a hospital for treatment.

The app was co-developed by British ophthalmologist Andrew Bastawrous, who moved to Kenya in 2013. Peek Vision is one of many health startups building on growing smartphone usage in low-income countries. Mobile apps are being used to send patients reminders of appointments and medication dosages, as well as instructions for giving birth at home. Addressing eyesight is particularly relevant given that 90% of the world's blind live in low-income countries.



Peek can also replace expensive, bulky equipment used for identifying other eye problems—equipment places like Trans-Nzoia can't afford. The app works with a clip-on camera adapter to take high-quality images of a person's retina to identify potential causes of vision loss, such as cataracts, glaucoma, or nerve disease. The attachment can be made with a 3D printer.

<http://qz.com/629270/a-kenyan-smartphone-app-is-preventing-blindness-in-kids/>

NEWS & INTERESTING INFORMATION

The First Audiobook: An LP for the Blind

From 1934 until 1948 long-playing records (LPs) were almost exclusively the domain of the visually impaired. But they weren't being used for music. Instead, they helped blind people listen to a brand new invention—the audiobook.



In the early 1930s, the American Foundation for the Blind took on the project to get “talking books” into the hands of blind Americans, with a mixture of funding from public and private money. In the early 20th century, the major record companies had found success selling records that could only hold about five minutes of music, but they struggled during the Great Depression to develop technology for long-playing records that sounded good while playing tunes.

However, long-playing records were satisfactory for voice recordings, and in 1932, the American Foundation for the Blind approached Frank L. Dyer to license his technology for audiobook LP players. Dyer granted the Foundation royalty-free use of his invention. As we see today, though, there was one major issue: the intellectual property rights of publishers.

If Talking Books were to command a wide audience among blind readers, they would have to include new and current books as well as literary classics in the public domain. In principle, authors and publishers who had long permitted their copyrighted books to be reproduced in braille were equally well disposed to making their work available to blind readers in this new form, but they raised some understandable objections. Those objections were publishers worrying how these new talking books would be delivered and to whom. The April 21, 1934, issue of *Publishers Weekly* explained that public performance would be absolutely out of the question: “If such discs were used for public halls, or especially for broadcasting purposes, they would fall into the realm of public performance and therefore would be decidedly in competition with books in print.”

NEWS & INTERESTING INFORMATION

The First Audiobook: An LP for the Blind (Continued)

The American Foundation for the Blind made contracts with the Author's League as well as the National Association of Book Publishers to ensure that they could produce talking books for a nominal license fee of \$25 per title. The Foundation also agreed to other terms that would guarantee recorded audiobooks would only be used by blind people, making sure that each record was labeled with "solely for use of the blind" and that no record or record player would be sold to sighted people. As Koestler points out in his book, the Foundation also agreed that these new audiobooks or players would never be used in groups open to the public nor would they be broadcast on radio.

In late 1934, the program, which would lend out both record players and LPs, finally began. Within a year of the program's implementation, 27 different audiobook titles were being distributed across the U.S. While equipment was loaned out to those who couldn't afford it, those who could were expected to buy their own. But again, LP record players and the audiobooks themselves were only allowed to be sold and lent to blind Americans.

In 1935 the Foundation's Talking Book project (now working in conjunction with the Library of Congress to ensure the broadest possible access) officially received funding from the Works Progress Administration. Between 1935 and 1942 the Talking Book project produced about 23,000 record players at a cost of approximately \$1.2 million, employing around 200 people in its factory. Almost half of the employees were visually handicapped themselves. Though funding from the WPA dried up in 1942, the program continued until 1951, when the Foundation stopped producing its own record players because they were now readily available to the general public and there was no longer a de facto ban on sighted persons buying the equipment. Though the Foundation no longer produced players, the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) continued to make materials accessible through a variety of media—eventually migrating to tape cassettes, CD, and today's digital technologies.



<http://www.psmag.com/books-and-culture/a-brief-history-of-talking-books-for-the-blind-work-in-progress-55975>

Quality Assurance

QNS Narrator Workshops

Please join us to hear Kaye Stevenson and Nick Warren on 13 April 2016 at the Queensland Narrating Service, 373 Old Cleveland Road, Coorparoo, Brisbane.

Kaye is an actor, and when not working on the stage, or in radio, TV, or filming, can be found in her study narrating books for QNS. She has been with QNS since 1973 and has recorded over 72 books and several documents for individuals and for community and government organisations.

Nick has been working at QNS since 2009 and also runs a recording studio in which he records local bands and artists. He has been involved with a community project called JAM (Join Australian Music), which took him into regional Australia to teach school children songwriting and recording techniques using the Audacity software that we use at QNS.

These QNS Workshops will be a great opportunity to build upon and help strengthen the knowledge learnt during your initial Narrator training session.

Please RSVP to QNS at qns@qns.net.au by Friday 8 April 2016 with your expression of interest in attending the QNS Workshops.

Numbers will be restricted to 8 people.

Narrators are encouraged to attend to either one or the two workshops.

*Workshop 1: Editing and Recording using the Audacity software
(conducted by Nick Warren) 09:30am - 10:30pm

*A morning tea will be provided at 10:30am.

*Workshop 2: Narrating (conducted by Kaye Stevenson)
11:00am - 12:00pm



Quality Assurance

Exporting Audio Files from Audacity

1. Double click on audio with (I) tool. It should turn grey. Make sure it is all joined by zooming out so that you can see the whole track.
2. Click File – Export selection
3. Click Desktop in the left column
4. Click on ‘New Folder’
5. Name this folder ‘title of your book’FINISH
6. Click create
7. You may need to locate the folder (title of your book FINISH) in the middle column and click to select, it should turn blue.
8. Click ‘Save’
9. If the Edit Metadata window shows just click OK
10. The file will now be exported to you ‘title of your bookFINISH’ folder on the desktop. This can take a while depending on length.
11. Quit the session by clicking ‘Audacity - Quit Audacity’ and click ‘Yes’ to save your session.
12. You are now ready to start the next chapter of book



CHANGE OF DETAILS & CIRCUMSTANCES

Please advise QNS of any changes to your address, phone/fax or email as soon as they occur - it is important for us to keep up-to-date contact details and to be able to contact you easily. Also please advise the dates you maybe unavailable due to holidays or illness.

We are aware that your circumstances and availability will change from time to time and we ask that you please keep us informed of these changes. If you feel you have come to the end of the narrating line don't despair - we have a few other volunteer jobs you maybe interested in undertaking.



Re-use or recycle this newsletter or pass on to a friend or family member

