

Mag Pia

Issue No.12 Summer 2010



MagPia is the quarterly newsletter of Pia, the UK's leading independent accessible media company

● Summer is here!

Welcome to issue 12 of MagPia, we hope you are all finding time to enjoy the summer weather and that it lasts for the school holidays! Hopefully, this issue will have something for everyone; industry updates; news from Pia and even wedding bells! As always, your feedback would be very welcome.

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● Lauren's Big Day!

We are thrilled to announce that on the 18th of June Lauren Hier became Mrs Lauren Morse when she married fiancé Daniel. They had a wonderful day, which was of course expertly organised by Lauren, who looked radiant.

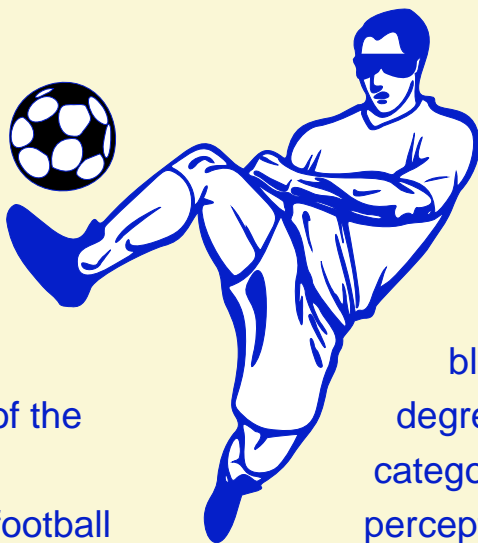


Unfortunately however, if you were hoping to wish Lauren well you will have to wait a few more weeks because she is honeymooning in Borneo cuddling the little orangutans and perhaps Daniel as well! Congratulations Lauren!!

● FAQ: Can Blind People Play Football?

Okay, I have cheated a little bit here as this cannot really be described as a frequently asked question. However it is a question that I was asked recently due to the current wave of football fever which is sweeping the nation and it occurred to me that since it is a topical subject the MagPia readers might be interested!

The answer to the question is a resounding yes and we have a national side which are pretty good at it too! In fact if the end of the World Cup leaves you begging for your next football fix you won't have long to wait because the 2010 World Blind Football championships get underway at the Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford, on 14 August. This is the first time the UK has hosted the event, which will take place at the college's new £21m sports complex which may also be used to host some



of the events for the paralympics in 2012. The event will take a week to complete and the final is likely to be broadcast internationally for those unable to secure tickets.

You may be interested to know that blind football is played five-a-side with smaller goals than are traditionally used and usually on a hard surface, often indoors. The goalkeeper is sighted but the outfield players all wear eyeshields, as even in blindness there are varying degrees and not all people who are categorised as blind have no visual perception at all. Wearing eye shields levels the playing field! The football contains ball bearings so that it can be located by sound rather than sight and the crowd are encouraged to be quiet so that the players can hear it. The good news is that there is no offside rule to worry about!!

For more information about this event please go to www.blind2010.com

● Unified English Braille (UEB)

As many of you are aware the International Council on English Braille (ICEB) seeks to improve standards for English-speaking braille users. To this end the ICEB has developed a single Unified English Braille Code for use throughout the English-speaking world. This would mean that braille produced by any English-speaking country would be accessible to any English-speaking braille user, making far more braille available to those who need it and reducing the amount of repetitive transcription.

The UK is now in a difficult position because if UK decision makers accept the code they would currently be going against the views expressed in a public

consultation, which found UEB to be

unpopular with end users leading to agreement not to discuss the issue again for five years.

However, if our decision makers do not agree to adopt UEB the UK will no longer be involved in decisions made regarding it. Therefore, if the UK ended up being the only English-speaking country not to adopt UEB (America has not yet agreed) our blind community would be internationally disadvantaged and faced with the difficult choice between accepting a code others have had greater influence over or being left out entirely. We will keep you posted.

More information about UEB can be found at <http://www.iceb.org/ubc.html>

● Articles for the Blind

The Royal Mail currently operates a service, whereby braille, audio (which is not music) or large print over 16pt for use by blind individuals can be sent for free with an AFB label (these are supplied by the RNIB for a small fee).

However a minority of organisations abused the system by sending large volumes of standard print using AFB, and as a result the service is now under review.

The rules do need to be tightened but a loss of this service would be hugely detrimental to the supply of alternate formats. Without AFB, alternative formats, which are often bulky, would be much more expensive to send by post. Transcription companies would have to pass this additional cost on to their customers, which in the current economic climate could result in less accessible formats being produced.

● Pia wins Silver!

We are very pleased to announce that Pia has been successful in achieving the Silver Small Workplace Health Award for our work to improve the health and well-being of our staff.

The Small Workplace Health Award is the national mark of quality for health and well-being in the workplace, for businesses and organisations employing up to 50 people. In order to achieve the award Pia now offers free physical activity 'taster' sessions, organises healthy eating staff picnics and makes



fresh fruit available to all staff. We are also committed to providing information in a designated area about various health related issues such as the effects of smoking, alcohol and drugs.

Alison received the award on behalf of Pia at a ceremony in the Millennium Stadium, where it was presented by Dame Carol Black, National Director for Health and Work. Alison said "It was a wonderful occasion and I was very proud to receive the award on behalf of Pia. We are very committed to the well being of all our staff and are already working towards our goal of achieving the Gold Small Workplace Health Award in 2011".

● Contact Details

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Sue, Staffordshire University.