# The Tactile Times Newspaper

Issue Number 4, Leaving Lockdown

Easter 2021

[Tactiletimes.org](https://Tactiletimes.org)

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Welcome to the 4th edition of the Tactile Times!

We are Ellie, Lexy and Theo, three young braillists who thought it would be fun to put together a way for children and young people who are braillists, to share news, event information, tips, opinions and ideas. We hope you like it.

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 else who might like to get a copy too, let us know!

Thankyou to everyone that sent in articles and ideas for this edition. We would love to include even more 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 favourite joke, or a puzzle.

The next issue will be in the summer, but we can accept contributions at any time. More information can be found at <https://l.tactiletimes.org/4-2>

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. We have also put headings in for sections and articles:

Heading 1: title

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## 1. News

### == Our homepage has had an upgrade

If you have looked at the Tactile Times website recently (tactiletimes.org), you will have noticed that there are now options which we think will be helpful for people who can see large print, and which will bring our website closer to it's goal of being accessible to everyone.

We have added greater choice to the website, so readers can now customise the background colour, font size, and hyperlink colour. We are also planning to add a text colour option in the future. One of our other plans is to start storing your appearance preferences for future visits, so you do not have to select everything again every time you reload (which is the current situation).

There is now a Toggle navigation button for the top menu in the website, so you don't always have to scroll past it, unless you would like to. We have also added in-page links on some of our webpages so you can jump around them quickly with a screen reader.

We are also very excited to launch our new fully-accessible games website which is available from our homepage menu. It currently contains an accessible online Hang man game, a new leaderboard for our C-race game, and a list of all of our active Kahoot! challenges that you can access all in one place.

### == Closure of the RNIB braille lending library

The RNIB recently announced the closure of their Braille Library service, which will take effect from April.

However, the RNIB have committed to running a ‘Braille on Demand’ service. This means that multiple people should be able to read the same book at the same time. Also, excitingly, for most publishers, RNIB will release braille books in the same week that print editions are published.

There will be no limit on the amount of books that you can order, and it generally should not take more than a week after ordering a book for it to arrive.

RNIB say that they will try and find a use for the old books. If you want to keep a favourite book or two, then contact the Braille library quickly! You might get lucky.

You can find out more information on the following link: <https://www.rnib.org.uk/reading-services/books/braille-books/braille-library-changes-faqs>

== Events

There are lots of interesting events and seminars coming up. See Section 10 of this newspaper for all the details.

For some of them you have to register very soon, so don’t miss out! For example, Sight Village like you to register on 19/4, to attend the first day, which is on 20/4.

## 2. Fun Things we’re Looking Forward to

== We did a small survey amongst some readers/editors about what we are all looking forward to about the end of lockdown:

* Zarie

" to go outside and go shopping at lush. I need some urgent bath bombs. I liked homeschooling, but now I just want to get out and have fun with my friends. I really want to get my nails done and I desperately need a smoothie from boost."

* Jess

"I’m looking forward to having a meet up with my friends and going ice skating and swimming!"

* Hester

"I’m looking forward to going abroad to continue with my skiing competitions, and also seeing my friends, and being able to legally hug my grandparents"

* Maleeka

"When lockdown ends I’m also really looking forward to seeing my friends and family again. Phoenix (my Buddy Dog) definitely misses all the walks we went on together. I also can’t wait to just... go places/out and about again; especially since summer’s approaching and all the fun events are going to be happening soon."

* Theo

"I am really excited about the vaccine being given to more people as it means Covid will be less common. I am looking forward to being able to attend more physical events such as Sight Village, and being able to go on holiday to more places."

* Alex

“I’m looking forward to the end of lockdown to get involved with more BBS and VICTA sports trips and events although at the moment I feel that the government are moving too fast.”

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### **3. A Favourite Recipe**

== Chocolate and walnut cake

Ingredients

• butter

• sugar

• eggs

• self-rising flour or plain flour and baking powder

• dark chocolate

• walnuts

• optional milk

• vanilla extract

• optional cinnamon

Equipment

• a measuring cup or weighing scales

• a large mixing bowl

• optional a spoon for mixing

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C.

2. Wash your hands with soap and set up your equipment.

3. First cream half a pack of butter 100g and sugar together. This is best done with your hands, but if you prefer you can use a spoon. If your butter is very hard then you may want to melt it a bit first to soften it, but usually I don't. You will need one cup of sugar to cream or mix with the butter. But if you don't feel comfortable measuring in cups you can use weighing scales. However, I don't particularly like weighing scales as a blind person.

4. Next add one cup of flour. Again this can be done using a measuring cup or weighing scales. If you are using plain flower you can also add your baking powder now, however if you are using self-raising flour you will not need baking powder. You will only need a pinch or so of baking powder as you don't want your cake to rise too much. Gently mix this in with your hands or a spoon. Be careful not to mix this in two thoroughly as the eggs will add to the wet ingredients.

5. After crack three eggs into your bowl.

6. Combine the dough until it is smooth and all the flour is combined. You may find the dough is quite wet. This is very good for cake consistency, however if you feel it is too wet you can always add more flour. If the dough is too thick you can always add a bit of milk, but be careful not to add too much.

7. Then add in the chocolate and walnuts. At this stage you can also add your vanilla extract and/or cinnamon. I like to add a bit of vanilla as it gives the cake a bit of flavour, however I feel that for this particular recipe cinnamon is not necessary. Cinnamon would go better with a cinnamon and walnut cake. It is up to you how much of these ingredients you add depending on how sweet and how nutty you want your cake to be. I like to add a bag of walnuts and a bar of chocolate, however I do like my cakes very nutty. You may want to break the chocolate and nuts into smaller pieces to make it easier to mix. Alternatively you can always melt the chocolate, but be weary this will make your cake more wet. Once everything is combined together you can put your cake in the cake tin. This should be enough mixture for one medium sized cake. Be aware that if you want two cakes you can always double this recipe. I sometimes do this as I love cake.

8. Check on your cake every ten minutes. It should take up to 45 minuses to cook.

9. Once it is cooked leave to cool. Once the cake is cooled you can always ice your cake.

My recipe for Buttercream icing is below:

Ingredients

• butter

• Icing sugar

• Optional - cocoa powder

• Optional - milk

Equipment

• measuring cup or weighing scales

• a small bowl

• optional spoon for mixing

1. Combine butter and one cup of icing sugar in a small bowl until smooth.

2. If you feel the icing is not wet enough or you want to make it more creamy you can then add your milk. I usually add milk as I think it gives the icing a nice texture, but be careful not to add to much or this will make it too wet.

3. Then you can add your cocoa powder if you want to give the icing a chocolate flavour. Usually a couple of pinches is enough. Cocoa power can be very rich so be careful not to add too much.

4. Once your cake is ready smooth the icing over it. It can even it out with a spoon if you like or can just spread it with your hands.

Written by Zarie Kunst-Khan

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## 4. Languages

This article is in both Spanish and English. Try the Spanish first!!

### == Learning languages - Spanish

El aprendizaje de idiomas

#### Por qué aprender idiomas?

Aprender un idioma puede ser muy emocionate, puede abrir muchas puertas de comunicación Y incluso te puede dar más oportunidades de trabajo. Por ejemplo, si un empleo que no es inglés viene en tu trabajo, puedes tranquilizarle por hablar su idioma Y este ayuda clarificar cosas Y puede sentir más cómodo en tu presencia, especialmente si está intentando hablar en inglés. También si tienes discapacidades visuales Y usas el braille, un niño no inglés que también los tiene podía aprender a leer Y escribir de tí porque tienes estás capacidades que muchos no tienen. También es muy divertido aprender de nuevas culturas Y puede hacerte una persona más abierta a las diferencias a las culturas Y los idiomas Y además la pronunciación de unos idiomas por ejemplo como el español son muy bonitos.

#### Que adapciones hay para las personas con dishabilidades visuales

Pues, los idiomas no tienen que ser visuales. Por cierto, los idiomas son sobre hablar Y comunicar por el sonido. Para escribir las palabras en un idioma a veces hay señales de braille nuevos que tienes que aprender Y no intiendes algo por sonido, puedes preguntar la persona a mostrarte una cosa por tacto. Creo que es muy importante aprender como describir cosas en un idioma porque si no puedes ver la cosa que alguién te está hablando, necesitas poder entender la otra persona por una descripción así que aprender una cosa por descripción a veces es más útil que aprender la palabra exacta para esta cosa.

#### En resumen

Aprender una idioma es emocionante, gratificante Y puedes ayudar a muchas personas. Así que si tienes dishabilidades visuales Y estás pensando en aprender un idioma, no dudes en empezarlo, hazlo ahora Y cambie la vida de tú Y muchas personas.

### == Learning languages – English

#### Why learn languages?

Learning a language is exciting, you can open many doors for communication and it can even increase your job opportunities. For example, if someone comes to your work who's first language is not English, you can put them at ease by speaking their language. This can help clarify understanding and make them feel more comfortable if they are trying to communicate with you in English. If you are visually impaired and using braille, and if you meet a visually impaired child and you are interested in teaching them braille, then you could help them learn English braille through their native language. They will be able to learn from you both ways because you have the skills that not many people would have. Also, learning a language can make you a more open-minded person as you learn to accept other cultures and languages and also, pronunciation can be very exciting to learn especially in pretty languages such as Spanish.

#### What adaptions can be made if you are learning a language with a visual impairment?

Languages don't have to be about pictures, writing and other visual things. Language is about expression and communication through speech which is primarily through sound. To substitute visual pictures, the person communicating with you could show you something tactile that you don't understand. Also, learning descriptive sentences in your new language will help you be better understood. These at times will be more important than knowing a word for something specific.

#### In conclusion

In conclusion, learning a language is exciting, rewarding and you can communicate with lots of people. So, if you are visually impaired and you are thinking for learning a language, don't doubt in starting, start now and change the lives of you and many other people.

Written by Lexy Ryan

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## 5. Music

### == Recordings of Tactile Times readers performing Music

Coming Soon

These will be added to the resources page of our website at <https://tactiletimes.org/resources> in the next couple of weeks (before the end of April 2021) so check back then!

## 6. Technology

### == Remote technology lessons, some top tips

One of the pleasant surprises about lockdown has been how good technology lessons can be when done remotely. They have been much better than I would have thought possible! I have really enjoyed the lessons, and they have been nearly as good as having them in person.

My top tips are:

* Zoom is great, and it’s really easy for me to share my screen so that I can also share audio from JAWS.
* NVDA Remote and JAWS Tandem are also very helpful so that the person teaching the lesson can understand where you are in a window and even take control if needed, as well as just hearing the speech.
* Some sighted people may prefer you to use TeamViewer, but this is not accessible to a blind person if they are on the receiving end (for example a blind person can share screen but not read someone else's screen). So don’t use TeamViewer!
* If you have a Windows computer, the temp folder very quickly fills up with temporary logs which are not needed, which makes your computer much slower, and this can be a pain during remote tech lessons. If you can, it is good to periodically empty your temp folder. This might seem like quite a long process the first time, but the more you do it the quicker you will get!

To empty your temp folder:

1. Press Windows+R to open the Run dialogue.

2. Enter %temp% and click enter.

3. Your temp folder will be shown, and it will likely contain over 500 files.

4. Select everything using Control+A, and then press Shift+Delete to permanently delete the unused files.

5. Click Yes on the warning screen.

6. If it says Error, file in use, use Alt+A to tell the computer to do this for all files currently in use and then Alt+S to skip the file.

Written By Theo

### == NVDA and JAWS compared

Recently, I have started using both NVDA and JAWS for different tasks on the computer, as NVDA is better at some things and JAWS is better at other things. But which is better for what?

I have found that NVDA is great for coding, as it gives you helpful beeps to show the indentation of code. The higher the tone, the more indented the code is. This is particularly helpful for programing languages such as Python that rely on indents to know when to end if statements or loops.

One of the other things that makes NVDA useful in some circumstances is that you can install add-ons to add functionality to it (for example, there is a dictionary add-on and another add-on for using your laptop keyboard to input braille).

I also use NVDA for connecting to my MOO, as JAWS does not read the output. As I really enjoy connecting to MOO, using NVDA has helped me to learn more about how to use it along the way.

JAWS has some very helpful features as well. It can OCR PDF's which is really helpful if you need a document in an emergency, and it can also describe images using PictureSmart. I prefer using JAWS for my school work, browsing the internet, and quite a lot of other things I do on the computer.

Lastly, learning two different screen readers may seem like a lot. But it’s not as bad as it could be as lots of the shortcuts are the same (for example all the Office ribbon shortcuts, webpage navigation shortcuts, top and bottom of document shortcuts, Google shortcuts and a lot more). So my advice would be to try learning both JAWS and NVDA, and go for it!

Written by Theo

### == App review – Strava

Strava – Run and ride training, available on the Apple App Store and Google Play store

My overall rating: 4/5 stars

Developer: Strava Inc.

#### What is Strava?

Strava is a free app you can use to analyze your runs, bike rides and a lot more. It has several helpful features to help you get the maximum amount of stats for your activity. It also acts a bit like a social network for exercise.

#### What’s the point of Strava?

It’s a bit like a social network for anyone interested in exercise. You have a ‘feed’ and you can follow friends, so you get to see their runs and rides and walks, and they can see yours. Users can also add photos and give each other ‘kudos’ for a good workout. You can also leave encouraging messages for the people you follow, so it’s all very motivating.

*Accessibility*

Strava is accessible to VoiceOver users on iOS, as well as BrailleNote Touch users. Although you can use this app on the Touch, it is hard to record activities as you cannot really run or ride with the Touch. If you have an Apple Watch, you can also use this to upload to Strava. If you don't have a GPS watch, you can record activities directly through the Strava app on your phone. This is also useful as a backup option

#### Strava Challenges

These are goals that you can reach to unlock badges in the app. These could be for example do 100km of running in a month, or walk 3 days a week for 2 weeks. I really enjoy collecting these badges in my electronic trophy case.

#### Strava Clubs

One other interesting feature is the clubs you can join (like the Tactile Times Strava Club!). Then you get to see everyone in the club’s exercise, and they see yours. Anyone can create a club on Strava for free. This could just be a league with friends, or a larger public club. We run a Strava club which you can join at <https://www.strava.com/clubs/tactiletimes> or via our website.

### *Strava segments and local legends*

If you join Strava and complete a few workouts near your house that contain GPS data (such as rides and runs) you will start to see several segments on each workout. Anyone can create a segment, so if there are none you can create them yourself! Strava segments are a particular often short stretch of road where you can compare and analyze your times.

There is also a leaderboard of everybody who has completed the segment along with their time. If you have a free account, you can only see the top 10, although you can compare your own efforts. If you have completed a segment in a faster time than any other athlete, you will get a electronic crown on your profile!

Another segment achievement is called a ‘local legend.’ You can get this by doing the most efforts on a segment in the last 90 days (this is a rolling time window).

You can see all your local legends ands in the segments section of your profile.

You can find out more about segments on Strava's official website here: <https://support.strava.com/hc/en-us/articles/216918167-Strava-Segments>

#### So, is Strava worth joining?

Yes! It’s probably the most popular exercise tracking app there is, and lots of people use it, so you are bound to find someone you know to follow, and who will want to follow you.

Written by Theo

### == Moo – An accessible game world that you can code – What is it and how can you use it?

#### What is Moo?

Moo is not only one of the noises that cows make. Moo is also a game world that you can use without any pictures. It is made up of text descriptions and code, and it is very accessible to braillists. I was very excited when I first heard about Moo, and it is definitely a really exciting thing to have a go at.

Everyone on Moo has their own character that they can move around different rooms, explore the world, try out things and pick things up and drop things. I have also coded some of the objects in my world to do particular things (such as bouncing a ball or using a vending machine).

I am currently creating a Moo which I call the Playable MOO, and I hope lots of people will be able to join it in the future. I plan for it to be a place for people to connect, explore and have fun.

You can even send messages to other people in the same room as you, which is quite fun. You can also connect to Moo from your iPhone or iPad, which is useful if you are away from your computer but still want to join in the fun.

#### What can you create in Moo?

You can literally create anything and make it do anything, as long as you are happy to write some code. You can turn a Moo into a realistic environment with houses, roads and trains, or you could have a Moo the size of the solar system if you would like to, with space ships to transport you between different areas. I even have a currency in my Moo called Theos, which people gain by recycling things, picking up coins and playing games such as Jumble (where you have to put jumbled letters in the correct order to make a word).

Get in touch with us (you can email us at: [info@tactiletimes.org](mailto:info@tactiletimes.org)) if you would like instructions on how to set up your computer/phone to connect to Moo, and/or Moo login details.

Written by Theo.

### == Moo, by Ellie Clark

I was introduced to Moo by Theo. This term my class are doing coding on purple mash. This is not accessible using screen readers so I have been starting to learn about moo.

I have joined Theo's moo and I have been looking around and creating things. There are also trains but you have to have a ticket. We have been creating a prison for animals. Theo has created most of the world and I'm learning how to create rooms. I have also started a coin farm because animals eat and drop coins. It is all done by text. You type commands and it tells you the result. I'm really enjoying it and it's nice to have an accessible game to play with a friend. It is quite funny because the animals are unusual colours like when I found a yellow poodle.

Written by Ellie Clark

### == Accessibility compared – Zoom, Google Meet and Microsoft Teams

These three meeting platforms all have several accessibility features and are all very popular, but which is the most accessible for young braillists?

#### Zoom

Accessibility rating: 9/10

Zoom have tried very hard to make their meeting platform accessible to everyone, and they have added a lot of accessibility features to their mobile and desktop apps that really make a difference.

One feature that makes a big difference is keyboard shortcuts (on a computer you can just press alt+A to mute/unmute, Alt+Y to raise hand, Alt+S to share screen, Alt+Q to leave, etc…) This is very useful if you want to complete any of these actions quickly.

A lot of the buttons are also clearly labelled which makes things much easier, and you can also turn off announcements when anyone joins or leaves, which means you can concentrate on the presenter in large meetings. In Meet, this is not possible.

#### Google Meet

Accessibility rating: 7/10

Google have also tried to make Meet accessible, and I can join Google Meets without any help. They do have a couple of keyboard shortcuts (Control+D to mute/unmute and Control+E to start/stop video) but not as many as Zoom.

There is no shortcut to raise hand, as Google just added this feature as quickly as they could, so that schools could use it. There is also no way to turn off announcements without turning the speech off entirely.

With Google Meet, anyone using a Focus 5th generation braille display and IPad or IPhone should beware! There is a button of doom!! The right hand most button on the front will abruptly stop your participation in a meeting if brushed or pressed. So watch out!

To find out more about Google Meet, and some top tips, click on the following link: https://noitech.legendusmaximus.com/2021/04/google-meet-my-top-tips-and-quick-setup.html

#### Microsoft Teams (meetings)

Accessibility rating: 5/10

I have not had much experience joining Teams meetings, but from the meetings I have joined I have found that it is quite a complicated process to find the Join now" button in a channel as Teams is a lot more than a meeting platform.

I have also had to join all meetings in the browser, as JAWS doesn't appear to work with the Teams desktop app at all. I have found the Chat function in Teams more accessible than joining meetings.

I have quite often had to get sighted help at some point in the joining process, and for a long time the Share screen button was inaccessible. So I would use Teams if I had to, but not if I was setting up the meeting or had a choice.

#### Conclusion

I think that Zoom is the best meeting platform for accessibility as it has the most accessibility features and the option to turn announcements on and off. I use Zoom for my braille lessons as it has the best audio quality on the Touch+, and I think the only thing that is a bit annoying is the 40-minute limit on free meetings, although you can easily leave and re-join.

Written by Theo

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## 7. Sports

### == Remote sports sessions and classes

Sport has been another activity where remote lessons can actually be quite good. It can be hard getting to accessible sports classes, so even better when they come to you!

I have been able to attend quite a few sports classes remotely (on Zoom and Google Meet) during lockdown. It is great to be able to learn new skills while being in a familiar environment.

Some of the best ones have been:

* Circuit sessions run by my school, instead of PE classes. Things like press up, star jumps, and sit ups, where the class all race to see how many they can do in a certain time. It’s hard work, so I recommend doing them outside if you can. It can get a bit hot inside!
* British Blind Sport Active at Home classes. Anyone can sign up for the Active at home classes and they are a great way for you to try new things while not being in an environment that is also new.
* Yoga classes, also run by British Blind Sport. I had never done yoga before, but they have been a great way to relax and calm down after a busy day full of online lessons.

British Blind Sport currently run Active at home sessions during the first week of every month, and Zoom links for all the five sessions are sent out on the Monday. There are also several pre-recorded workouts that you can have a go at on the British Blind Sport website.

You can sign up for the Active at Home newsletter at <https://britishblindsport.org.uk/the-active-at-home-programme>, and view the online workout library at on the British Blind Sport website.

Written by Theo.

### == Exercising during and after lockdown, how to stay motivated?

Exercise was one of the only reasons we were allowed out of the house during lockdown. But, how to stay motivated, especially now that lockdown is lifting? The Tactile Times recommends three ways to stay motivated. Why not try one or more of them?

TTN Number 1 tip – Join Strava

I got really into Strava during lockdown, and after a run I would look at my statistics, and the challenges on the app. So I found myself doing much more exercise than I normally would during term time. For example, there is a Strava segment called "Sports Field lap CW" which is a clockwise lap of the playing field near my house, and I often ran around the field before school. I always try and keep my local legend status (most laps in the last 90 days).

We have recently created a Strava club for The Tactile Times. This will allow us to send updates out directly via Strava. There is also a leaderboard on the club page for the person who spends the most time working out in a week, so why not join an and see how high you can get?

You can join at <https://strava.comm/clubs/tactiletimes> and you can find more setup instructions in the [Strava app review](#_==_App_review) in the tech section.

TTN Number 2 tip – Sign up to a Race

Another way to keep motivated is to sign up for a race. Lots of famous races like the London marathon have gone virtual again. This means that you sign up, and then do the race, but anywhere you like! You just need a watch with GPS, or a smartphone, so your distance and speed can be measured on the run. But, don’t worry, you don’t have to run a marathon! There are lots of shorter races of 3km or 5km or 10km that you can sign up to.

I joined a race called the Runderwear Festival of Running, and ran a 5km in early April. Before the race, the organisers sent me a number to wear, and afterwards they sent me a medal. I might do another race in the summer.

TTN Number 3 tip – Set Yourself a Challenge

This can be small, eg one of the easy Strava challenges. Or you could decide how many times a week you will exercise, or how fast you want to run a race. Or you can set yourself a distance challenge.

In February I set myself a challenge of doing a bike ride of over 100km all in one day. I thought of the idea when I was thinking about what I could and couldn't do in February half term. There weren't many adventures I could go on this year. I normally love going skiing, but because of the travel bans that wasn't even an option. I decided that I still wanted to stretch myself and have a fun challenge to aim for.

So, I started to think of a crazy yet fun plan. The challenge I set myself was to ride to my cousin's house (which is 100km away) via my Grandparents house, which is half way. The furthest I had gone on a bike in one day before this was about 54km so it was a big jump setting a goal of 100.

I used Strava Beacon to share my live location with some of my family and friends so they could see my progress live on a map, and know where I was all the time.

The first half of the ride wasn't too tiring. There was a very short rain shower in Cambridge where my Dad (George) and I both got soaked, but it was all part of the experience. When I stopped for lunch I was tired and needed a rest. I had brought some spare tops and coats with me which I changed into, so I didn't have to start the second half soaking wet.

The second half was much harder, and I went a lot slower. I even found myself on a narrow footpath at one point, after we took a wrong turn. I was very relieved when we found the road again! There was one last hill at the end which felt like climbing a huge mountain, and then I made it!

I was very happy that I had managed it, and it made me think about how setting your own hard but achievable challenges during lockdown is important, as it gives you motivation to get through some of the harder days.

Written by Theo

### == Fantasy Football league

If you like football you might be interested in joining an online Fantasy Football league which we will set up for Tactile Times readers this Summer. Once the league is live, you will need to set up your own team for this year’s Premier league if you would like to join.

You can do this using a free, accessible app and website. To register your interest for the Tactile Times Newspaper league you would need to visit the link below and enter your details: <https://tactiletimes.org/ttnfpl>

For more details about this league visit the link above or get in touch.

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### 8. Joke section

== Five not very good jokes!  
  
Q. Which branch of the army accepts toddlers?  
A. The infantry  
  
Q. Can you guess why I decided to sell my hoover?  
A. It was just gathering dust.  
  
Q. What did the ocean say to the beach?  
A. Nothing, it just waved.

Q. Did you hear about the maths teacher who's afraid of numbers?  
A. He'll stop at nothing to avoid them.  
  
Q. What is the opposite of a croissant?  
A. A happy uncle.

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## 9. Games

### == Hangman

We have now launched an accessible Hangman game that can be played in any web browser. We are still improving it so please do get in touch with suggestions or ideas. The game is available on our new games website at: <https://games.tactiletimes.org> or via the link on our homepage.

### == 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 6.4 seconds. If you beat the record, send your time in and you will become the champion….until someone beats you!

You can find an up-to-date leaderboard and more details here: <https://games.tactiletimes.org/crace.html>

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## 10. Upcoming Events

We have had a look at what’s coming up, so you don’t have to search! Believe it or not, some of these events are not even advertised on the web, apart from in the Tactile Times!

### == LOOK UK

Look have been great during lockdown, offering lots of webinars and classes remotely.

13 April, 4 – 5 pm. Webinar on exams. It aims to empower VI students to advocate for appropriate support in exams, to share revision tips, and to inspire students to take on their exams with confidence and motivation.

### 14April, 28 April, etc…. Wednesdays at 6pm, Online Youth Music Forum. Takes place fortnightly.

25th April. Sing for the UK in Euro Low – Vision 2021, UK selection round. LOOK is searching for a star to represent the UK in the final of this prestigious competition on the 21st of May. You have to write your own song.

Thursday nights, Parent Braille Club. Get your parents better at Braille!!! Send them on this introductory braille course. The current course (the 2nd this year), is full, but you can contact LOOK to get your parents on the list for the next course.

Contact LOOK on 07464 351958 or [**events@look-uk.org**](mailto:info@look-uk.org)

### == The Braillists Foundation

They run lots of good braille related events through the year. There is something every Tuesday night.

They are operating ‘braille clinics’ (now called ‘Braille bar’) on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m, and ‘Masterclasses’ on the first and third Tuesday of every month, also at 7:30 p.m. You can find the joining instructions for the clinics and other events at: www.braillists.org/events

They also have a braille podcast, called ‘Braillecast,’ with a new episode roughly every week or so. You can get this podcast anywhere you would normally get your podcasts. It has interviews with high profile braillists, and discussions with manufacturers of braille products, and demonstrations of new braille software and hardware.

You can contact them on [help@braillists.org](mailto:help@braillists.org)

### == Sight and Sound

Sight and Sound are still doing webinar Wednesday's every two weeks about the technology that they sell. But the webinars are not advertised anywhere, not even on their website!

Maybe Sight and Sound have their hands full right now. They just moved to new offices at the end of March, and have delays on the hardware they import from Europe.

To register to receive emails about Sight and Sounds’ upcoming webinars, you can click on the following link: <https://sightandsoundtechnology.us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=967baeca2666e923876de6b3c&id=a2cb8c674a>

Their previous webinars are available on their podcast, which is on the following link: <https://audioboom.com/channels/4972917>

### == HumanWare

Through much of 2020, HumanWare were organising webinars on their technology. We think that these have stopped in 2021, but you can still find most of the older ones on You Tube. Check them out on this link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDWfRB9hDxLNiQC_dkmreT47gcgLrakMI>

Humanware have been busy bringing out new tech. Their new 40 cell braille display, the Brailliant BI 40X braille display, which can do lots more things, has just been made available for purchase now.

Contact them on [eu.support@humanware.com](mailto:eu.support@humanware.com) or 01933 415800

### == American Printing House for the Blind (APH)

11 May – 14 May, ‘National Coding Symposium’ hosted by APH and the California School for the Blind.

There will be a series of speakers, panel discussions, presentations, and question and answer sessions. Attendees will apparently learn about the various pathways to careers in and/or related to coding.

The great thing for UK based children, is that it’s all after school, thanks to the time difference. Details are on the following link: <https://aphconnectcenter.org/coding/>

APH have lots of other interesting educational webinars, as part of their Virtual Excel Academy. Check them out on the following link: <https://www.aph.org/educational-resources/training/excel-academy/>

### == The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

The RNIB have been running ‘Shape and Share’ events, which are mostly for younger children. But they do have one coming up which is for secondary school age children.

12 May 6pm to 7pm, Shape and Share – Virtual escape room. 11 – 16 years olds. This event promises to ‘test your wits in a variety of challenges and puzzles.’

See more details on the following link: https://www.rnib.org.uk/sight-loss-advice/children-young-people-and-education/activities-and-family-events/shape-and-share-registration-form.

Contact them on [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk) or 03031 239999

### == Vocal Eyes

Vocal Eyes send out a weekly newsletter, which has a listing of accessible online arts and culture.

You can subscribe at: <https://vocaleyes.us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=909237df20438895b80cc2b0d&id=1c2762eb08>

### == Sight Village

Sight Village, where you can generally get to know about, and get your hands on, the latest blind specific and low vision technology, have one last online event.

22 – 24 April, there are lots of really interesting seminars from all the major manufacturers and charities. Details for this even are on the following link: https://www.qac.ac.uk/seminarsevents/sight-village-online-information-event/574.htm#.YHwbyuR7k2x

Sight Village are planning to start up physical events again soon. Details are on the following link: https://www.qac.ac.uk/exhibitions.htm

### == New College Worcester Summer Activity Break

20 - 22 July, for 11 – 16 year olds to take part in a range of activities and sports using the facilities and grounds at NCW.

Details are on the following link: <https://www.ncw.co.uk/blog/events/summer-activity-break/>

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### == British Blind Sport

British Blind Sport have been doing lots on of online things during lockdown. This has included a live workout week at the beginning of each month, with a different exercise class each night of the week at 6pm

For details of their ‘active at home’ programme, you can click on the following link: <https://britishblindsport.org.uk/the-active-at-home-programme>.

### == VICTA

Now live, VICTA Science Fair, Age 0 – 29.

18 May, Online, Money Charity Workshop

But lots more activities are planned, according to VICTA’s website. Coming sometime soon, dates to be confirmed:

[Family Day at Windmill Hill City Farm](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/family-day-city-farm/?portfolioCats=131) Bristol

[Family Day at Bentley Priory Museum](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/bentley-priory/?portfolioCats=131), Stanmore

[Entry to Eden Project, Cornwall](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/eden-project/?portfolioCats=131)

[Get Fit with VICTA: VI Football Taster Day](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/vi-football/?portfolioCats=131)**,** RNC, Hereford, Age 7 – 16.

[Pre-Teen Climbing Taster Session](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/pre-teen-climbing/?portfolioCats=131), Big Rock Hub, Milton Keynes

[Family Day at Matlock Farm Park](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/victa-family-day-matlock/?portfolioCats=131)

[Early Years Day with Moor Vision](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/early-years-moor-vision/?portfolioCats=131), Devon

Visually Impaired Tennis Taster Day, Nottingham

[Family Day at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/ysp-2020/?portfolioCats=131)

[Family Day at the Jorvik Viking Centre](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/viking-centre/?portfolioCats=131), Lincoln

Contact VICTA on 01908 240831 or admin@victa.org.uk

### == Royal Albert Hall

These are not blind-specific performances, but if you like classical music, or pop music, or Indian music, then there is something for you coming up over the next 6 weeks.

See below those that are planned to go ahead, with live audiences anticipated back on 30th May.

### 15–29 April, The **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** with Nicola Benedetti, streaming from Thursday.

25 April, HRVY will perform his ‘Behind Closed Doors’ debut broadcast live show at 7pm.

14 May, The **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** with Paul Lewis will perform Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, streaming from 14th May.

30 May, The Royal Choral Society will perform Handel’s Messiah on 30 May. This will be a socially distanced event, so there will be limited tickets.

31 May, Satinder Sartaaj, a multi-talented songwriter, singer, composer, poet and actor who has released eight number 1 solo albums and sold millions of albums worldwide.

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## 11. Get in touch and website

== 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 using the details below.

Email: [info@tactiletimes.org](mailto:info@tactiletimes.org)

Website: [tactiletimes.org](https://tactiletimes.org)

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## 12. SpaceX Fun Facts

The company

•The full name of the company is Space Exploration Technologies Corporation

•American aerospace company founded in 2002 by Elon Musk

•The first private company to successfully launch and return a spacecraft into earth’s orbit

Portrait of 49 year old man with short brown hair and brown eyes, smiling. Wearing open white shirt with a dark jacket.


How SpaceX started

•Elon Musk wanted to make space travel affordable

•Their first rocket was the Falcon 1 which was designed to take small satellites into orbit.

•The Falcon 1 was much cheaper to build and operate than its competitors because it had cheaper Merlin engines and was designed to be reused.

•The first successful launch was in September 2008 after a number of failed attempts between 2006 and 2008

•They got a contract with NASA for providing services for the International Space Station (ISS) worth 1,000,000,000 dollars

Falcon 9



•In 2010 SpaceX sent up the Falcon 9 named because it has 9 engines

•The Falcon 9 was designed so that its first stage could be reused

•SpaceX designed the dragon capsule to go on top of the falcon 9 to carry cargo and people to space

•In May 2012 dragon became the first commercial spacecraft to dock with the international space station delivering cargo and supplies

•In August 2012 SpaceX won a contract to design the spacecraft to transport astronauts into space as a replacement for the shuttle.

•In 2015 a first stage of a Falcon 9 returned to earth

•In 2016 SpaceX started using drone ships for stage landings at sea

•A first stage was successfully reused for a launch in 2017

•In the same year, a dragon capsule was reused on a flight to the international space station

•In May 2020 the first crewed flight of a dragon capsule to the international space station with astronauts Doug Hurley and Robert Behnken

#### The Starship



•The Starship is being developed and designed for several purposes including fast transportation between cities on earth and building bases on the moon and mars

•SpaceX plan to use the starship for a flight around the moon in 2023

•They plan to send the first group of people to mars to start building in the mid-2020s

•SpaceX have started their test programme to launch and land a Starship in late 2020s and successfully land one in march 2021 which then blew up 5 minutes later!

Written by Ellie Clark

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