

Letters

Letters should be addressed to NB magazine, RNIB, 105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE – email nbmagazine@rnib.org.uk

Letters may be edited, and may be cut to fit the space available. Around 250 words is our usual limit. Please indicate whether you want your email address to be published. The deadline for letters in the August issue is July 11

New genes for old and other matters

I was very concerned to read the article entitled “New genes for old” in the last issue because the new technique has been gained using animal experiment and the article doesn’t give sufficient evidence that it will work with humans. Besides this, I am against genetic engineering – I see it going horribly wrong.

I also thought it very presumptuous of the scientist involved to assume we would all in favour. I will certainly be writing to my MP as he suggested – but to tell him not to support this at all and to prioritise rehabilitation instead. Rehabilitation has become so poor lately that there is even talk of braille being a “luxury” rather than the necessity that it is.

While I welcome campaigns such as “Rethink Rehab”, I think that Guide Dogs and other bodies should do more than just think about rehabilitation. With the money that is currently put into research they could easily set up a rehabilitation centre of their own for newly blind people and those wishing to try out new equipment.

I also think it’s a pity the long cane was scrapped from RNIB’s new logo. I have quite a bit of useful vision in good lighting but I still use a long cane when my guide dog is not in use. It helps me get about more easily and with less effort than using my residual sight, so I think that the cane symbol is quite

appropriate for both blind and partially sighted people.

Helene Ryles, by email

Out of the loop

Like many readers of NB I was fortunate enough to attend the mass Lobby of Parliament on 4 December 2006. This Lobby was led by RNIB and was to press for the higher rate of mobility component of DLA to be granted to blind people. We all assembled in the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, just across the way from the House of Commons. The assembly point was the Lecture Hall, where we listened to speeches before setting off in a long crocodile in the rain to the Houses of Parliament.

But there was a problem for people like me who are dependent on hearing aids – there was no induction loop or infra-red system in the Lecture Hall! RNIB had hoped that there would be such a system, but there was a misunderstanding and no express commitment for such a system to be there. On the day, I switched my hearing aids to the T setting in order to pick up the induction loop signal, but nothing happened. Quite by chance there was a young woman near me who also tried to do the same, but could hear nothing either. I approached the RNIB stewards and they asked the Central Hall’s staff, who tried for a long time and then said

they just couldn't get the system to work. I made a complaint to the management of Central Hall and later, after I told RNIB of the problem, it emerged that there was in fact no induction loop or infra-red system in the Lecture Hall at all.

I wanted to issue proceedings against the Methodist Central Hall under the Disability Discrimination Act because I felt it was unreasonable and discriminatory not to have any provision for hearing-impaired people in such an important venue. I stayed my hand on a promise that the management of the Central Hall would pull their socks up and install suitable equipment. Sadly they didn't, and last month – just before the cut-off date of 4 June 2007 – I issued proceedings.

I would like to ask the young woman – and any other hearing-impaired people present on

that day who were frustrated at not being able to use their hearing aid to access the speeches – to make contact. The website for the Methodist Central Hall (www.c-h-w.com) shows that there are 30 rooms for hire, but only part of one of them (the Great Hall) has an induction loop installed.

Please note that I am not criticising RNIB. In fact they have been very helpful and I shall be asking the stewards and others to be witnesses in the Court action.

This is an important matter for all people with sensory loss. If we cannot get understanding and provision from this world-famous meeting place, then what is the outlook for us?

Colin Bennett, Hove

colinbbennett@palmeira.org.uk
www.bennettsworld.blogspot.com

Christian Resources

in audio cassette, DAISY CD, giant print and braille

Bibles, hymn/song books, calendars, greetings cards, daily Bible readings, books, booklets, courses, etc.

Free postal library service - over 3300 Christian titles - something for everyone - from fiction to study

Hand-held solar-powered audio Bible and DAISY CD New Testament

Request a Torch Trust resources catalogue in your media choice



See us in the Reading Room at Sight Village
 Tel: 01858 438260 - Email: info@torchtrust.org
 Web: www.torchtrust.org
 Registered Charity number 1095904

TORCHTRUST
 For the Blind 