

Audio Description Association

note pad

Items 262 - 266

September 2018

262 ADA Annual General Meeting and Professional Development Session, Theatres Trust, London, 25 September 2018

A reminder that the 19th Annual General Meeting of the Audio Description Association will take place at Theatres Trust, 22 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QL on



Tuesday 25 September 2018 from 11.45-1.15pm.

The AGM is open to all members of ADA; non-members are also very welcome to attend the meeting in a non-voting capacity.

The AGM will be followed by the first in ADA's series of Professional Development Sessions from 1.45-3.45pm. It will feature current models of good practice in service provision for blind and partially sighted audiences, with speakers from Theatre Royal Nottingham and Birmingham Hippodrome.

Coffee will be served in the interval between the AGM and the afternoon session for people leaving after the AGM, or staying on/arriving for the afternoon.

An advance email to info@audiodescription.co.uk to let us know you plan to attend the AGM would be welcome, but please feel free to drop by on the day!

The booking fee for the afternoon session is £20 for ADA members or £30 for non-members. Details of payment options and the timetable for the afternoon can be found in last month's *Note Pad* (item 254).

Please contact office@audiodescription.co.uk with any queries and to book your place.

263 Describing from a phone box Fully integrated audio description at Leeds Playhouse

Leeds Playhouse (formerly West Yorkshire Playhouse) opens its year-long season of pop up theatre with a new production of *Road*, featuring “fully integrated” audio description at every performance delivered live and in character by the entire cast.

First staged at the Royal Court in 1986 and later televised, *Road* is Jim Cartwright’s award-winning play about life on a working-class street in the North of England during the Thatcher era. Amy Leach directs the current production with a creative team that includes two Audio Description Directors – Ben Wilson (who describes himself as Actor/Theatre Maker/Blind Man, and is Ramps on the Moon’s Agent for Change at Sheffield Theatres), and local audio describer Vicky Ackroyd (who trained with ADA in 2009 as part of the See A Voice project).

The cast of nine Northern actors take turns to pick up the receiver in the street’s 1980s phone box standing in a corner of the split level set, and deliver the audio description direct to the listener’s headphones.

“A *fabulous experience*” is Vicky Ackroyd’s description of working on *Road*, which runs from 5-29 September in the Playhouse’s 350-seat Pop Up Theatre (an old scenery workshop converted for use while the venue’s two theatres are closed for a £15.8 million redevelopment of the building). For more information, visit:

<https://leedsplayhouse.org.uk/events/road>

264 Calling blind and partially sighted museum visitors – and non-visitors! University of Westminster seeks volunteers for research study

As part of their ongoing research into developing enjoyable and engaging audio description for visitors to museums and galleries, researchers at the University of Westminster are recruiting blind and partially sighted volunteers for their research study, carried out in collaboration with the Thomas Pocklington Trust and VocalEyes.

The study will investigate listeners’ responses to recorded audio descriptions of a series of photos taken from the collections of the Museum of London. All perspectives are

welcome – from regular visitors to museums and galleries to people who rarely or never visit, and from experienced audio description users to those who have never listened to audio description before.

If you would like to take part in research that will contribute to understanding of what makes audio description successful in museums and galleries, with the ultimate aim of increasing access for blind and partially sighted visitors, and you are able to start now, please visit VocalEyes' website at: www.vocaleyeyes.co.uk and select *Services* from the drop down menu on the home page, followed by *Museums, galleries and heritage* and *Seeking research participants*, to find full details of what is involved.

To sign up, email Rachel Hutchinson at: rachelsarahhutchinson@gmail.com or phone her on 07816 244469.

Sighted participants are also being recruited for the study, so if you have friends or family who would be interested in taking part, they are very welcome to get in touch too.

265 State of Museum Access 2018: Report

VocalEyes has published the results of this year's survey of the access information provided on the websites of 1,718 museums across the UK, carried out in collaboration with Stagertext and Autism in Museums.



The audit found that one in five (19%) of the museums failed to provide any access information online. While this is an improvement on 2016 when the figure was 27%, the survey also revealed that the level of detail is generally poor, with most museums providing basic information for mobility impaired visitors only.

To help redress the situation, the report contains comprehensive guidelines on the types of access information a museum should provide; how to communicate with disabled visitors; providing information in a range of accessible formats; and supplying detailed directions for reaching the museum.

Five groups of potential visitors are identified in the report: people who are autistic or have a learning disability; blind and partially sighted people; D/deaf and hard of hearing people; people with dementia; and people with mobility impairments. For each group, the report recommends appropriate information, resources, facilities and events to welcome and support them. There are additional tips on setting up disability advisory groups to assist the museum in developing its online and on site provision.

Finally, the report presents an access showcase, celebrating current good practice in British museums with links to over 50 websites which the authors hope will inform and inspire others.

Venues are encouraged to make the Museum Access Pledge ([#MuseumAccessPledge](#)) to close the gap in service provision and ensure that everyone in the UK is catered for at museums, galleries and heritage sites.

The full report is available to download in PDF and Large Print format (text only) from VocalEyes' website at: www.vocaleyeyes.co.uk

266 Is there a logo for integrated AD?

The museum symbol used above comes from Helsinki's *Culture for All* symbol bank,



which also includes this symbol for audio description. A rare example of its use in the UK was spotted on The Lowry's website two years ago, but has since been replaced by the more familiar American version of the **sound waves** (or **audio**) concept in the venue's performance listings.

Most audio description logos found on British websites today are based on one of three design concepts, **headset**, **speech bubble** (or **quote box**), and **sound waves**. Their black-and-white originals are shown below: ADA's early symbol with its roots in theatre (hence the **headset**), RNIB's versatile **speech bubble** with its roots in television (hence the screen-shaped border), and the **sound waves** design adapted by the American Council of the Blind from the logo for television and film description created by the Graphic Artists Guild, New York, as one of a set of access symbols.

Over the years, designers have added embellishments and changed borders, fonts and colours to comply with house style or harmonise with other access symbols, or in a few

cases, devised their own logos, but **headset**, **speech bubble** and **sound waves** remain the dominant concepts, with **speech bubble** and **sound waves** vying for popularity.



ADA headset symbol
2000



RNIB speech bubble logo
2008



Graphic Artists Guild, New York
sound waves logo



American Council of the Blind
sound waves logo

The editor's personal favourite among the variations on these designs is the chirpy red bubble from Artlink Edinburgh's rainbow-coloured set of access symbols. It marries design elements from both sides of the Atlantic, with the distinctive 'AD' from ACB's **sound waves** logo sitting inside the RNIB-inspired **speech bubble**. The simplicity of its circular design is appealing, and it would be equally at home in performance listings, adding visual interest to access pages, or labelling products.



Virtually all audio description logos seen in the UK rely on the letters 'AD' to convey their meaning, including Wales where *audio description* and *sain ddisgrifiad* have different initial letters but no corresponding Welsh language logo is currently available. Designers who want to avoid linguistic associations usually choose the **slashed eye** symbol intended for international use, to indicate services for blind and partially sighted visitors in general, or audio description in particular.



Is there a logo for integrated audio description? The question comes from Cardiff-based describer Alastair Sill of Word of Mouth, who was asked it by a local theatre company about to embark on a production with integrated AD. The answer is no, nor does there appear to be one for integrated BSL. Is there in fact a case for a separate logo for integrated audio description? It has been a feature of inclusive theatre for more than thirty years, but the recent upsurge of interest in integrated AD and its

growing presence in mainstream theatre schedules, suggests that recognition of its difference from conventional audio description, in the shape of a separate logo, may well be due. A literal-minded approach to the logo's design would be to insert a lower case 'i' in front of the nationally-recognised 'AD' for audio description – but the door is wide open to more ingenious interpretations.

Note: If you choose to use an AD logo (and many venues do not), please be aware that the examples shown here are freely available to download, but you may need the owner's permission to make use of other existing logos.

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