

RNIB

supporting blind and
partially sighted people

Tactile Images and Maps 2011

Helping businesses to create
an inclusive society



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Introduction to tactile images and maps

Why is accessibility important to your organisation?

There are around two million people in the UK with significant sight loss and millions more who struggle with standard print and signage.

We understand that whilst you may want to offer them the same high quality of customer service and communication enjoyed by your sighted customers, you may not know how best to achieve this.

Tactile images, maps and touch installations enhance the experiences that people with sight difficulties have, making their visit more engaging, informative and stimulating, allowing greater independence and inclusion.

For many years, RNIB has been the UK's market leader in the design and production of tactile images and maps and all of our services can be tailored to meet the requirements of individual clients.



Our hands-on training workshop is highly regarded and our consultancy service is able to draw upon more than 20 years experience in the field of design and usage of tactile images, maps and touch installations.

Our dedicated in-house team of experienced tactile image and map designers are braille trained and offer a full description writing and production service. As a result, RNIB is ideally placed to help you meet the needs of your blind and partially sighted customers and make their experience a more enjoyable one.

RNIB Map for All

Map for All is a unique product developed and produced by RNIB and is intended for use by people of all ages and abilities. They can be read by sight, by touch, or a combination of both and are designed with 'access for all' as the core principle.

Each map is carefully created to combine both visual and tactile elements resulting in a map that is a mixture of layers, visual contrasts, textures, raised large print and braille lettering, as well as tactile and visual symbols.

RNIB Map for All is manufactured from exterior grade signage plastic that has a non-glare matt finish over a layer of rich colour that resists fingerprints, is stable under ultraviolet light and is suitable for use indoors and outdoors.

Each map is designed by experienced RNIB personnel and manufactured under licence by our own suppliers. Every map carries our logo, along with the strapline "RNIB Map for All – Designed for sight and touch" that helps to explain the purpose of the map.

RNIB Map for All allows blind and partially sighted people to be more independent when visiting a wide variety of buildings and venues, contributing to a more inclusive lifestyle.

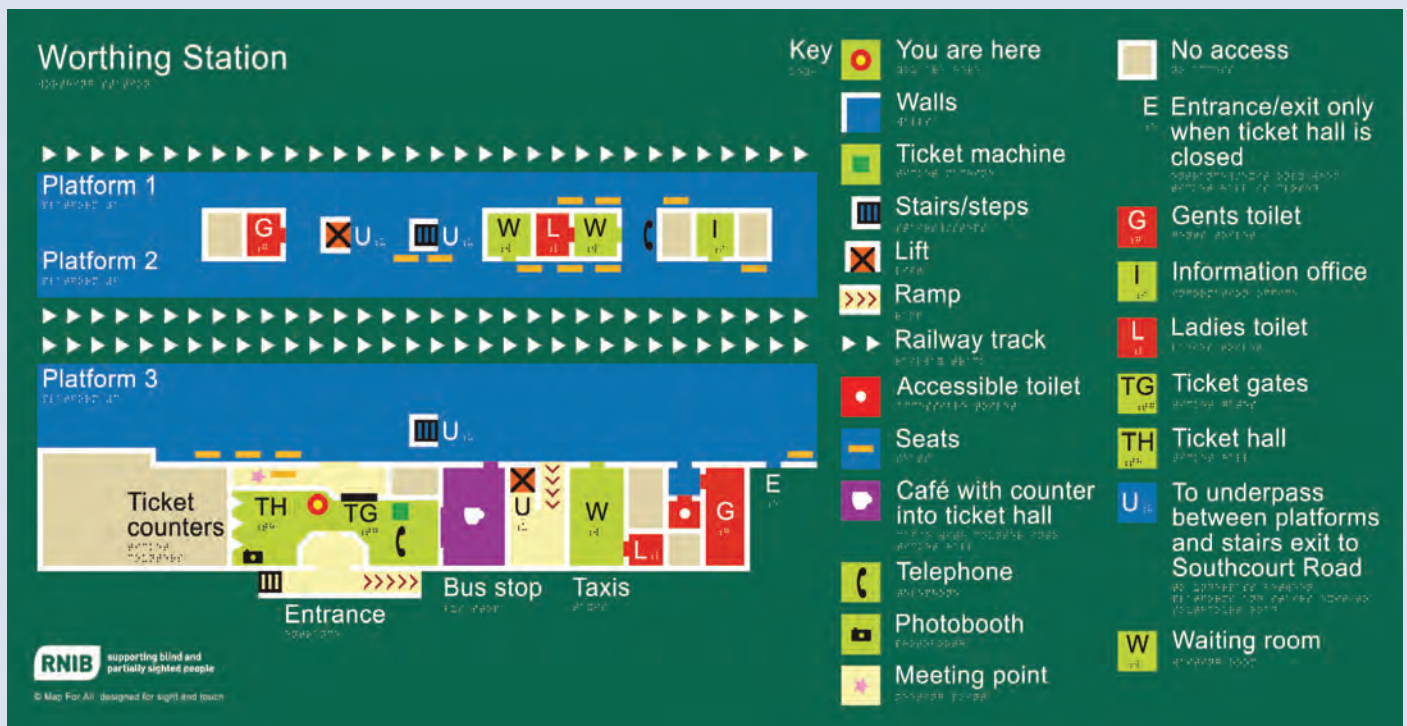
Map for All has been successfully installed in a variety of locations including railway stations, museums and leisure facilities. However, they are also the perfect solution for a wide range of other applications from shopping centres to stately homes.

Our fully comprehensive service includes:

- initial project discussion and advice to help you get started and focus on the correct elements – either via telephone or face-to-face meeting
- consultancy and site visits including working with you on the content and proposed location of the map, taking photographs and making on-site sketches to aid the design process
- all RNIB Map for All design
- all RNIB Map for All production
- co-ordinating plinth production and installation.



Sample RNIB Map for All



Worthing Station 'Map for All' in design and in situ

by permission of Southern Railway

Tactile images

Tactile images give blind and partially sighted people the opportunity to explore objects that would not normally be accessible to them. The images are raised interpretations of visual images or objects and are designed to be read by touch in conjunction with a detailed description and braille labelling.

Each image is interpreted and designed by experienced RNIB personnel, focussing on the key elements of the object, which when combined with essential descriptions and other relevant information, provide a comprehensive guide to both the object and the venue.

Our tactile image consultancy offers advice and help on all aspects of tactile images from initial concept through to the finished product.

Tactile images are ideal for museums, art galleries, historic houses and heritage sites. However, the service is also suitable for any venue where there is “something to see” that may require interpretation in order to allow engagement by blind and partially sighted people. This might include paintings and drawings, historical objects, building facades, monuments and statues and even animals or birds.

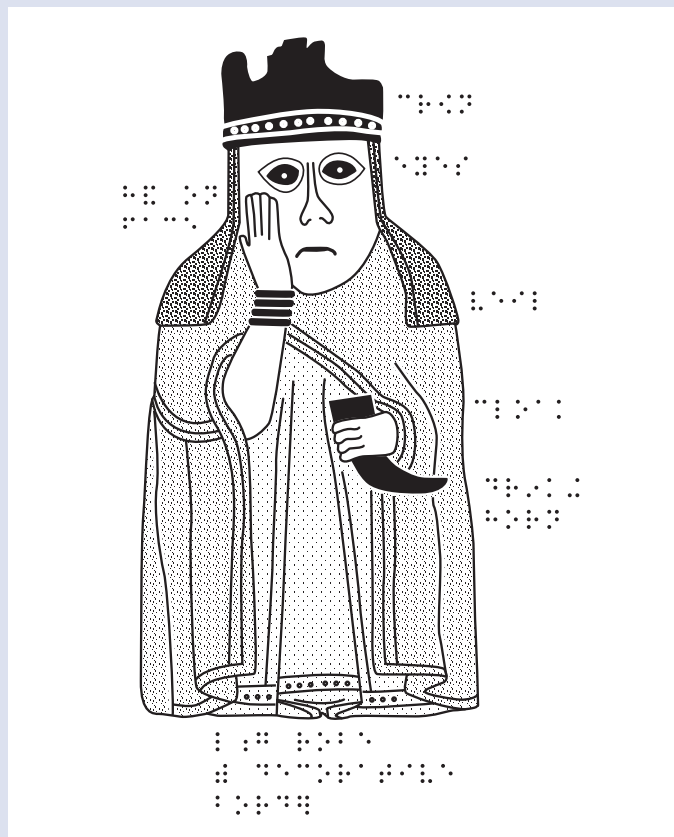
Our fully comprehensive service includes:

- initial project discussion and advice to help you get started and focus on the correct elements – either via telephone or face-to-face meeting
- consultancy and site visits including working with you on the textural information to accompany the tactile images
- writing detailed descriptions to accompany the tactile images
- all tactile image design
- all tactile image production
- feedback sessions with end-users on behalf of the client.

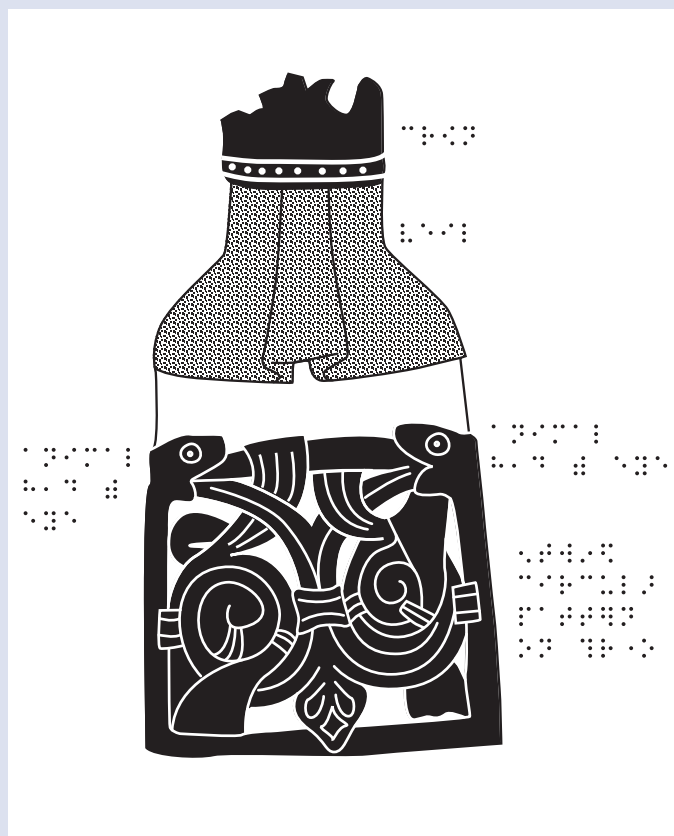


Sample tactile image

Front



Back



Photograph of actual object and design of tactile image

© The British Museum

Hand-held maps

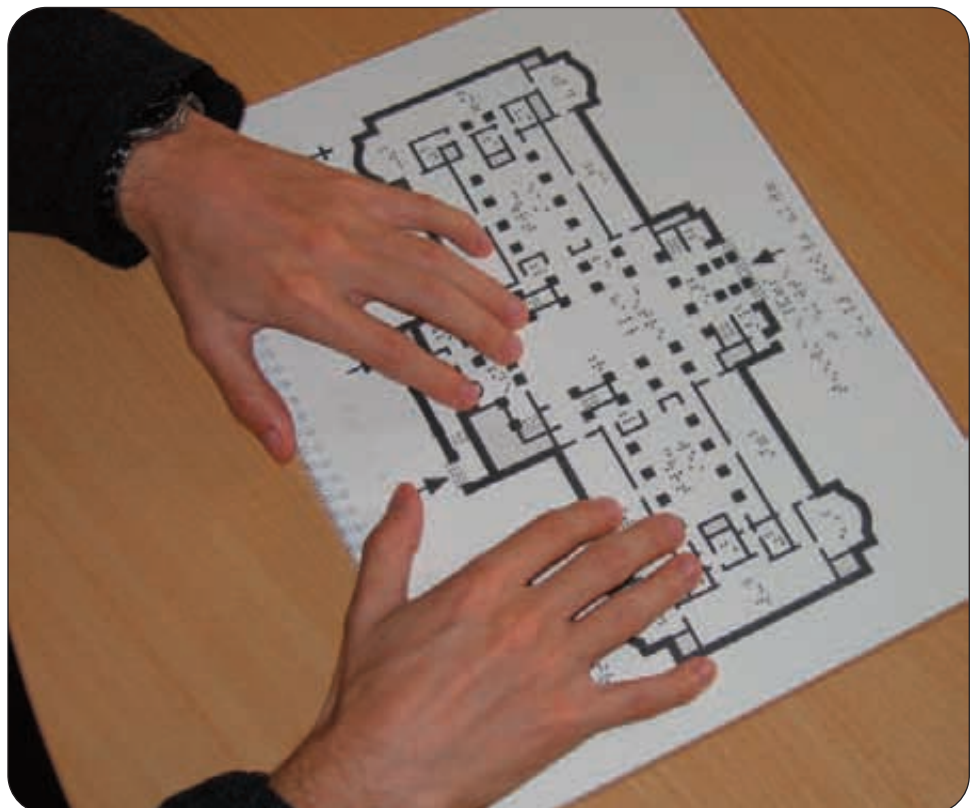
Hand-held tactile and large print maps are portable, booklet-style maps that give blind and partially sighted people access to information which improves spacial awareness, enabling them to engage with an environment more independently.

Blind and partially sighted people often have great difficulty in comprehending the layout of large areas or buildings and hand-held maps can assist in overcoming these issues, contribute to supporting independent living. The detailed information contained in the hand-held maps allows independent choices to be made about where to go and what to do within an area or building.

Each map is carefully designed by experienced RNIB personnel with the information conveyed in a simple and easy-to-read format including a detailed key and important textural information.

Our fully comprehensive service includes:

- initial project discussion and advice to help you get started and focus on the correct elements – either via telephone or face-to-face meeting
- consultancy and site visits including working with you on the content of the map, taking photographs and making on-site sketches to aid the design process
- all tactile and large print map design
- all tactile and large print map production
- feedback sessions with end-users on behalf of the client.



Touch installations

Touch installations can be used to interpret a wide range of subjects in a number of different environments.

Using a wide range of interesting materials, touch installations are imaginatively designed by experienced professionals to meet your specific requirements and will provide a unique focal point for your exhibition or venue.

Types of installations previously undertaken include architectural models, replica objects, raised relief of paintings/drawings, high relief maps and interpretation of damaged objects to show what they would have been like originally.

Our fully comprehensive service includes:

- initial project discussion and advice to help the client get started and focus on the correct elements – either via telephone or face-to-face meeting
- consultancy and site visits including working with the client on the content of the installation and proposed location
- all touch installation design
- all touch installation production.



Tactile images and maps workshop

Duration: Half day or one day course
(up to 16 delegates)

Available as in-house or open training course at venues throughout the UK.

Aims

'The creation of accessible images is more complex than simply creating a tactile or large print copy of the original'.¹ This hands-on workshop provides an introduction to the world of tactile images and maps and outlines the key factors in their design and development.

For

- any professionals making decisions about the provision of tactile images, maps, touch installations and touch tours for blind and partially sighted people.

Learning Outcomes

- understand what a tactile image is and how they can be used
- understand the differences between visual and tactile recognition that underpin the use of any tactile image
- understand the basic design principles for tactile images and maps
- guidance on description writing for blind and partially sighted people
- understand the importance of supportive information for any tactile image or map
- guidance on how to decide whether to provide a tactile image or map or provide an alternative
- showcase and explain how other organisations have used tactile images and maps at their sites.



¹ See It Right Guidelines: RNIB

Photo: RNIB credit Chris Smart Silva Productions



For further details about our tactile images and maps service please contact:
01733 375370 or email commercialservices@rnib.org.uk

RNIB is the leading charity working in the UK offering practical support, advice and information to anyone with sight loss or those who work with them.

Go online and visit rnib.org.uk/professionals to find out more.