

## **Moon: laughably old-fashioned or a serious option in 2010?**

(This article will appear in **NB** and has also been circulated to NALSVI members)

Moon is a simpler alternative to braille for people reading by touch. Moon was in use in the UK before the advent of braille in the mid-nineteenth century and has been in use ever since –despite the undisputed advantages of braille as a reading code.

For most people who have been print readers, Moon is easy to learn in just a few hours, and the large and simple tactile symbols are relatively easy to distinguish by touch. These features also make the learning of Moon a possibility for some children whose additional disabilities make the learning of braille too daunting a task.

The disadvantages? Moon is bulkier than braille; there is no easy way for an individual to produce it; and hardly any reading materials are now produced in Moon – despite the fact that modern embossers make it easier and cheaper to mass produce than at any time in the past.

The Moon Forum is a small group of institutions and individuals (including ClearVision, Linden Lodge School, Pia, RNIB and Birmingham University) promoting the use and availability of Moon as a viable alternative to braille.

The Moon Forum recently started producing a quarterly magazine in Moon for adult readers. This initiative was in response to the need for short, easy-to-read items in a single, easily portable volume. 'Moon Mag' will be funded by Linden Lodge School via Specialist School stats for the next couple of years and the Forum hopes to be able to provide copies free of charge to any UK Moon reader. Please contact the Moon Forum (details below) to sign up for future issues, or pass this information on to any Moon readers you know.

To inform future developments in Moon, the Moon Forum is anxious to get an idea of the potential readership in the UK. If you work for a local authority or are involved with a local society for the visually impaired we would welcome your input. We are trying to ascertain the percentage of visually-impaired people for whom learning Moon could offer a rewarding challenge leading to a pleasant additional activity.

There is more information about Moon on the Forum's website:  
[www.moonliteracy.org](http://www.moonliteracy.org).

The Moon Forum is open to all, either as participating members who attend meetings three times a year or as corresponding members who receiving minutes, etc.

The members of the Moon Forum believe that Moon has an invaluable role to play in the lives of many blind and partially-sighted people and our aim is to make learning and using Moon a serious option for everyone who needs it.

For more information contact the Moon Forum Chair, Helen Wythers, at [helen@lindenlodge.wandsworth.sch.uk](mailto:helen@lindenlodge.wandsworth.sch.uk)