

**THE NATIONAL LIBRARY FOR THE HANDICAPPED CHILD**

**Catalogue of Library Holdings 1984-1986**

The catalogue lists over 5,000 books and materials suitable for children with a handicap that affects reading ability.

There are three sections: 1. Alphabetical listing by author; 2. Alphabetical listing by title; 3. Listing by handicap.

Section 1 contains full bibliographical information including pagination, type size, illustrator and type of illustration, age interest and age reading level, complexity of language, suitability for particular handicaps. Sections 2 and 3 refer back to Section 1 by page number.

Introductory pages give full details of the Library and the catalogue.

Single volume, 700 pages, printed in an easy-to-read typeface with a laminated paper cover. ISBN 0 948664 00 2.

Price: £7.50 per copy including postage  
£5.00 per copy including postage for Friends of the Centre

Available only from The National Library for the Handicapped Child, Lynton House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9LT.

The catalogue is financially supported by The British Petroleum Company, plc.

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# In tune with microchips

by Robin Robertson

Last Christmas I received a musical Christmas card. It had a picture of holly and snow on the front and looked like a conventional card until I opened it. It started squeaking and, for a fleeting moment, I thought it was alive. I listened again, this time more closely and heard a tune ... it was playing *Jingle Bells* in high-pitched hiccups.

The tune was erupting from a tiny lump in the back of the card. It was a microchip which had been programmed to drum out a tune when I opened the card and stop when I closed it. I was told it needed no maintenance and would never wear out. It didn't either.

a rousing, "Hip, Hip, Hooray!" Batman comics will shout "Zap! Pow!"

Talking magazines won't be far behind. Inside the microchip will be a voice to read a page to you. Then there'll be no need for any printed words. Magazines will be page after page of pictures, talking pictures ...

I'll never read a magazine again. Instead, I'll listen to it. At home it will tell me its recipes while I cook them. In the train or bus I'll stare out the window and 'read' my magazine at the same time.

But — what if the person beside me is also flicking through a magazine? And the person



My children played it continuously. It buoyed up their festive spirits long after the Christmas decorations were gone and the presents were either broken or broken in.

Even now, it's showing no signs of wear. It isn't slowing down or forgetting its notes. Nor is it rusting, although it fell into the bath once and the card went mushy.

Obviously, it will outlive me. I have no doubt the microchip will expand its operations and, in the future, I'll be able to buy birthday cards which play *Happy Birthday* and Donald Duck comics which quack.

The next step will be magazines. A microchip will be implanted in each page and *presento*, musical magazines!

Musical magazines, I imagine, will be the same as the one you're reading now, except they'll have lumps inside the pages. When closed, they'll look like they have muscles. They'll lie quietly on the newsagency shelf and burst in to tune when they're opened.

As the magazines are read, one microchip will play at a time and stop as the next page is turned. The music will set the mood for each article ...

*Old Man River* for The Source; *Smile, Smile, Smile* for this article; *The Way We Were* for News from the Divisions and *As Time Goes By* for Happenings.

To accompany an advertisement, the microchip will play the product's signature tune.

In time, the microchip will also learn to talk. Then birthday cards will sing *Happy Birthday* in three-part harmony and end with

behind? And the one in front? All those microchips, talking at the same time, at the same decibel level ...

'... Virgo, your energy may be low Monday, but there will be many pressing commitments ... popping the corn ... tanning the saucepan ... scrubbing out the septic ... What's smaller than an ant's pants? ... a housewife's salary ... This good three-year-old filly ... the Belle of the Laundromat ... who races in New South Wales, had won ... large, sticking-out ears ...'

## — LATE NEWS —

### Library History

The Australian Library Promotion Council advised me on 21 November 1986 that they had not received the funding they expected to enable them to publish the popular history of Australian libraries they had asked me to write.

They have therefore been obliged to abandon the project, for the time being at least.

This letter is to thank those people to whom I have not written personally who have given and offered me help with the research for the book. I shall continue to work on certain aspects of library history on my own behalf and may need the offered help in due course.

Laurie Brown

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