

How to use the service

Hello and welcome to Calibre Audio Library (formerly Calibre Cassette Library). Calibre brings the pleasure of reading to people who have sight problems or other disabilities through a free, nationwide postal service of recorded books. We offer a choice of over 7,000 titles, fiction and non-fiction, recorded unabridged by professional actors and broadcasters.

This information explains how to use the Calibre service. If there is anything which is not clear to you, do please let us know. Do keep it so you can refer to it if you need to. The information is available in large print, on cassette and on MP3 disk. Please let us know if you would like a copy in a different format for yourself or for someone who helps you to use Calibre.

We do hope you will enjoy the service. Please let us know if you have any problems or questions. We will do our best to sort things out, and it will help us to improve the service for everyone.

How to get in touch

Our telephone number is **01296 432 339**, and there is an answering machine outside office hours. If you prefer you can write to us at

Calibre Audio Library
Aylesbury
Bucks HP22 5XQ

Email: enquiries@calibre.org.uk

Website: www.calibre.org.uk

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Section 1 - the easy way to use Calibre

There are two ways to use Calibre Audio Library. Either we can choose books for you, based on the types of book you tell us you like. Many members prefer this method. Alternatively, if you want to choose your own books and send us a list, this is described in section five.

When you filled in your membership form you told us the types of books you like reading. As soon as you join you will be sent your first book, selected from one of the categories you ticked.

When you have finished reading the first book, just post it back to us. The postage is free - you do not need to pay anything. We will then send you two more, usually by return of post. After that, please return each book as soon as you have finished with it, and we will send you a replacement. In this way you should get a constant supply of books of the kinds you have told us you like. All you have to do is return them to us when you have finished with them - within four weeks if possible. You can however keep a book as long as you need in order to finish it. We do not charge fines, but after six months we will write to check that you still have the book.

If we send you a book you do not like, just send it back straight away and we will send you another one. And if you want to change your categories, just let us know. By the way - we will try not to send you the same book twice, unless you ask to read it again.

Most members have two books on loan at a time, which means that one book is in the post while you are reading the other. If you read a lot, two books may not be enough. In this case you need only ring us and we will increase your allocation.

Always send books back as soon as you have finished with them - do not stockpile and send them all back at once. Returning a book is what prompts us to send you a replacement, so if you do not send it back you will not get a new one.

If there is a delay before your replacement book arrives do give us a call. The book you have returned may have been lost in the post, and until we know this we will not know that you need a new one. You will not be charged for lost or damaged books.

If you need extra books, for instance for a holiday or over Christmas, you need only phone, or write, and we can increase your allocation on a temporary basis. If you are going to be away from home for some time, we can send books to you at a temporary address.

If you have a period when you do not want to receive books, let us know and we can hold them until further notice. If you just want a few days' delay before receiving another book, then you simply need to hold onto the book you have, as it will not be replaced until we receive it back.

That's the easy way to use Calibre. However, if you prefer to choose for yourself which books you want to read, Section 5 explains how to set up a personal reading list.

If you have any problems, questions or suggestions do please let us know. We always take account of members' comments and are glad to have them, even when they are critical.

Section 2 - about our books

Calibre offers its members a choice of literally thousands of books for reading for pleasure. At the time of writing there were over 7,000 titles in the library, more than 6,000 for adults and 1,000 for children.

All our books for adults are available on standard cassette tapes, which can be played on any ordinary cassette player. Many are also available on MP3 disk, and we are converting more titles to MP3 all the time. To play these disks you will need an MP3 disk player. If you would like information on choosing and buying a player, please let us know.

Many of the books in the library have been specially recorded for us. All our books are read in full, including the preface and other introductory information, if any. They are not abridged or edited in any way.

Cassette books

The books are recorded on to both sides of the cassette. When you come to the end of one side of the tape, you merely need to remove the cassette at this point, and put it back in the machine with the other side facing you, to continue listening to the story. **Do not run on to the end of the tape, or there may be a long wait at the beginning of the next side before the recording starts again.**

Each cassette is labelled on side one with the title of the book and the number of the cassette. The numbers are in large print and in Braille. The Braille number on cassette 1 is on the top right hand corner of side 1. On the other cassettes the Braille number is in the bottom right hand corner. This is to help you find tape 1 when you first receive the book. On top of the box which contains the book you will also find the title and author of the book in print, and inside the lid the same information in Braille.

As well as the books which have been specially recorded for us, we also buy some commercially recorded books. These are not abridged or edited, but may not have the introductory information, and the tape numbering and instructions for turning over may be different.

MP3 disk books

MP3 disks look exactly like ordinary CDs, but the way they are recorded is different. This special recording system means that most books will fit onto one MP3 disk.

Each disk is a continuous recording that has been divided into numbered tracks to help you find your place. A disk may have up to 99 tracks each lasting approximately 10 minutes.

Every disk has a face label in large print with the book title, author and Calibre library number. An exceptionally long book may require two disks and in this event the disk number will also be on the face label.

Section 3 – receiving and returning your books

Cassette books are sent to you through the post in a plastic box which has a pocket in the top of the lid. This holds the card with your name, address and membership number and details of the book. On the other side of the card is the Calibre address for the return journey.

Before you return the book just take out the address card, turn it over and slot it back. Some boxes have two slots in the lid to slip the card into, some have a pocket. One corner of the card is cut off diagonally, so that you can be sure you have it the right way up. If you put the card in with this cut-off corner at the top right, then you will know that the Calibre return address is showing. Some people like to turn the card over as soon as the book arrives, so that they do not forget to do it later.

The box is closed by strings which wrap around the box once and fix on to buttons on the side of the lid. Wind the string around the appropriate button tightly, and leave the end loose.

With very long books, there may be too many cassettes to fit into one box. They are then split into two or more boxes. We send out both boxes at the same time. Please remember that with these very long books we will not send you a replacement until you have returned all the boxes to us.

With very short books, we sometimes put two books in the same box. In that case the books are distinguished by large coloured dots on the cassettes, and we also put the titles in Braille on the back of each cassette.

MP3 disks are sent out in a plastic box, shaped like a shell. They will be posted to you inside a reusable pouch. On the outside of the pouch is a pocket for the address label. To return a book simply turn over the address label to reveal Calibre's return address (again, the cut off corner should be at the top right), place the disk in its plastic box inside the pouch, and post it back to us.

Whichever type of book you have, it is important that the book is returned using the same container it came in, and that the card used for the return journey is the correct card for the book inside. If you have more than one book in the house at any one time this can be confusing, so please take care not to separate box from book and card.

Because the great majority of our members have serious sight problems, the Post Office take the books free of charge under the 'Articles for the Blind' regulations. You therefore do not need to pay postage. Place it in a post box, or take it to the post office.

If you have any problems with receiving or returning books please let us know, and we will try to find a solution.

Section 4 - problems with books

Over time, cassette tapes are bound to become weakened, and as a result the sound may be distorted or the tape may break. Please do not worry if a tape becomes damaged. We have the original recording, and we can easily replace the tape before we issue it to another member. Please mark any damaged tapes you are returning with a rubber band, or wrap a slip of paper around it to bring it to our attention. Include a note to say what is wrong with the tape if possible. You will not be charged for damaged tapes.

If you need a replacement tape in order to continue reading your book, please telephone us at Aylesbury and we will get a replacement tape in the post immediately.

To get the best sound quality it is a good idea to clean your cassette player regularly. The heads and rollers inside your machine will become dirty with use and if they are not cleaned regularly the sound becomes distorted and the tape may slip or get caught in the machine. Cassette machines should also be demagnetised from time to time to improve the sound quality. An inexpensive special 'demag' cleaning cassette can be purchased for this purpose from your hi-fi dealer, or retailer such as Currys.

If you need a new cassette player, you may be able to get one free of charge from the British Wireless for the Blind Fund. Ask your local society for the blind, or phone the Wireless Fund on 01634 832 501.

MP3 disks are generally more reliable than cassettes, but they can sometimes be damaged or defective. If you have problems with a book on disk please send it back and we'll send you a replacement copy.

Section 5 - how to set up and maintain a personal reading list

To set up a personal reading list for you, we need a list of books you would like to read. Please choose between 50 and 100 books, as this will mean that we will usually be able to send you a book from your list. As you read books from your list, please keep it topped up to at least 50. You can phone your list to us, or send it by post or email, making sure your name and address are on it. If you prefer, you can set up and change your list through the Members' only section of our website, www.calibre.org.uk

To help you make your choice we produce a range of catalogues and other materials. New catalogues are produced regularly – these are announced on our audio newsletters, or you can get up-to-date information from the website or by phoning us.

There are three types of catalogue available now (July 2006).

1. Online on our website, www.calibre.org.uk. This service is free. It contains the whole catalogue and is updated regularly. The website also has an online ordering system, so you can view your personal list, add books to it, or take off books you no longer want to read.
2. CD-ROM for use with a computer. This can be updated through our website, or we will send you updated copies, free of charge, on request.
3. Printed – we have four catalogues in large print, each giving details of 500 titles. They contain the books added to the library from 1994. There are also four in standard print, with information on older recordings, some of which have been withdrawn. If you are only buying one catalogue to begin with we suggest you buy one of the large print ones.

Some of our catalogues are also available on cassette, to borrow. You may find that these are not very easy to use. Please phone us if you would like to try one.

The children's catalogue is available in large print, on disk and online as described above. All children's catalogues are free of charge.

To order any catalogues, please select from the list on the order form and enclose your payment if necessary.

For Your Ears Only is a quarterly magazine of reading ideas and new books. It is sent free of charge to members who have set up a personal reading list. It is available in print, on cassette and through the website.

Later in 2006 we will start to produce a new series of catalogues, each covering one or more of the subject categories listed on the application form. As they are produced we will announce them on our twice-yearly audio newsletters.

Please remember to put your name, and postcode or membership number, on all notes and lists you send us, whether by post, phone or email.

Section 6 - special requests

Children's books - adult members are very welcome to borrow children's books - perhaps to share what their children are reading or just for nostalgia. If there are children's books you would like to read please tell us.

X-rated books - some books in the catalogue are marked X to show that they contain strong language, sex scenes, or other material that may offend some members. We will not send you such books unless you tell us you do not object to receiving them. You may already have told us on your membership form that you are willing to have X-rated books. If you did not, but would like to have them, just let us know.

Personal requests - if there is a book you would like to read which we do not have in the library, please tell us. We will consider recording it, or try to find out where you may be able to get it.

Series and serials

We make every effort to send out books in a series in the correct order, but sometimes, with very long series, this can be difficult. If you specially want the titles in a series in the correct order and this is not happening, do please let us know so we can make arrangements to do this for you.

Urgent requests

If you need a book quickly, for instance because you are a student, or a member of a book group, just let us know. We will try to send it as soon as possible.

Section 7 - the Calibre newsletter

We produce a recorded newsletter twice a year which contains items of interest about books and reading, and keeps members informed of Calibre news. This newsletter comes to you free of charge with your book. Please return it to us by the same method.

Section 8 - about your personal details and the records we keep of your membership

When you joined Calibre you gave us information about yourself including your name, address, phone number and the sort of books you enjoy. As you use the library we also keep records of the books you want to read, the books you have read, and other information such as whether you have had the latest newsletter – and of course any money you have sent us for any reason.

All the information we have about you is controlled by the Data Protection Act 1998. We are only allowed to keep the information we need to supply you with our service, and for our financial records. It is all kept securely, and access to it is strictly controlled. If you leave Calibre we will destroy the information about your use of the library, and will keep other information only as long as necessary for accounting and audit purposes. We never pass members' details to other individuals or organisations.

Do please let us know if you change your address or phone number, or any other details. Please quote your postcode or membership number when you contact us.

Section 9 - about Calibre

Calibre is a registered charity, set up in 1974. The name comes from the words Cassette Library of Recorded Books. The service is free to members - we do not charge a subscription - so we rely on donations to maintain and expand the service.

Some members like to make a contribution to our running costs. We would like to write to you from time to time letting you know about the different ways you can help us. Please be assured that there is no obligation to respond to these letters, and it will not affect the library service you receive from us. If you would prefer not to receive these letters please let us know.

and finally

We do hope you enjoy the service. Please let us know if you have any problems or questions – our membership services team are here to help. The phone number again is 01296 432 339 or you can email us on enquiries@calibre.org.uk.

Thank you.