



# Audio Books for Dementia Patients

## An RUH Academy Library Initiative

### The idea

#### Background

A patient story was presented to the RUH Trust board in May 2017 which highlighted the need for activities to help keep patients with dementia stimulated and engaged during their time in hospital. Audiobooks were suggested as a useful tool to help alleviate the boredom of being in hospital; they could also help with some behavioural issues associated with dementia.



A Simple Music Player

Designed to look like a familiar classic radio, the audio players are available in different colours with minimal function and easy-to-clean surfaces.

#### Development

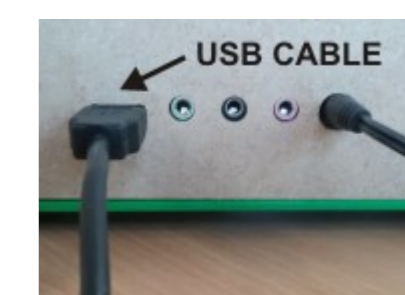
The innovative idea that we have developed is to run a one year project to provide the opportunity for patients with dementia to borrow a dementia friendly audioplayer during their stay on our wards. Preloaded with audiobooks and radio / TV programmes, the audioplayers will help keep them stimulated and engaged, providing focus and relieving some of the boredom of being in hospital - without too much input from staff. Our dementia co-ordinators and ward staff would identify patients for whom audiobooks would be helpful; our dementia volunteers would assist our patients in using the audio-players where required, choosing appropriate books available from the Academy Library.

In March 2018 we applied to our Innovation panel for £1600 funding. The proposal was to purchase ten dementia friendly Simple Music Players which can have audiobooks preloaded by library staff. A subscription was needed to an audiobooks downloading service. Earphones were also purchased along with a request for funding one hour per week of Band 3 time, factored in to administer the project. In addition to the audiobook subscription service there are also 1000s of audiobooks available to download freely as they are now out of copyright.

#### Progress so far

The project has been running since July 2018. Usage has been good following a soft launch. This approach was taken to help iron out any unforeseen issues. We expected to lose headphones and possibly the odd Simple Music Player, but surprisingly we have lost a couple of power cables (possibly because they resemble phone chargers). In September we have publicised the project in our Trust monthly newspaper so we hope that usage will continue to increase.

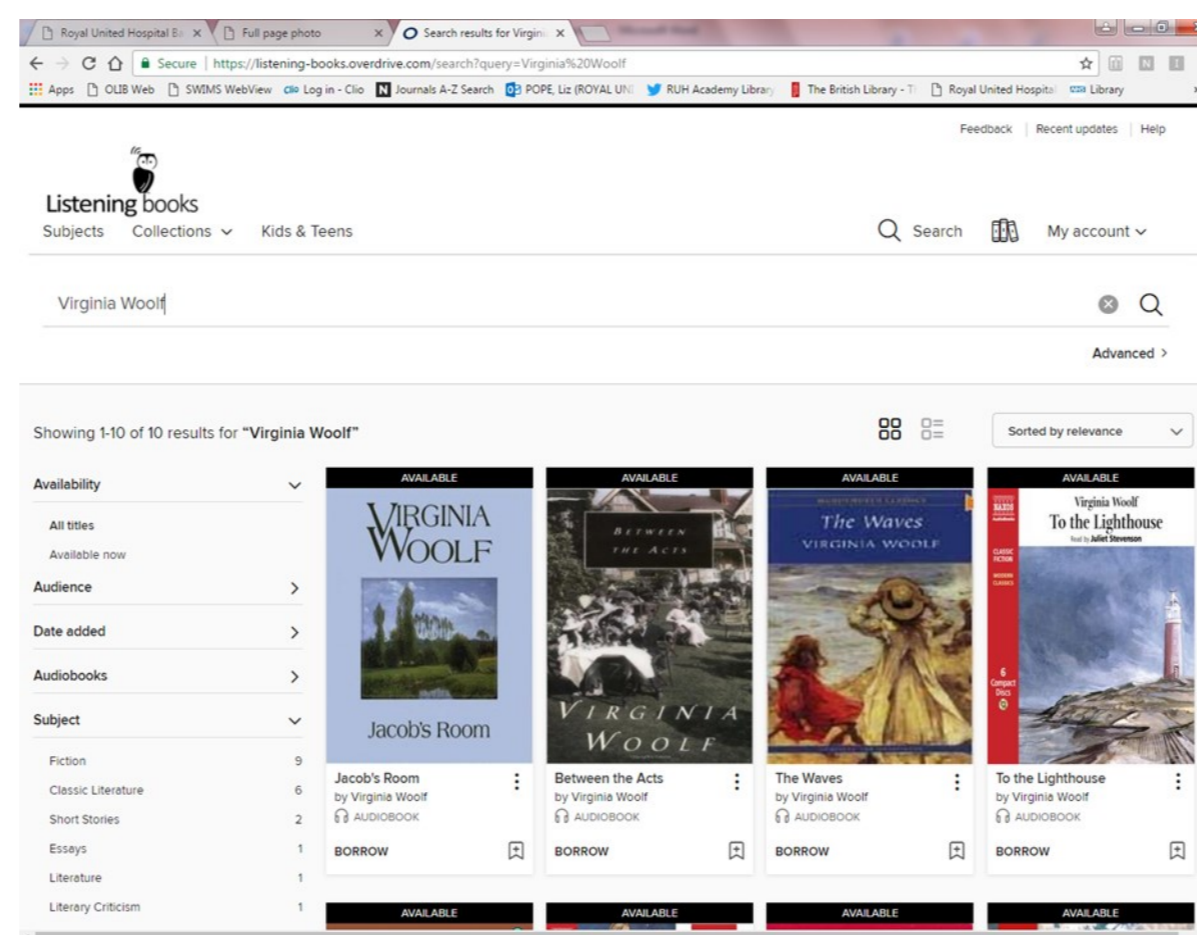
USB & headphone sockets on base of player.



Volume controls are tucked away for simplicity, and to prevent the user accidentally changing the volume to uncomfortable levels.

### The process

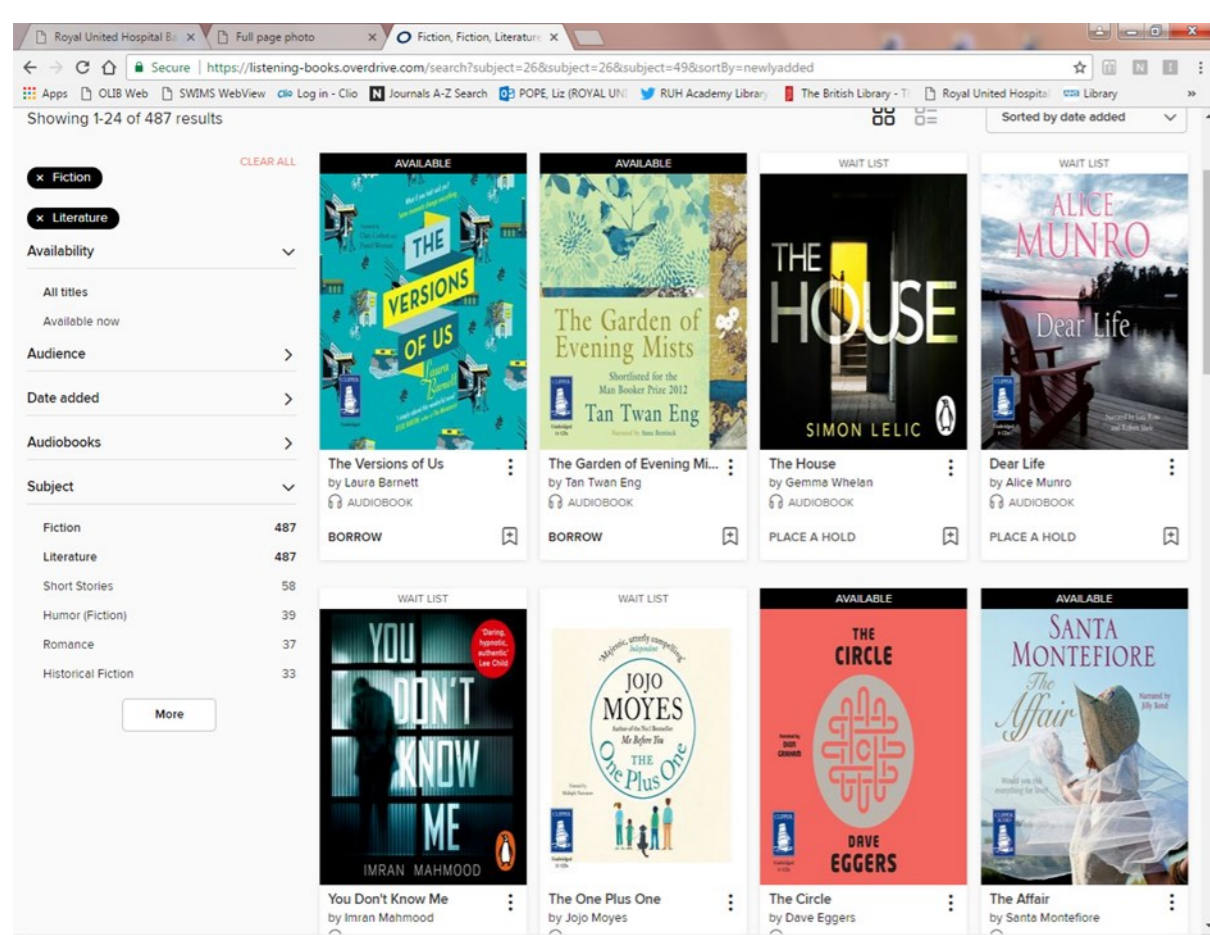
When a request comes into the library - usually through one of the dementia co-ordinators or a member of ward staff - we spend some time finding out about the patient's needs, and what kind of listening material they might enjoy.



#### Browsing by author

We then search through the online Listening Books library to find an appropriate choice. We can search by genre, author, subject and audience, and choose from thousands of titles. The titles are downloaded onto the player, and a borrower form and spreadsheet filled out.

The audioplayer and headphones are then taken to the ward. Here we demonstrate how the player works, either to the patient, their family or a member of staff, depending on which is most appropriate. The patient can request another book at any point and can keep the audioplayer for as long as they like. After about a week, we will phone the ward to check on the patient's progress, and enquire if they would like new listening material. When they have finished with the player, or when they are discharged, we collect the player & headphones and gather feedback.



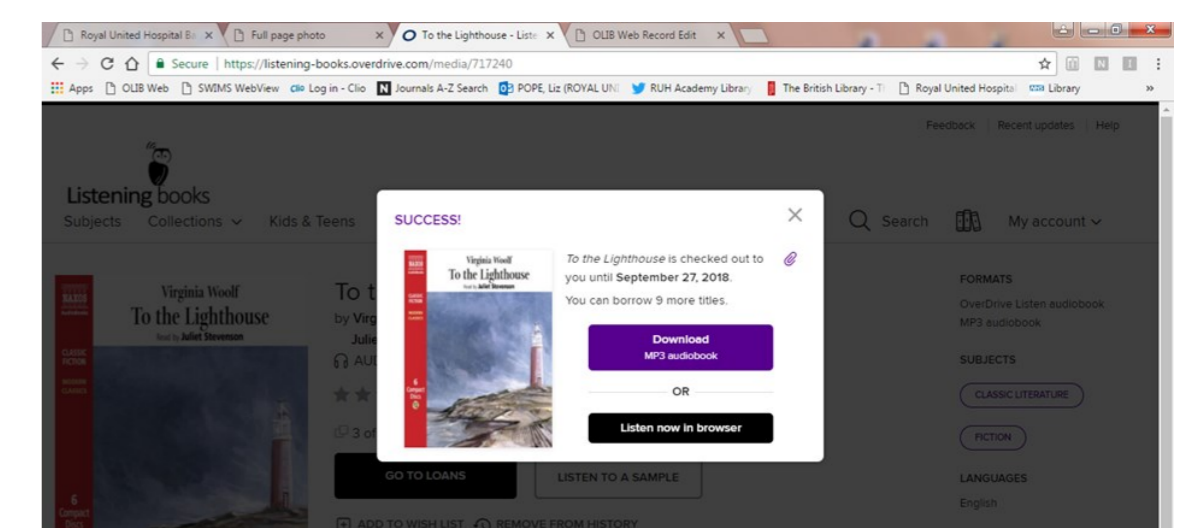
Browsing the online library by category

#### We have had some great feedback....

"Really enjoyed listening to the audiobooks, thank you!"

"The audioplayer was the only thing that calmed down the patient, who was very distressed"

#### Downloading a chosen title



### The future

As this project has progressed, we have inevitably come across a few problems that need resolving. One issue has been ensuring that the players, headphones and power cables are all returned. Despite clear labelling and instruction, a few pieces of equipment have gone missing. Because each patient is cared for by more than one staff member, it is quite hard to ensure messages are passed on and communicated between staff. However, we are confident this will improve over time; as we get more requests for audioplayers, staff on the wards will become more familiar with the equipment and loan process.

Although we started this project with a focus on dementia patients, we have had interest from a range of people on different wards. This is very encouraging, and we can foresee the audioplayers being used and enjoyed by many different patients, not just those with dementia.

