Charity recognised for giving deaf teens a voice

The British Youth Council has announced that The National Deaf Children’s Society’s (NDCS) Young People’s Advisory Board (YAB) has won a Youth on Board award in recognition of its role in giving a voice to deaf young people in the UK.

Last month, NDCS launched its national Look, Smile, Chat campaign to help hearing teenagers to understand how to communicate with their deaf peers. The campaign was devised and developed together with YAB members and offers filmed tips, posters and lesson plans for schools.

Look, Smile, Chat aims to help hearing teenagers understand how to communicate with their deaf peers.

The YAB was set up in March 2012 as a platform for deaf young people to tell NDCS about issues that affect deaf children and young people across the UK. It consists of 15 deaf teenagers, aged 12-18, giving them the opportunity to champion change at a local and national level. The YAB won the Youth on Board award in the “Inspiring Project” category.

“This recognition will show other organisations that deaf young people should have the opportunities to campaign and make their views known.”

Last month, NDCS launched its national Look, Smile, Chat campaign to help hearing teenagers understand how to communicate with their deaf peers. The campaign was devised and developed together with YAB members and offers filmed tips, posters and lesson plans for schools.

Look, Smile, Chat has to date reached several million people through national and regional media, giving deaf young people the opportunity to break down the communication barriers they face in school and everyday life.

Nairi Gallant, 18, member of the NDCS Young Advisory Board, said, “I’m totally over the moon that the YAB has won the British Youth Council’s “Inspiring Project” award. Being on the Board has been an invaluable experience for me and other deaf young people. It has allowed us to get truly involved with NDCS and make a difference to the lives of other deaf teenagers.

“I hope this recognition will show other organisations that deaf young people should have the opportunities to campaign and make their views known – and that we’re very good at it! Thank you so much from everyone on the YAB.”

Lucy Read, Head of Children and Youth Participation at NDCS, said, “The stunning success of the Look, Smile, Chat campaign shows that deaf young people can achieve anything, with the right support in place. The YAB was set up in March 2012 as a platform for deaf young people to tell NDCS about issues that affect deaf children and young people across the UK. It consists of 14 deaf teenagers, aged 12-18 years old, giving them the unique opportunity to champion change at a local and national level.

Rosina St James, 21, Vice Chair of Participation and Development at The British Youth Council said, “We are delighted to announce that a panel of young people chose the NDCS Young People’s Advisory Board as an Inspiring Young People award winner. “Our Youth on Board Awards celebrate organisations and projects that support youth participation in innovative and exciting ways, and mark the fantastic achievements that can happen because young people are supported to get involved. The awards are special because all of the selection and judging is done by young people, and we hope that flagging up these projects will encourage other organisations to follow in their example.”

To find out more about Look, Smile, Chat, visit www.buzz.org.uk/looksmilechat

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Partnership will help eliminate language barriers

Language Services Associates (LSA), a global language services provider offering a full suite of multicultural solutions, has announced a new partnership with Action Deafness Communications.

Through this strategic partnership, Local Government Authorities, including most recently Walsall Council, are able to meet their sensory impairment and foreign language requirements in a unique and innovative way.

Front-line services now have access to Action Deafness’ highly qualified and specialist British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters, as well as LSA’s foreign language Interpreters, on demand through LSA’s Video Remote Interpreting platform (www.lsavideo.com/video-remote-interpreting). This partnership offers a fully functioning, fully qualified, secure video-remote proprietary platform for obtaining interpreters in both BSL and foreign language.

Through a dedicated online web portal, Walsall Council staff have instant access to both organisations together.

The email addresses and phone numbers listed on the dedicated website channel communications instantly to LSA and Action Deafness Communications simultaneously, allowing the council seamless and trustworthy contact with both specialist organizations.

Users also have the option to book professional interpretation services online, over the phone or via e-mail.

The partnership offers a fully functioning, fully qualified, secure video-remote proprietary platform for obtaining interpreters in both BSL and foreign language.

“LSA’s partnership with Action Deafness Communications is consultative and inclusive, based on many levels of operational integration, and designed to offer a single channel of access to both spoken languages and high quality specialist deaf-related services and expertise,” said Jonathan Potter, European Commercial Director, LSA.

“We look forward to a long and very successful partnership for both organisations in their unified support for front-line Government services.”

I am pleased to announce that Action Deafness and LSA are working together to provide a comprehensive range of services to both foreign language and Sign Language users,” said Craig Crowley, MBE, CEO of Action Deafness.

“I am confident that our joint commitment to quality and value for money services will enhance the range of services available to the clients that we support.”

For further information visit www.adcommunications.org.uk or www.lsavideo.co.uk
Royal visit for hearing dogs

HRH The Princess Royal visits Hearing Dogs for Deaf People as charity celebrates 30 years of changing lives

To mark national charity Hearing Dogs for Deaf People’s 30th anniversary, its patron – Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visited its Buckinghamshire headquarters to celebrate with the charity’s staff, volunteers and recipients. It was a double celebration at the charity’s headquarters in the village of Saunderton as the event also marked 20 years of patronage of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People by The Princess Royal.

During her visit, HRH not only met charity staff, but also some of its loyal force of volunteers, fundraisers and deaf recipients – several being children who have benefited from the charity’s recent service expansion to include young people.

HRH also officially opened a new puppy reception and planted a tree commemorating 30 years of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

Michele Jennings, Chief Executive at Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, said, “Over the past 30 years, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People has given those with a hearing loss greater independence, confidence and companionship. We remain non-government funded so rely on the generosity of the public and hope that Her Royal Highness’ visit will further raise the profile of our incredible work.”

To tie in with HRH’s visit and Hearing Dogs Week 2012, earlier this week, the Charity for the first time also released findings into the lives of its severely and profoundly deaf recipients.

Recipients said that the introduction of a hearing dog – trained to alert recipients to important house signals such as the alarm clock, doorbell and smoke or fire alarm – made a truly life-changing impact. They said a hearing dog gave them confidence in daily life (95%), greater independence (92%), and more companionship (97%). Also, 92% of recipients said that a hearing dog helped them to make friends when in public.

The Charity hopes the research will help to draw to the public’s attention the huge difference a hearing dog can make to a deaf person’s life and launched an appeal to tie in with Hearing Dogs Week 2012.

Michele Jennings added, “The provision of a hearing dog really is an incredible life-changing service, bringing greater levels of independence, confidence and companionship to deaf people. Our findings reveal just how much of a difference a hearing dog makes – bringing deaf people back in from the brink of isolation and loneliness and giving them an enriched life.”

That’s why during Hearing Dogs Week, we are keen to bring to people’s attention the real difference a hearing dog can make.”

With hearing loss in the UK recently rising to one-in-six of the population, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People hopes that the appeal will lead to an increase in the number of hearing dogs that can be trained each year. The current lifetime cost of a hearing dog is around £45,000.

For more information on Hearing Dogs for Deaf People or to donate visit www.hearingdogs.org.uk

Readers’ letters

Dear Fellow Hearing Times readers,

On the radio, when they were talking about his long and distinguished career, no mention was made of the fact that in the House of Lords Jack Ashley relied totally on stenographers (Palantypists) writing to a little screen in front of his bench, even after he had his cochlea implant.

When Jack Ashley (later Lord Ashley) lost his hearing in around 1968 it became obvious to him that he could not, however skilled he became at it, lipread all the MPs speaking in the House of Commons. In those early days he would rely on colleagues writing brief notes to him, but, the point of jokes made later of little asides said. Thus began the search for a solution to his and other deaf people’s need for communication support.

In his book, Design and the Digital Divide: Insights from 40 Years in Computer Support for Deaf and Disabled People, Alan Newell describes the work that he, along with John Arnett, Joe King, Andy Downton and Colin Brookes, in the late 70s, early 80s, did in re-designing the Palantype machine for computer-aided transcription. In his book he acknowledges the tremendous help given to them by Isla Beard, a Palantypist (who originally used a manual machine with a printed paper tape for later transcribing). Isla, now retired, was an Accredited Reporter member of the Institute of Shorthand Writers (now the British Institute of Verbatim Reporters), and she acted as “an expert consultant and demonstration operator throughout our research”. Isla was, in fact, Jack Ashley’s first Speech-to-Text Reporter (Palantypist). Isla wrote down every word uttered for Jack to read on a screen next to him in the House of Commons so that he could fully participate as an MP. Later, when he was elevated to the House of Lords, Jack had other qualified STTRs there such as Lorraine Comerford (Chapman), Lisa Cordaro, Julie Whittaker and Chris Meade, to name a few. These and other Speech-to-Text Reporters continued to write for him until his retirement, thus enabling him to take a full part in those proceedings.

Isla re-wrote the theory book for realtime Palantype reporters to enable them to write for the computer. The American Stenograph machine and theory had also been up-dated for CAT (Computer Aided Transcription) and, with the advent of faster operating computers, both machines are now capable, with the input by a highly qualified stenographer, of producing accurate Realtime translation with the words coming up on screen in English just seconds after they were spoken.

Where Isla led others have followed and there are now several qualified, registered, STTRs in the UK, though more are needed and I am pleased to say that training for Speech-to-Text continues, though nowadays it is mostly using the American Stenograph machine.

BIVR has many STTR members, using both the Palantype and the Stenograph machine, assisting deaf or hard of hearing people to participate fully in meetings or in all aspects of their lives and, together with AVSSTR (The Association of Verbatim Speech-to-Text Reporters), continues to fly the flag for high standards in verbatim reporting generally. Both organisations hold training seminars for their members and trainee stenographers, or writers of shorthand of any system, can get extra dictation practise, in London, by attending the IFS (Incorporated Stenographers Society) dictation sessions on a Thursday evening, or from the free dictation offered on their website.

Whilst the shorthand machine and its software, together with computers, have come on by leaps and bounds over the last 20-odd years, it is the high skill of the person operating the machine, such as Isla Beard, who make all this possible.

Kind Regards,

Mary C Sorene FIPS, MBIVR, CRI (Certified Reporting Instructor - USA)
Landmark Supreme Court judgement clarifies social care law

In the case of KM v Cambridgeshire CC, a blind, autistic, wheelchair user was offered a care package that he argued did not meet his needs sufficiently. Four national charities (Sense, National Autistic Society, RNIB and Guide Dogs) sought to clarify whether a local authority can take the resources of a local authority may be taken into account when assessing someone's needs. Although the court ruled against KM, the judgement has made it clear that "resources are not to be taken into account" when establishing the needs of disabled people. Some councils restricted assessments on the grounds of costs and some did not, which in the past resulted in a postcode lottery for social care.

Importantly, the court also made it clear that when social care support is provided by direct payments to the individual it is "crucial" that local authorities provide "a reasonable degree of detail" to a judgement can made whether the indicative sum is too high, too low or about right. Representatives from the national charities say the legal challenge is important as it clarifies the law for disabled people across the country.

The charities argued that the law has been misinterpreted and that each individual should be assessed in the first instance in terms of what care they need, rather than the local authority's financial position. A result local authorities currently assess and meet an individual's needs taking into account the resources they have available - rather than first establishing the person's full individual needs. This leads to a situation whereby a persons assessed needs could be viewed as different depending upon where in the country they live.

The charities were given permission to proceed with a legal intervention in the case brought by a disabled person, known only as KM to protect his identity, against the lawfulness of the adult social care policy of Cambridgeshire County Council. The judgement now means that every local authority in England and Wales may have to reconsider how it assesses the needs of disabled people.

The Secretary of State for Health also intervened in the case and the Supreme Court allocated seven judges to the hearing, demonstrating the potential national significance of the judgment.

Simon Foster, Head of Legal Services at Sense, a national charity for deafblind people, said, "We believe in the principle that a person's needs ought to be assessed in full, without regard to financial considerations. We are pleased the court confirmed a local authority must give sufficient detail when providing direct payments so disabled people can see if the amount is enough to meet their needs."

Scholarship awarded to deaf Oxford student

Childhood meningitis victim overcomes deafness and prejudice to achieve Oxford success

Following her amazing recovery from meningitis which left her completely deafened in both ears just 18 months, Helen Wilcox, 21, has now received the national Cochlear Implant Award from The Lord Mayor of Nottingham, Councillor Leon Unczu.

Helen, who has been fitted with a Nucleus® cochlear implant at the age of three at the Nottingham Cochlear Implant Centre, she fought against prejudice and disbelief to win a place to study Physiotherapy at Oxford. Thanks to the £6,000 award, Helen will now be able to complete her course and pursue a doctorate in Auditory Neuroscience. With typical unselfishness she has chosen this subject to help benefit others with her condition.

Helen's journey to prove them wrong began: she gained admission to Mary Hare Grammar School for the Deaf where she was outstanding A Level results and performed at interview won her a place at St John's College, Oxford. Even then some of Helen's former teachers thought she was getting favourable treatment and she was not really worthy of her status as an Oxford University student. Helen's first year examination results finally silenced the doubts as she received a distinction grade in all her first year examinations and won the Casbaker Award, which entitles her to wear a special scholar's gown.

To my knowledge I am the only deaf person to achieve a scholarship award," said Helen. "I feel extremely honoured to have been successful in the academic world and this is something that I am proud of."

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To my knowledge I am the only deaf person to achieve a scholarship award," said Helen. "I feel extremely honoured to have been successful in the academic world and this is something that I am proud of.
One thing I can’t get my head round is that I’m now three-quarters of my way through BSL Level Two and the practice level, which I’m doing at the same time. It seems like only yesterday that I started learning Level One – and I’m now two years down the line. I’ve thoroughly enjoyed learning the language so far, and the 201 and 202 exams have been hard. 201 tested my receptive skills through a DVD story, and I don’t mind admitting that it was tough. There were some Northern signs in the story which, being the South of England boy that I am, rather lost me in places. That’s part of the natural flow of BSL, I suppose – but the North/South divide in Sign Language is a big learning curve for a hearing adult such as myself.

The 202 exam was hard as well; some teachers actually do the 203 exam first, in a way, I’m glad that we’ve done it the ‘linear’ way round. It was tough and (god forbid), if I have failed, it gives me more time to retake. Don’t get me wrong, I’d rather not re-sit, but having a few weeks left of my course gives me more options.

When my course finishes in a few weeks (with 203 on the last week), I’ve got to decide what to do next. Pre-Level 3 is the next step in my learning, but right now, I want to have a break from formalised study and try something else.

Trouble is, I’m not entirely sure what as yet!

One thing that I have found is that I really want to increase my conversational BSL experience. A lot of the work I’m doing is around formal classroom settings, where I’m learning the vocabulary, the grammar and culture, but I don’t get as much opportunity to practice it as I’d like. A recent promotion at work was really valued, but it’s taken me away from the shop floor – where I was able to interact with Deaf people on a semi-regular basis.

I’m fortunate to have made some friends who are Deaf, and they’re all incredibly patient with me as I occasionally stumble over my signs – I’m working on reducing my ability to sign in the ‘real world’ – I’m working on reducing my ability to sign in the ‘real world’ – I’m working on reducing my ability to sign in the ‘real world’ – I’m working on reducing my ability to sign in the ‘real world’ – I’m working on reducing my ability to sign in the ‘real world’ – I’m working on reducing my ability to sign in the ‘real world’ – I’m working on reducing my ability to sign in the ‘real world’ – I’m working on reducing my ability to sign in the ‘real world’ – I’m working on reducing my ability to sign in the ‘real world’ – I’m working on reducing my ability to sign in the ‘real world’.

So, I’ve made a decision. I’m going to take a year out before applying to Pre-Level Three, and look for some more opportunities to make use of my BSL education so far. Any suggestions gratefully received!

Find out more about Matthew at www.vikingbay.blogspot.com

Juliet England

Life in Cameroon’s capital, Yaoundé, continues to present more than its fair share of ups and downs for mum Sandrine, her husband pastor Vincent, Daniel, whose deafness was diagnosed at the age of four, and his brother Emmanuel, now a teenager.

Some of the frustrations are no different to those occasionally experienced by any family of a deaf child. Sandrine, who often struggles to find soccer-mad Danny meaningful activities which would allow him good socialisation outside school, while communication is also a constant issue.

Like many parents whose children can’t hear, Sandrine and Vincent find it hard to convey all their feelings and emotions through lip-reading and sign language. And they’d like to find a reading method that got Danny interested in books. However, many of the challenges must be unique to a developing country where hearing loss is often considered a shameful condition, a mental illness which is a punishment for past sins. (The family was told in church to look to their past for the reasons for the son’s hearing loss, and to swap his aids for prayers and faith.)

Sandrine believes that Danny’s hearing aids break, no-one can fix them. And because of limited staff supervision, the devices are often lost at school. It’d be great to have a hearing centre here. Aids frequently have to be brought in from abroad, often used ones, and parents struggle to maintain them. We’d also love him to have speech therapy – this is not provided.

But we’re grateful we can send him to Yaoundé. The school has been vital in continuing to develop his command of sign language. And he loves it there."

Thanks to extra support, Danny has moved up a grade, and next year sits his leaving certificate. Like all parents, Sandrine and Vincent worry about how their child will cope in “big” school – but for Danny the future is particularly uncertain.

“Up until now, pupils who leave the elementary school my son attends, must learn pottery, carpentry and so on in its recently opened workshop section. I want Danny to have more options. Only very few pupils have been able to continue their education abroad or integrate into mainstream school and go on to take A-levels.”

Fortunately, however, this could be about to change. Recently, the government in Cameroon has started talking about inclusive education, and, as Sandrine puts it, “Things here are moving at the speed of the hand hour of the clock. But inclusive education could have been done years ago, since they don’t seem to have the means to build public schools for the deaf.”

Sandrine is still a committed campaigner, fitting it around family life and her work as a teacher of English and French, currently the family’s main source of income.

She adds, “I’m still trying to raise money for underprivileged deaf kids, some of whom are abandoned because of their hearing problems, and live in an orphanage. I still believe that the situation for deaf people in Cameroon must change. And funding is still the biggest mountain to climb.”

Sandrine’s two films, one documenting her own story and the other highlighting cultural differences to attitudes towards deafness in the UK and Cameroon, have been finished. She is copyrighting them before aiming to broadcast them more widely, and is working on further scripts.

When asked what remains to be done, she says: “Deaf people still have a long way to go to be accepted in our society. They are still and will be perceived through the veil of stigma attached to their condition, unless permanent, significant awareness is raised, unless people stand up to address this issue.

Many of the needs of deaf need to be educated, too, and to become more involved in their children’s education. Then they would realise their kids should neither be destined to manual work, nor hidden away to avoid the condemning eyes of society. In short, there’s still a lot to be done.”

Somali opens Mogadishu’s first dry cleaners in decades

A dry cleaners has been opened in Somalia’s capital city, the only one, and it’s first since the start of the civil war more than 20 years ago. Some of the profits will be donated to a school for the blind and deaf.

Businessman Mohamed Mahamoud Sheik, 24, recently returned home to notice Mogadishu after several years abroad and noticed many Somalis were sending their clothes by air to Kenya to get them dry.

“My dad, friends and people in the government were taking their clothes to be dry cleaned in Kenya,” Mohamed said. “They either took them themselves, or gave them to friends who were flying to Nairobi. Everyone, from the president downwards, was really suffering.

He explained that the city’s security had improved in the last 10 months, since Islamist militants were pushed out by African Union and government forces. The Islamist al-Shabab militia, which is fighting the UN-backed interim government, still controls much of the south of the country, but since it was forced from Mogadishu, the city is coming back to life. People are opening restaurants, hotels and other businesses and going to the beach.

Mr Sheik, who has a business degree from a university in Malaysia, was working at the airport in Dubai when he came upon the idea. With no experience in the cleaning industry, he spent his spare time picking up skills at a dry cleaners owned by a friend.

Setting up a laundry in Mogadishu was really difficult. The equipment is expensive, and I had to order the washer, dryer, presser and dry-cleaning machine from Dubai, the US and Italy,” Mohamed said.

Finding a suitable premises was also a problem, “Because the city is more peaceful now, everybody is running to find a place to open a business. Getting a building is really hard in Mogadishu these days because there is so much competition for space.”

Government officials have provided the dry cleaner with one guard at night and two during the day.

He has brought spare parts and other supplies in Dubai, and says he can easily order more, which can be shipped across the ocean in a matter of days and notes that he will give some of his profits to a school for the blind and deaf in Mogadishu.

Somalia has had no effective central government since 1991, and has been wracked by fighting ever since - a situation that has allowed piracy and lawlessness to flourish.

Although most al-Shabab fighters have been driven out of Mogadishu, the city is by no means safe. Suicide and other attacks are common. Government officials have just provided the dry cleaner with one guard at night and two during the day.

Mohamed is aware that he will face many challenges running his business in a country that has been at war for most of his life.

Deafness charity shortlists for national award

Deafness Research UK has won a place in the semi-finals of the National Lottery Awards 2012 and is calling on local support with public voting.

The National Lottery Awards recognise the positive impact that Lottery-funded projects – both big and small – make to local communities. Deafness Research UK’s The Bionic Ear Show, is one of only 10 projects to make it through in the Best Health Project category.

The Bionic Ear Show, delivered across the UK, is an educational, fun and interactive show that promotes safe listening.

In 2011 alone, Lottery funding helped the project to reach over 30,000 people across the UK by delivering the Bionic Ear Show and/or hearing screening to a wide range of communities.

People across the UK are being urged to help Deafness Research UK make it through to the final three and an appearance on the Awards show, which is broadcast live on BBC One later this year.

The winning project in each of the categories will receive national recognition at the star-studded event and a £2,000 cash prize to spend on their project.

There are seven categories in the Awards each reflecting the main areas of Lottery funding: arts, sport, heritage, health, environment, education and voluntary/charity.

Voting for the semi-finals ends at midnight on Sunday 22 July. To vote for the Bionic Ear Show call 0844 836 9601 or log on to www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk/awards
Increased volume of insurance claims citing hearing loss issues

Insurance giant Zurich reports claims made against policies citing hearing loss problems have seen a dramatic increase in recent years

Ed Gould

John Latter, UK casualty claims director at Zurich, was reported in the Financial Times as saying that there had been a recent shift in the number and type of claims. “What we’re seeing is a drive to commoditise these claims, regardless of their merits,” he was reported to have said.

Some in the industry have suggested that the rise in personal injury litigation accounts for these types of claim.

Hearing Times asked Zurich about the issue and was told that claims made for noise induced hearing loss (NIHL) went up by 25 per cent in 2011. “We cannot comment on the overall market volumes but we can confirm that based on our data, which stretches back many years, the trend is continuing for 2012,” a spokesman for Zurich said.

“Discussions with solicitors and other insurers do suggest that we are not alone in seeing the higher frequency of claim,” he continued. The rise in such claims led some of the press to dub NIHL as the ‘new whiplash’, that is a condition which is targeted by fraudulent claimants as it can be problematic to disprove.

“The Association of British Insurers (ABI) said that they did not have any data that supported the rise in the number of claims made for deafness. “However, insurance companies are committed to paying genuine claimants,” the ABI said.

According to Zurich, the phenomenon appears to be limited to third party claims made against current or former employers, rather than a rise in personal medical insurance claims.

Like ABI, Zurich was keen to stress that genuine claimants have nothing to fear. “We will continue to settle all genuine claims as quickly as possible,” the company stated.

Insurers are keen to involve audiologists in the process of identifying claims that may be spurious. “Clearly audiology is a critical part of the claims process,” Zurich said. “It should be remembered that the audiologist is a part of the claim process, although admittedly an important one for confirming the extent of the injury suffered by the claimant.”

“And as we are seeing an increase in repeat claimants, that is an individual trying to be compensated against an injury that they have already been compensated for, identity checks by audiologists would assist,” the spokesman continued.

According to the insurer, the approach to spurious NIHL claims is like that of any other fraud. “We have a specialised disease team with considerable experience and expertise across all occupational disease types,” Hearing Times was told.

“Our approach to fraud within the disease arena has been recognised by the industry and we’ve picked up two insurance industry awards in recent weeks.”

Cooperation between law firms and insurers, through an industrial forum, has helped to identify bogus claims. The industry expects that NIHL claims will continue to rise for the next few years as they tend to relate to workplace incidents from many years ago.

“But with improving health and safety practices, plus the awareness of the individual, we do expect the frequency to tail off,” Zurich stated.

Regional winners announced in search for deaf Communication Champions

The regional winners in a UK-wide search for the best and most dedicated teachers and learners in deaf and deafblind communications have been announced

Signature, the UK’s leading provider of accredited qualifications in deaf and deafblind communication and organisers of the prestigious 2012 Signature Annual Awards, has announced the regional winners in the awards’ Learner of the Year and Teacher of the Year categories.

Regional Teacher of the Year Winners:
Northern Ireland: Marie Franklin – Belfast Metropolitan College
Scotland: Stephen Joyce – DeafBlind Scotland
Wales: Gaye Hampton – Sign Language Studies Centre
North East: Keith Reed – Northumbria University
North West: Jimmy Anderson – Deafway
Yorkshire & Humberside: Nigel Clarke – Signia Signing
East Midlands: Andrew Rowe – South Nottingham College
West Midlands: Jelinder Ajmal – BID
East of England: Jamie Billam – Cambridgeshire Deaf Association
London: Zane Hema - Signmap
South East: Jon Palmer – The John Townsend Trust
South West: Clive Mason – Centre for Deaf Studies, Bristol

Regional Learner of the Year Winners:
Northern Ireland: Robert Glipin – Queen’s University Belfast
Ireland: Gwyneth Molloy – Catholic Institute for Deaf People
Scotland: Louisa McDaid – BSL Scotland
South East: Kate Wheatley – [bonus]
North East: Joseph Jones – Newcastle College
North West: Neil Morris – St Helens College
Yorkshire & Humberside: Bob Blackwood – Field Interpreter Training
East Midlands: Susan Henderson – Grantham College
East of England: Christine Hardy – Handy Training Ltd
London: Lesley Weatherston – City Lit
South West: Caroline O’Brien – Signite

Olympic Torch bearer sports the latest hearing technology

When the Olympic torch passed through Lincolnshire on the road to London 2012, it was 15 year old Jack Hodgson running proudly with it in front of the excited crowds

As one of Great Britain’s most accomplished under 16 Judo competitors his athletic strength is surpassed only by his strength in character. Jack suffers from Usher’s Syndrome, a condition severely affecting both his hearing and his sight.

Already a Gold Medal winner at The Common Wealth Games, the young athlete is now turning his attention to 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil.

Unfortunately Jack’s hearing equipment hasn’t proven as resilient as the man himself and struggled to function during his strenuous training and exercise regime. While Jack has done all that he can to not allow his disease to hold him back, it was now his personal FM system that was doing just that by preventing him from hearing his coach and stalling his promising progress.

Before all was lost his parents contacted audiologist Lorraine Tipler from Hearing Help, Lincoln who immediately understood Jack’s unique needs and contacted PC Werth.

From the wide choice available PC Werth provided the Olympic hopeful with the Comfort Audio DM10 and DH10 units. This microphone/receiver combination set is just part of Comfort Audio’s Digisystem range – the World’s first (and only) all-digital personal FM system. One week on, Jack was delighted with the difference Digisystem had made.

“The Comfort-Audio System is brilliant, it’s made everything so much easier to hear...when I’m in crowded areas it’s brilliant. It helps with training, I can hear the coach which means I should be able to improve which will take me to Brazil 2016”

As the crowds of Lincolnshire cheered the torch go by it seemed that it wasn’t the only thing that day headed for Olympic glory.

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Upgrading text relay services to benefit disabled consumers

Ofcom have recently set out further details of proposals to improve communications services for people with hearing and speech impairments.

They are proposing that all UK landline and mobile providers give their customers access to a next generation text relay service approved by Ofcom.

Text relay services enable people with hearing and/or speech impairments to communicate with others through telephone or textphone equipment. Under the current system, a relay assistant acts as an intermediary to convert speech to text and vice versa for the two parties. Ofcom research has found that these conversations can be slow and sometimes fail to flow naturally.

The proposed new services would be faster and accessible via the internet through PCs, laptops, tablet computers and smartphones. There are a number of potential benefits of the proposed new text relay services including: improving the flow of conversation by introducing parallel two-way speech, allowing users to interject, rather than wait until the end of a message; enabling a wider range of mainstream equipment to be used to access the service, including easier use of text relay on the move via mobile phones; and improved conversation speeds.

Ofcom intends to consult on proposals on video-based relay services later this year. In the meantime, Ofcom is working with government and disability groups to encourage the provision of video relay services by communications providers and other organisations and businesses voluntarily.

NDCS response...

Ian Noon, Head of Policy and Research at the National Deaf Children’s Society, said, “Telephone services for deaf people are stuck in a time warp, making communication via telephone slow, cumbersome and impractical. The long-awaited proposals outlined by Ofcom are a massive disappointment and do not go nearly far enough to offer deaf people a phone service that is fit for the 21st century.

“Deaf young people need equal access to telephone services, but instead are being held back by a service that has been neglected for decades. Having full access to effective telephone services is vital for deaf young people to become independent, build relationships and gain employment.

“The text relay services that deaf people have to use today run on technology that was introduced before the internet became publicly available, when the Walkman was cutting edge, and mobile phones were the size of house bricks. Ofcom’s recommended Next Generation Text Relay improvements are potentially a step in the right direction but still won’t offer anything close to this.

“We are dismayed to see more delays, as instead of bringing through urgently needed reforms, Ofcom has announced today yet another consultation. Deaf young people are now unlikely to see any improvements to existing services until spring 2014 at the very earliest. Text relay services must be radically improved without delay to give deaf young people the opportunities, choice and independence that other young people enjoy.”

World’s first active bone conduction implant

MED-EL has announced the launch of the Bonebridge, the first active bone conduction implant.

The Bonebridge is easy to implant in a 30-60 minute operation. In contrast with other hearing implants, there is no need for surgical access to the middle ear. Other advantages include the low requirement for clinical after-care and the significantly lower complication rate compared with bone-anchored hearing aids.

In contrast with other hearing implants, there is no need for surgical access to the middle ear.

The Bonebridge is particularly suitable for people suffering from impaired sound conduction, for example associated with malformations of the outer ear and/or disorders of the middle ear. In addition, it can also be used for single-sided deafness.

The first implantation was performed on Daniela S., who had already undergone numerous unsuccessful surgical procedures, and had therefore experienced considerable psychological pressure.

Earlier operations had not been successful, as congenital malformations had proved difficult to treat with surgical access available at that time.

The patient had a very positive response to the new treatment. The audio processor was activated four weeks after the surgery.

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**Product review**

**Freiland Libra+ Door Chime**

Guy Peppiatt

I am constantly being told by hard of hearing friends about the man who never called. A telephone call that tells them of the missed visitor who rang the doorbell and failing to get an answer assumed they were out.

The TV is loudly proclaiming the guilt of tax avoiders, the dishwasher is sluicing the remnants of dinner and the fridge is gently humming in the background. It is no wonder that the ill-equipped doorbell from the local hardware store cannot penetrate the cacophony of the sounds of daily living even for the sharpest of listeners!

Enter the Friedland Libra+. It’s bigger and better than the average doorbell and makes a lot more noise. I suppose we have to live with the view that manufacturers have of the hard of hearing—that we are also sight-impaired—remember the big button phones.

It is loud and there are a number of different chime settings which have been carefully thought out to provide maximum audibility in a noisy environment. You can choose the chime that rings the “loudest” for your hearing loss.

There is also a flashing light in case you are not afraid to ring up and complain about things.

It is estimated that there are over 114,000 people in Suffolk who are deaf or hard of hearing. Sensing Change is one of just seven pilot projects in the UK which supports people with sensory loss.

Tina Winwood, senior technical officer at Sensing Change, said, “For Doreen, this has opened up a new world. Using a Screenphone has certainly increased her quality of life.”

The pilot is run as a social enterprise which puts social workers in the driving seat and encourages team participation in decision making. Doreen explains, “I have come to regard Sensing Change as friends as well as helpers.”

For more information about Sensing Change visit www.sensingchange.org.uk, email info@sensingchange.org.uk or call 01473 260030 or minicom: 01473 711825 fax: 01473 325709

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**Technology**

**Hearing Times**

July/August 2012

**A Lowestoft grandmother has told how her life has been transformed after new technology enabled her to reconnect with the world**

Doreen Davey was just 27-years-old when she lost her hearing overnight and doctors told her there was nothing they could do. The happily married mother was forced to give up her job as a secretary and bring up a family with 100 per cent hearing loss.

When Doreen’s daughters left home and her husband Paul, 78, was out at work she says she became a “recluse”. Doreen felt cut off from her family who live more than 200 miles away and she went for years without speaking to them on the telephone.

But new technology has enabled the 74-year-old to regain her independence and her confidence. Doreen now spends hours speaking to friends and family all over the world, supported by Sensing Change, a new social enterprise formed to provide services to people with sight and/or hearing loss in Suffolk.

Delighted Doreen loves speaking to daughter Lyn, 49, and hearing about her two grandchildren. “With my hearing I also lost my self-confidence and became very timid. I felt very isolated. I was more or less a recluse,” she said. “I had a few friends, but did not hear much news of the family as they do not have the time to write letters and my husband forgot to relay things to me. It is brilliant being able to speak to my family and catch up on what has been happening in their lives.”

“We have lost our hearing not our sight!”

Doreen first met her future husband Paul when she was 14 and they courted at roller skating sessions. Doreen and Paul, a retired factory worker were married in 1956.

Doreen says her Screenphone, which allows her to talk to callers and read their responses on the screen via an operator, is a “vital life-line”.

“It is brilliant being able to speak to my family and catch up on what has been happening in their lives.”

Doreen was “terrified” of the Screenphone system to begin with, but she has embraced the technology and says nothing will hold her back. “Paul does not like phoning people and I can do all our important phone calls now. I am not afraid to ring up and complain about things.”

I am constantly being told by hard of hearing friends about the man who never called. A telephone call that tells them of the missed visitor who rang the doorbell and failing to get an answer assumed they were out.

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An interview with... Adam Isenberg, director

Lizzie Ward

Adam Isenberg is the director of A Life Without Words, a visually rich and emotionally powerful film about two deaf adults, Dulce Maria and Francisco, who have spent their lives without language – speech, text or sign.

The film follows the story of what happens when they are taught to sign by a sign language teacher, Tomasa. Nicaraguan Sign Language is a relatively new development. Many deaf children and adults have been unable to access language.

Adam's journey as a film director began a few years ago, "I didn't study film in school, but came about it a bit late. For the past few years I've been directing and hosting a travel documentary program for Turkish state television. A Life Without Words is my first film. I have a degree in linguistics, so I'm trained to deconstruct language. In a way, I apply these skills to the grammar of cinema.

Whilst studying linguistics, Adam heard about the story of the development of Nicaraguan Sign Language, "after the Sandinista revolution, Deaf Nicaraguans were brought together for the first time in large numbers to be taught Spanish through lip-reading. That didn't work. Instead, something wonderful happened–within a few years a new and unique sign language emerged, as rich as any other language."

Adam discovered the NGO in the film – Nicaraguan Sign Language Projects Inc – through research online and he was impressed when he saw their work first hand. "I first thought of making a documentary about the birth of this language, but after researching it more and travelling around Nicaragua meeting members of the Deaf community there, I came across the family in the film and was very touched by Dulce Maria and Francisco."

"We seemed to exist in different dimensions, yet we shared time and space together, and as human beings we had so much in common."

Despite some years studying language in academia, I felt a sudden insight into just what language was when I met these two, who lived without it. But I should say that finding language-less deaf adults is, sadly, not as hard as one might think. Since returning to Turkey last year I have happened across two similar cases here, and heard about others. There are deaf children and adults without language in rural areas of less developed countries all over the world – locked out of fundamental knowledge, frustrated, and particularly vulnerable to abuse. It is an injustice that deserves our attention."

Watching the film made me aware of how much language gives us – expression, identity, a way to connect with others. However, the film also expressed how human beings can find ways to connect that don't necessarily need language. Body language is also an important part of human communication. The film transports you into another way of life – one which is both painfully difficult but also lifts the heart.

When asked what the most rewarding aspects of making the film were, Adam answered, “Knowing Dulce Maria and Francisco, and feeling by the end that we are friends. Every day with them was special. There is so much I could never share with them, and so much they could never share with me, but passing time together, everyday, we came to know each other.

“We seemed to exist in different dimensions, yet we shared time and space together, and as human beings we had so much in common. I hope that the film viewers can feel a bit of what it was to be with them. It changed me in ways I still feel.”

Adam's future projects are also looking inspiring, "I keep busy with the travel documentary for Turkish television, and meanwhile I'm working on a documentary about being Deaf in prison.

“A friend of a friend here in Turkey is serving a ten-year sentence for robbery and is the only Deaf prisoner where he is being held. His situation is quite hard as no one else at prison knows Turkish Sign Language.”

To find out more about A Life Without Words, please visit, www.alifewithoutwords.com

Deafblind artist pays tribute to Lord Ashley

Nicola Conway, 29, a deafblind artist from Harrow, North London, presented her handmade award to Lord Ashley’s daughter, Jane Ashley, as part of the deafblind charity Sense’s tribute to the late Lord of Stoke

The award ceremony to mark International Deafblind Awareness Week (25 June – 2 July) was at Sense’s Anne Wood Centre in North London, where Nicola made the ceramic art award.

Lord Ashley became deaf not long after he was elected as an MP in the 1960s, and he continued to tirelessly campaign on important social issues, and in particular for deafblind people, throughout his life and right up until his death in April this year.

On accepting her father’s award, Jane Ashley, said, "I am honoured to accept this beautiful bowl made by Nicola, and the family will treasure this award. Deafblindness is a disability that my father cared about deeply. As someone who is totally deaf himself for 25 years, he had a special empathy with those who are deafblind and could appreciate the enormous challenges they face.

“My father had the highest admiration for Sense and wanted to do all he could to help. He greatly respected the way the organisation assists deafblind people and their families through its highly effective campaigning at national level and for the tremendous support it provides people across the country.”

Gillian Morby, Sense CEO, said, “Lord Ashley was a champion for the rights of deafblind people, and this award is our way of ensuring his legacy is not forgotten at Sense.

His role was instrumental in securing the Deafblind Guidance, which was issued by the Department of Health in 2001 and gives people like Nicola the right to a deafblind specific social care assessment, which helps ensure they receive the support they need to live independent and fulfilled lives. I was delighted to meet his daughter, Jane, to let her know just how much her father’s tireless efforts have meant to the people Sense supports.”

Nicola has both sight and hearing loss, as well as some physical and learning disabilities. She has been going to Sense’s Anne Wood Centre in High Barnet for 11 years where she creates her artwork and also enjoys baking, Yoga, swimming and horse riding.

Her mum, Linda Conway, said, “I am so proud of Nicola because she has grown up into a really lovely and sociable young lady. Since going to Sense’s Anne Wood Centre her confidence has grown enormously and it’s been a real life saver for our family.

“I know she had so much fun making Lord Ashley’s award, and I am so pleased that she got to personally give it to his daughter.”

"Despite studying language in academia, I felt a sudden insight into just what language was when I met these two, who lived without it,” said film maker Adam Isenberg

Deaf Theatre Club launched in Scotland

Glasgow’s Solar Bear theatre company has set up a Deaf Theatre Club, aimed at increasing attendance and awareness of theatre for members of the deaf community around Scotland

Deaf Theatre Club will work with the deaf community to find out what they want when they visit the theatre. It goes beyond just providing signed performances, to making the whole experience of going to the theatre accessible and enjoyable.

Trial weekend events are to be held in seven theatres, with the company training theatre staff in basic British Sign Language and deaf awareness beforehand. The Deaf Theatre Club will be launched at a signed performance of the NTS’s Macbeth at the Glasgow Tramway, with further events in Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth, Edinburgh, Inverness and Kirkcaldy.

Gill Garrity, Solar Bear’s general manager, said, “There is a barrier for deaf audiences coming to mainstream theatre. Deaf Theatre Club is about breaking down the barriers in many ways.”

“What came directly from the deaf community, through our trials with the NTS, is that they are fed up with only being able to see theatre on a Tuesday night or a Wednesday afternoon. “They want to be able to come out with friends and family on the weekend. So we worked with all the venues we picked around the country that they have this performance on a weekend.”

Deaf Theatre Club comprises of signed evenings, performances for adults and for children, drama workshops for 7 – 12 year olds, run in association with the National Deaf Children’s Society. Solar Bear will also train front-of-house staff theatre staff in basic British Sign Language and deaf awareness.

Deaf Theatre Club aims to break down some of the negative preconceptions of...
An interview with... Kaite O’Reilly: playwright, dramaturg, theatre maker

Lizzie Ward

HT: Tell us a bit about your work and what inspired you to write In Water I’m Weightless.

KO’R: I’m a playwright, dramaturg, and theatre maker who works both in the so-called ‘mainstream’ culture and Disability arts and culture and Deaf arts. I’ve written extensively for radio as well as live performance, and tour internationally with The Llanarth Group, an independent performance company – I’m the resident dramaturg.

The play is my second production with National Theatre Wales. It brings together some of my long-term collaborators and old comrades – Mat Fraser, Mandy Colleran, David Tool, Sara Beer – and is inspired by the lives, experiences, imagination, and humour of Deaf and disabled people. It’s an Unlimited Commission, inspired by my ambition to put Deaf and disabled experience, what I call crip culture, and disability cool centre-stage on a national platform, performed by some of the best Deaf and disabled performers in the UK.

HT: What is In Water I’m Weightless about?

KO’R: It’s not a naturalistic drama with a linear chronology, telling the story of one individual. It’s an ensemble piece - a montage of stories and experiences in signed and spoken languages, a fusion of text, dance, movement, sign performance, video and media projections. We have a stellar cast and a world class creative team: John McGrath, artistic director of National Theatre Wales, will direct, internationally respected Nigel Charnock will choreograph, and renowned New York-based media artist/designer Paul Clay will design.

HT: How has it felt to create something for the Cultural Olympiad?

KO’R: This Unlimited Commission has been a great experience. As lead artist I have been allowed to get on with the work and run the whole developmental process myself. I’ve felt trusted and respected. I’m delighted that with the Cultural Olympiad so many Deaf and disabled artists are being given this opportunity to make work as part of such a high profile event.

HT: How do you hope the performance challenges perceptions of d/Deaf people and people with disabilities?

KO’R: I hope the work will challenge and subvert stereotypes and misinformation – we’re not tragic but brave – we’re not ‘inspirational’ individuals to be patronized and put on pedestals – we’re not malingerers needing charity rather than our civil rights – we’re talented, sexy, witty, ordinary individuals just like everyone else.

We have full lives and blossoming careers and all the paradoxical complexities of other human beings, regardless of age, gender, sexual preference, cultural inheritance, and embodiment – whether typical or atypical.

I hope the work challenges superficial notions of normacy and limited definitions of what it is to be human. But that’s my personal perspective. The work is not a political manifesto – it would be disrespectful to the actors to lump them under one political banner – it’s about diversity and difference and validity and the opposite of hegemony.

HT: Where do you hope to go next?

KO’R: Generally, I hope to continue to grow and develop, take risks, learn new skills, face new challenges and opportunities – that’s where the joy lies.

Once In Water appears at the Southbank Centre, I’m off to Berlin and Singapore for three months (I’m a Fellow of the International research centre ‘Interweaving Performance Cultures’, part of Freie University, where I’m reflecting on my work between Deaf and hearing cultures and ‘mainstream’ and disability culture).

I’m completing my first novel and working on several commissions with theatre companies in the UK and beyond. Apart from the potential tour to Iran, Jordan, and Japan with the Llanarth Group in 2013/4, as a playwright I have a production in Copenhagen in Spring 2013 of LeanerFasterStronger, my cultural Olympiad project for Cho/Shffield theatres.

For more information, visit www.kaiteoreilly.com and www.kaiteoreilly.wordpress.com

Midlands based all-deaf dance group now recruiting

Def Motion are the UK’s only actively touring deaf dance group, most noted for their performances at Deafest, Wolverhampton; Signcircle, Preston; and as Signmark’s supporting act at HMV Forum, London.

The group requires committed, enthusiastic dancers for forthcoming shows that will be held across the UK.

Skills in street, jazz and contemporary forms of dance are highly desirable although training will be offered to those who do not have any formal dance experience.

The group have been together since March 2011 and rehearse in Walsall & Wolverhampton. They specialise in re-creating Michael Jackson classics, infusing street and jazz styles and have recently begun exploring the dance genres of tap and 1950’s swing. Def Motion are living proof that deafness creates no barriers when it comes to a love for dance.

To express your interest, contact the group’s director, Billy Read, on defmotion@hotmail.co.uk or @DefMotion on Twitter. For further information on Def Motion and their work, check out www.facebook.com/defmotion or see their Twitter page @DefMotion.

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Currently in development with the Police, Fire and Ambulance services, U Sign: Emergency Services aims to help professionals communicate with Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Foreign Language speakers at times when an interpreter may not be available.

Launching Autumn 2012. Log onto our website, or follow us on Twitter for more details!
Colours ‘sing’ to deaf artist

A deaf artist who has exhibited of her work displayed all over the world says she owes her life to the work of a hearing dog

Samuel Evans

After discovering Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, almost 12 years ago, Emily Peters of Wrexham, North Wales, has now become dependent on Pabi, her three-year-old Italian Spinone curly coated retriever, who has been by her side for over 18 months.

“Before Pabi, I had my previous dog, Cassy, for 10 years. She was magnificent. I was profoundly deaf for 15 years before I heard of Hearing Dogs and once I was aware of the charity I applied for help.”

“Pabi is my whole life. I live in silence where communication with my fellow humans is so difficult it is often impossible. Without a hearing dog by my side, I barely exist. I find that words are hopelessly inadequate at expressing the full feeling a Hearing Dog has on the life of a profoundly deaf person.”

“Pabi tells me the sounds of the doorbell, cooker timer, alarm clock, smoke alarm and fire alarm. She will come and fetch me from anywhere in the house – I can do so and also learn how to respond to the microwave ping and the kettle clicking off,” said Emily.

“Without realising it, I have become totally dependent on a Hearing Dog for every aspect of my life.”

Before losing her hearing Emily found love in music, she said, “The loss of my precious music was huge but gradually it was colour that started to sing a silent song to me.”

I named my exhibition at Erdigg Hall, Wrexham in 2009 Sing a Song of Colour to reflect the sounds I no longer hear.”

“As myriad sounds disappeared from my life, I gradually began to feel that the colours around me were beginning to sing a joyful visual song of their own,” explained Emily who achieved a BA Honours in Art and Design from the Wrexham School of Art.

“Over the years colour became increasingly important, during which time I became aware that the purer the colour, the more vibrant the visual song would be. By this point, colours became progressively more important.”

“I discovered the excitement of using my imagination, whilst also developing abstract design elements. With my source material in place - potential designs are sketched within small squares. It is at this point that these miniature motifs are subjected to my imagination and then formed into a practicable whole. Most of the small designs within the squares might be rejected until designs emerge that, for me, really work.”

“Once the designing is complete the colours in mixed media emerge as the chosen designs and are further enlarged, manipulated and refined. The designs are now the vehicle upon which the colours are enabled to visually sing.”

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People has been providing assistance dogs to deaf adults, children and families for 30 years and in this time has created over 1,600 lifesaving partnerships, despite receiving no government funding, relying solely upon public and company donations.

Deaf Writers and Book Group

For many people, the pleasure of discussing books and meeting up with like-minded bibliophiles is something they take for granted

Lizzie Ward

Across the UK, people meet in each other’s houses, at cafes and literary haunts to discuss off each other, as well as working on anything that needs working on, such as dialogue, showing versus telling and so on.

The aim is to foster an open and inclusive atmosphere where everyone gets a chance to share their ideas. The Writers’ group meets separately, usually a few hours before the book group meeting on the same day.

The first meeting we had was the set up meeting in April, where we discussed what we wanted from the group. What I found interesting was that everyone wanted to try reading books written with deaf characters or written by a deaf author, at least as a starting point. There are not many books with deaf characters, so it is as good a place to start as any. It also gives us a lot to discuss – bringing our different experiences to the table and thinking about how the ideas and situations in the book apply to us, or may be stereotypical.

I’ve had somebody say to me that they hope we’re not ‘discriminating’ against hearing authors – when really it might be considered the other way around, with the lack of solid, sensitively written and empowering deaf characters in fiction. Ninety five percent of the time, what I read, or what we read, is fiction written about hearing protagonists – most of my favourite books have hearing characters. The book group, at the present time, is drawn towards exploring what there is to offer in the realms of deaf fiction.

The book group is also a brilliant chance to explore the literary cafes and bookshops of London – our second meeting was at the legendary Foyle’s Bookshop, where we spent a few hours discussing Isles of View by C.F. Brunner, eating cake and drinking fruit juice. This has been the only time we have had some book buying involved too. Definitely a good way to spend a Sunday afternoon...

For more information, reviews and writing inspiration, head to www.deafwritersandbookgroup.wordpress.com

Recently, I have been dabbling in the world of online dating, with little success. Sure there’s been some nice dinners (we’ve split the bill) and some nice guys, but no one I’ve wanted to see again.

My online dating profile doesn’t mention my deafness, and I think the main reason why I left it off is that while my deafness is a massive part of who I am, it’s not the only part and I don’t want that to be the first thing someone learns about me – in the dating world or otherwise.

That said, I usually have to tell my dates I’m deaf pretty early on, mostly due to the fact that in London – unless you meet in a library – it’s going to be noisy.

Last week, however, I went on a coffee date with a guy. He seemed nice enough on email and I was actually quite excited to meet up with him. In theory, he spoke very fast – I struggled to hear him. But for some unknown reason, I didn’t tell him I was deaf. Randomly, however, the only thing I did manage to hear was that he had ironed bowel syndrome, which to me seemed a bit of a first-date overshare.

The result? An absolute car crash of a date. There I was providing neutral expressions or answers to everything we conversed about, but actually thinking ‘Why did you think I’d want to know about your IBS?, while he must have been wondering, ‘Why has this girl, who seemed so eloquent on email, become a mute grinning weirdo?’

But would I change how yesterday went? No, actually. You see, with online dating, so much about who you are is revealed before the person has even met you. They already know what you like and what you don’t. They have a preconceived idea of your personality and appearance, and that first meeting seems to be a test of whether you meet those expectations.

From experience, I find that if you then throw in a deafness curve ball, it seems to knock them out of the comfort zone of the kind of dates they thought they were going to have.

So what I realised as I walked away yesterday was that it’s not how I act that’s got to change or whether I reveal my deafness – it’s how I date. No more online dating for me! No more preconceived idea of your personality and appearance, and that first meeting seems to be a test of whether you meet those expectations.

The ‘Writers’ part of the group is also important. The haphazard and informal atmospheres and communication within writing meet ups can be inaccessible to deaf people. This part of the group is support each other as deaf writers and to bounce ideas off each other, as well as working on anything that needs working on, such as dialogue, showing versus telling and so on.

The book group, at the present time, is drawn towards exploring what there is to offer in the realms of deaf fiction.

A renovation project at Doncaster Deaf Trust has received a £5,000 boost from Westfield Health

The Greenhouse Project at the Deaf Trust is lovingly restoring an old, unusable greenhouse in the gardens at the trust, which will be used by students and staff.

Students from Doncaster College for the Deaf have been involved in renovating the greenhouse to its former glory including making the cold frames with assistance from the college’s joiner’s department.

Bobbie Roberts, Chair of Trustees at Doncaster Deaf Trust, said, “Having won a prestigious Silver-Gilt Urban Space award at the Chelsea Flower Show last year we were inspired to look at the benefits of gardening as an activity for our students.

“We are incredibly grateful to Westfield Health for their donation to this project. They have been a long-standing supporter of the trust and we are thrilled that they have supported us yet again.”

“We feel it is an important lesson for our students to renovate rather than re-create wherever possible, with the woodwork on one third of the greenhouse being re-used and painted. In addition, all the brickwork has been re-pointed by a member of staff in their own time.

“As a charitable trust, Doncaster Deaf Trust provides vocational education for some 150 hearing impaired students and has had a presence in Doncaster since 1829.

“Westfield Health Chairman Graham Moore commented, “The Deaf Trust does a fantastic job in educating and working with the deaf community across the region and beyond, and we are delighted to be able to support them with their greenhouse project.

“I hope that the students are enjoying the renovation work, it is no longer waiting for the trust when the project is completed. I am sure it will be used for many years to come.”

www.deafinitelygirly.com
Charity profile
Ménière’s Society

As the charity celebrates 25 years as a registered charity, Hearing Times finds out more about the work they do.

The Ménière’s Society is run by three members of staff from a small office nestled in the Surrey Hills, and is the only UK charity solely dedicated to supporting people with dizziness and imbalance caused by vestibular (inner ear) disorders.

Ménière’s disease is a long term progressive condition affecting the balance and hearing parts of the inner ear. Symptoms are acute attacks of vertigo (severe dizziness), fluctuating tinnitus, increased deafness, and a feeling of pressure in the ear. Other vestibular disorders, such as labyrinthitis and BPPV have similar debilitating symptoms of dizziness for several days.

The Ménière’s Society was founded in 1984 and became a registered charity in 1987. From humble beginnings it has grown to become a vital, national information and support service to those who have been recently diagnosed or are struggling to live with the debilitating symptoms of vestibular disorders which can cause a devastating effect on family and work life.

The Ménière’s Society is fast becoming an international frontrunner in the vestibular field as they have recently cemented their longstanding relationship with Menière’s Australia. Working together they hope to collaborate information to help those affected by Ménière’s disease and related disorders across the globe. As it stands the Ménière’s Society has members spanning across the UK with a growing membership in Europe, America and the Middle East.

There is a lack of research in this area which is why we are funding projects into the treatment of vestibular disorders,” said Humphrey Bowen, Trustee of the Ménière’s Society. To date the Society has funded over £350,000 in research with further projects in the pipeline.

In the last quarter of a century the Ménière’s Society has supported over 20,000 people via their confidential helpline. However with over 40% of people over the age of 70 also experiencing dizziness and imbalance more needs to be done to reach those who are often left isolated and from the vertigo and hearing loss.

Director, Natasha Harrington-Benton says, “This is a really exciting year for us, not only is it our 25 year anniversary but we are launching our new website, along with Facebook and Twitter, and have big plans for awareness week which will be held 8-12 October.” The Society aims to further raise awareness during the week among both the general public and GPs to ensure that those suffering from vestibular disorders get the support needed.

For more information call the Ménière’s Society on 0845 120 2975 or email info@menieres.org.uk

Parents urged to protect children’s hearing

As part of the recent Child Safety Week, Action on Hearing Loss called on parents to protect their children’s hearing by making sure they wear ear defenders when they are exposed to loud noise.

Exposure to loud noise above 85 decibels over time can cause permanent hearing damage. Lightweight ear defenders can protect children’s hearing and keep loud noises out without shutting out other ambient noises.

When children, whose hearing is particularly sensitive, are listening to loud music at festivals or concerts they should wear ear defenders. It is important that children protect their hearing from long term damage, with the risk of hearing damage increasing with volume and with the length of time spent in the noisy environment.

Mark Catling, Action on Hearing Loss Head of Business and Relationship Development, said, “Anyone who sees a child covering their ears at noisy events like concerts and firework displays will recognise that young ears are sensitive to loud noises, ear defenders are a simple way to protect your child’s hearing for the future.”

The hearing loss charity has funky coloured ear defenders to protect them from long term damage and tinnitus. They are important to wear when the noise is up to the age of seven and are available in stylish red, blue, pink or green.

Available from £11.22, visit www.hearingloss.org.uk/shop or call 01733 361199 for more information.

Research exposes gaps in sex education

Deaf charity reveals sex education is inaccessible to deaf students and barriers prevent access to sexual health services.

Deafax has launched a campaign to call on schools, teachers and medical service providers to supply adequate sex education and sexual health care for deaf people.

Research into deafness and sexual health is extremely rare and almost completely overlooked. Deafax are pioneers in this area, carrying out in-depth research within the deaf community and uncovering shocking results. As part of the deaf E.A.R.S: Education and Advice on Relationships and Sex campaign Deafax has conducted new research into deafness and sexual health using a sample survey of mild to profoundly deaf people, 43.3% of which were British Sign Language users.

Most of the sample received sex education at school, but 65.2% said that the information they received was not accessible to them as deaf students. 42.1% could not understand their teachers and 52.6% said the information given was too limited. Others cited language barriers and a neglect of their personal communication needs for their lack of sex education at school.

The survey also revealed that the majority of deaf people learned about sexual health through the media, or else falling back on the deaf community for clarification. Others learned from direct sexual experience; risking pregnancy and STIs. In-depth interviews with deaf mothers exposed the dangers that can arise by failing to provide equal access to sexual health services.

One deaf woman told Deafax, “I never understood the sexual education classes I had at school and there weren’t many of them either. They were taught by a teacher who was very embarrassed and it was embarrassing for us. I struggled to understand any of it and switched off.”

When she later fell pregnant she was unsupported and uniformed; I never went to antenatal classes, because I wouldn’t be able to follow what was going on there. No-one used sign language and I couldn’t read about having a baby, the leaflets were complicated and I didn’t understand them.”

A deaf teenage mum, who fell pregnant without any prior knowledge of sexual health, highlighted the necessity of deaf awareness midwives during labour. “It was awful that when the birth came my (deaf aware) midwife couldn’t be there. I had someone else who I didn’t understand, and no-one there could understand me. They gave me a caesarean and I was frightened. I still don’t know why I had a caesarean, but I was angry, I wanted a natural birth.”

The campaign has received messages of support from Dr Radha Modgil, presenter of Channel 4’s The Sex Education Show and resident doctor on Channel 5’s Gaby Live, The National Deaf Children’s Society and many of the deaf community via Facebook and Twitter.

In order to make sex education and sexual health services accessible, Deafax has created a Sexual Health package for teachers of deaf students to be able to deliver deaf-friendly, factual and up-to-date lessons on STIs and Safe Sex. Deafax also deliver training to healthcare professionals and midwives to ensure they are able to provide access to deaf clients.

Success for student learning event

Deaf Education Advocacy Fellowship was a huge success for the D/deaf Learner Event at the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University

Deaf Education Advocacy Fellowship (D.E.A.F) is a Community Interest Company which seeks to benefit the Deaf community by raising awareness of D/deaf people’s needs for access to the community.

This is done through the delivery of a number of services which include: Education, Employment, Advocacy, Deaf Black Minority Ethnic (BME), Deaf Awareness and British Sign Language training.

We are proud of working nationally and received 15 awards and recognitions including an invite to the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, and we are a quality assurance company.

More than 60 students from schools and colleges across the North West came to the University for a day of D/deaf learners. D/deaf is a term used in higher education to describe students who are deaf and use sign language, or who are deaf or hard of hearing, but have English as their first language and may lip-read or use hearing aids.
Debut for new resources for Deaf people in the media industry

A new online learning tool developed by University of Wolverhampton experts which is aimed at Deaf people working in the media industry has been debuted at a leading arts festival

SignMedia is a two-year project to enhance the career prospects of Deaf people working in the media in Europe by providing interactive exercises in written English taught through the sign language of their country.

The full project value will be nearly half a million Euros and is supported by the Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. The learning tool was showcased for the first time at Deafest at the Light House Media Centre in Wolverhampton.

Deafest is the UK’s leading Deaf film and arts festival, and experts behind SignMedia provided workshops enabling sign language users to try the tool. Representatives from the three countries involved in the project also gave a presentation.

The project is led by the University’s Institute for Media Arts with experts from the School of Law, Social Science and Communications’ Deaf Studies Department. Wolverhampton’s partners in the programme are Klagenfurt University, Austria, University of Turin, Italy and Mutt & Jeff Pictures Ltd, UK.

Director of the Institute of Media Arts, Samantha Hope, said, “We’re really pleased with how SignMedia was received at Deafest. We ran presentations and workshops and the response to the online learning tool was fantastic.”

“Feedback indicates that this innovative resource will be a really beneficial tool for Deaf people working in the media industry,” added Steve Powell, Chief Executive at Wolverhampton’s partners in the programme,

For further information visit www.signmedia.org.uk

Greek specialist visits tinnitus team to learn more

A Doncaster health service for people who suffer from a common hearing problem has been visited by a Greek specialist interested in providing similar care to patients over there

The tinnitus service provided by Doncaster & Bassecotian Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is renowned for the holistic way it treats people suffering from the condition – a combined approach including cognitive behavioural therapy which has been shown to have the best clinical outcomes, according to a Dutch study published recently in The Lancet.

Tinnitus is thought to affect around one in eight of the UK’s adult. The common experience can include persistent whistling, humming or whooshing sounds in the ears or head that last for more than five minutes. Some people can find this distressing, which may lead to sleep deprivation, anxiety or other conditions that can then further exacerbate the symptoms of tinnitus, creating a vicious circle.

The Doncaster service, which is provided at Chequer Road Clinic, aims to give patients who have been referred by their GP more power and control over their tinnitus. Patients attend a three-hour group education session where they learn more about the condition, how the ear works, ways of coping with tinnitus, and options for further care.

Tinnitus team one-to-one appointments with the tinnitus team, as required.

Hearing Therapist Sandy Grimes, who leads the tinnitus team at Doncaster & Bassecotian Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said, “The British Tinnitus Association contacted us to ask if we could provide Nicholas with further information, as he was interested in setting up a similar service in Greece. We were very happy to assist by welcoming him here to learn more and observe the service in action, with patients’ consent.”

Nicholas Vrailas, Executive Director of Greek Hearing Centers, said he was finding the visit to Doncaster extremely informative and helpful. “It is a very interesting approach,” he said, “and I am keen to see how we can translate it to the Greek culture and system, where there isn’t a national health service providing this kind of care.”

SignHealth appoints new Chair of Trustees

Richard Dunford from Stepney Green, London has recently been elected as the first Deaf Chair of Trustees for Beaconsfield-based charity SignHealth

In his new role, which starts this month (June, 2012), Richard will be responsible for leading the Board of Trustees at the national charity for Deaf people.

Steve Powell, Chief Executive at SignHealth, said “Richard has been a Trustee for SignHealth for the past 14 years, so we are thrilled he will now run the Board.

He will be working with the senior management team on a number of new and exciting initiatives to ensure Deaf people receive equal access and improved healthcare in the new National Health Service (NHS).”

Richard, who has been severely Deaf since he was five-years-old, worked as a senior lawyer in the public sector for more than 20 years, and now spends his time concentrating on business, charitable and voluntary interests.

He said, “I am deeply honoured to have been asked by the Board to become the first Deaf Chair for SignHealth. Having been on the Board for 14 years, I have built up a deep understanding of what the charity is about.

“I am passionately committed to the aims of SignHealth and the work it is doing to improve the lives of Deaf people and their mental and physical well-being.

“The charity has recently adopted a challenging new set of strategic objectives for the next five years.

In his spare time, Richard enjoys helping out at his nearby city farm. He also volunteers at the Royal Association for Deaf People’s Law Centre one a week.

SignHealth is the only UK charity focused on improving the mental and physical health of Deaf people and campaigning for improved access and communication within the healthcare setting. The charity provides a range of services for Deaf people, including supported living, advocacy, outreach, psychological therapy and health promotion, all within a British Sign Language (BSL) supported environment.

For more information visit www.signhealth.org.uk

Malcolm Bruce knighthood

Veteran Liberal Democrat Malcolm Bruce is being knighted for public and political services. The MP for Gordon, in the north east of Scotland, is the party’s Scottish president and is involved with charities for deaf people.

Mr Bruce, whose daughter Caroline was born profoundly deaf, said, “I’d like to think the knighthood is not just for political longevity but for the Liberal Democrats.

“I got into that because of my daughter and hopefully it’s of benefit to them. I’ve been an MP here since 1983, so I do owe a lot of this to the constituency.”

Mr Bruce, Lib Dem member for Gordon, is vice president of the National Deaf Children’s Society and chair of the Deafness All Party Group in Parliament.

www.deafax.org
**SUCCESS FOR SARAH**

As the deadline for entries for the 2012 Audiologist of the Year competition looms, Rayovac continues its series looking at some of the country’s top hearing professionals and their own personal stories.

Sarah Rayner, who was nominated by her patients last year, and was one of a select group of nominees highly commended by the judging panel, talks to Hearing Times about her career in audiology.

**Q: Where do you work?**
I work in the Blackpool branch of Boots three times a week and I spend one day at the Boots stores in St Annes-on-Sea and Cleveleys respectively.

**Q: Why did you decide to train as an audiologist?**
I was working in the opticians department at Boots in Preston as a dispensing optician with a view to becoming a contact lens optician. The hearing care department opened and I began to sit in and observe appointments, which I found really interesting. In 2011 Boots were taking on trainee audiologists, I applied and I got a place.

**Q: What does your average working day entail?**
An average day can range from performing hearing health checks for customers who have never had a hearing test before, six monthly hearing care health checks, full hearing assessments or two year recall hearing assessments. As I work on my own I also do all my own admin.

**Q: What’s the best part of your job?**
The best part of my job would have to be the knowledge that I’ve made a difference to someone’s life. There are individuals who have struggled with their hearing all their lives and as you spend more time with them you can gradually help them overcome these problems and it’s amazing when you begin to see their confidence increase. Hearing aids can make such a big difference, not just for the individual, but for the whole family. Generally, I just enjoy spending time with the customers. As they return every six months you really get to know them. You find out about their everyday lives, what they’ve been doing, where they are going on holiday. That’s the nicest aspect of the job.

**Q: Is there ever a downside to your job?**
No, I can’t think of any downsides.

**Q: Moving on to the Audiologist of the Year Award, you were nominated in the 2011 competition and the judging panel commended you for your excellence and dedication. Do you know who nominated you?**
Yes, a lady in her mid forties, who, when I met her, already suffered with hearing loss in one ear. After I took over the store she experienced a sudden change to her hearing. She had a severe decrease in her hearing levels and needed aids in both ears. She was on medication for the pain and experienced constant fluctuations. But through an intensive process, where I would see her every week, she eventually started to improve.

**Q: What was it like to be nominated? And were you surprised on hearing about your nomination?**
Yes, it’s a thrilling feeling. I was very surprised. I had the forms for the competition on my desk but I didn’t anticipate being nominated. The lady who nominated me didn’t tell me beforehand. I found out when our head of sales informed me that I had been commended. I’ve since seen the letter that the lady wrote and I was touched that a customer had taken the time to nominate me for the award.

**Q: Can I ask what the impact has been like for you since the nomination? And what do your colleagues think?**
Well, I get asked about it all the time. I have my certificate up on display and customers often comment on it. It’s an amazing accolade to have. I have more confidence in myself now personally and I think this confidence has a knock-on effect on customers. They become more confident in your ability as a professional. My colleagues are proud of my achievement. They feel proud too, as it’s a reflection on the whole department.

**Q: What do you think of the awards in general?**
I think they are a huge thing. It’s amazing to have clients recommending you and for your colleagues to even comment on it. It’s an amazing accolade to have. I have more confidence in myself now personally and I think this confidence has a knock-on effect on customers. They become more confident in your ability as a professional. My colleagues are proud of my achievement. They feel proud too, as it’s a reflection on the whole department.

**How to enter Audiologist of the Year?**
Nominations for the 2012 Rayovac Audiologist of the Year award are open until July 13. To vote for your audiologist visit www.audiologistoftheyear.eu or ask your audiologist for more information.

You can follow Rayovac on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HearingWithRayovac or on Twitter @HearwithRayovac

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**Contact:**
Sarah Rayner
Head of Audiology
Boots Opticians
Boots Stores in St Annes-on-Sea and Cleveleys respectively.

**Web:**
www.conversorproducts.com

**Phone:**
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**Email:**
lisad@conversorproducts.com

**Web:**
www.hearbasedirect.com

**Phone:**
Tel: 01293 423700

**Email:**
info@hearingtimes.co.uk

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The Peepol Centre, Orchardson Avenue, Leicester LE4 6DP

**Web:**
www.adcommunications.org.uk

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Email: info@iac.co.uk

**Web:**
www.industrialacoustics.com

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Theatre Guide

July

Wed 4 7:30pm Starlight Express
Edinburgh Playhouse, Edinburgh

Wed 7 7:30pm The Real Thing
Northcott Theatre, Exeter

Wed 9 7:30pm The Comedy of Errors (RSC 2012)
The Roundhouse, London

Wed 16 7:30pm Antigone
National Theatre (Olivier), London

Thu 5 2:30pm Billy Elliot - The Musical
Victoria Palace Theatre, London

Fri 6 7:30pm Henry V
Cambridge Arts Centre

Fri 13 7:30pm The Prophet
Bradford Theatres, Bradford

Fri 20 7:30pm A Doll’s House
Theatre Royal Norwich

Sat 21 1:15pm The Comedy of Errors
RSC, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

Sat 28 2:30pm Les Misérables
Theatre Royal Haymarket, London

Sun 19 1:00pm Henry V
Shakespeare’s Globe, London

Wed 22 7:30pm Timon of Athens
National Theatre (Olivier), London

Thu 23 2:30pm Oliver!
Theatre Royal Plymouth

Fri 24 7:30pm Dandy Dick
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

Sat 25 2:15pm Heartbreak House
Chichester Festival Theatre, Chichester

Sat 28 7:30pm Billy Elliot - The Musical
Victoria Palace Theatre, London

Aug

Wed 1 7:30pm The Phantom of the Opera
Her Majesty’s Theatre, London

Sat 4 2:15pm The Last of the Haussmans
National Theatre London

Sat 11 2:30pm Dreamboats & Petticoats
Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury

Sat 18 2:15pm A Midsummer Night’s Dream
Open Air Theatre, London

Sudoku

Medium

Hard
Events Guide

July

BSL interpreted performance of Inua Ellem's Knight Watch
Wednesday 6
At Tara Arts
In a world where tower blocks are stone mountains and city walls are urban tapestries retelling epic fights, Michael keeps away from the warring tribes until a passer-by helps him out of a tight situation. Instantly, he is pulled into the culture he has tried to escape. The city spirals out of control as battle lines are drawn and redrawn. In the quest for balance, loyalty, faith and friendships are tested, but will Michael succeed in ending the war?

Martin Roberts is a Community Interpreter with the Royal Association for Deaf People whose performance credits include work with the BAC, South Bank centre and Young Vic theatres.

For tickets and information visit www.tararts.ticketsolve.com/shows/126523505/events

SIGNific at the Science Museum

The first Saturday of every month
The Science Museum, London

Deaf-led events with voice-over interpreters, suitable for deaf and hearing family audiences.

They also have adults-only deaf-led gallery tours during our Lates events.

15.30- icy Cool Adventure Storytelling: a story all about the journey of a snow flake
For ages 7 and under Launchpad briefing 13.30- Icy Cool Adventure Storytelling: a story all about the journey of a snow flake
For ages 5 and over Lecture Theatre, Ground floor.

If you would like more information email charlotte.robinson@sciencemuseum.org.uk or visit www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

DefaSmart Fundraising Ball
Saturday 7
Telford International Centre, St Quentin Gate Telford Shropshire TF3 4JH
Black tie gala dinner with an award winning menu, dancing, guest speakers, entertainment, raffle (with a first prize of a spa weekend for two), celebrity item auction (Cerabira Art) and the award ceremony for the DeafSmart Photographer Of The Year 2012.

To book a room at GRAYS HOTEL and HOLIDAY INN (Telford) telephone 08444 820168 or email reservations@southwatereventgroup.com - Ref DefaSmart01712 for discounted rates.

For further information contact DeafSmart on 01939 251515 or email info@deafsmart.co.uk or visit www.deafsmart.co.uk

Free Deaf and Blind Awareness Summer School
Monday 9 to Tuesday 10, 10AM to 3PM
Room OC 28, Cyncoed Campus, Cardiff Metropolitan University, South Glamorgan CF23 6XD

Learn about the effects on People from deaf/Deafblindness and how communication between them and hearing people can be effective.

Learn about the nature of Deafness and Deafblindness and their effect on Communication with hearing, sighted people.

Gain a brief outline of deaf culture and the various aids to communication available.

Learn to perform basic finger spelling and various aids to communication available.

Gain a brief outline of deaf culture and the various aids to communication available.

Learn about the effects on People from deaf/Deafblindness and how communication between them and hearing people can be effective.

Deaf/Deafblindness and how communication between them and hearing people can be effective.

Learn the effects on People from deaf/Deafblindness and how communication between them and hearing people can be effective.

To book places telephone 02920346828 or email cbentley@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Marwell Zoo Trip
Saturday 14 at 10AM
Marwell Wildlife, Thompsons Lane, Colden Common, Winchester, Hants, SO21 1JH

North Hampshire Deaf Children’s Society have funding to pay the entrance fee for all the Deaf children and their siblings. Also, one adult can go free as a carer. You’ll just need to pay for any extra adults and children.

You must join the NHDCS to participate, membership is free and they’ll bring forms to the Marwell entrance gate at 10AM.

They may not be able to pay for your child’s entrance if you arrive later!

Please confirm if you are coming by the Friday 6 July and advise the number of adults, the names and ages of children coming and any additional needs that your children may have.

Email northhampshire@ndcsgroup.org.uk or text us on 07959 159031 if you’d like to come along.

Leonardo da Vinci: Anatomist, BSL Interpreted and Lipspeaking Guided Tour
Saturday 15 at 1-4PM
The Elizabeth Foundation, Southwick Hill Road, Cosham, Hampshire PO6 3LZ
Join the Elizabeth Foundation afternoon of family fun, including: hoopla; raffles; live music; tombolas; cakes and sweets!

Entrance is £1, children FREE

For more information contact 02392 372375 or call 023 9237 2735 or email alison.robinson@elizabeth-foundation.org

Hotpot Bingo
Saturday 21
Courthouse Restaurant, 33 King Street, Portsmouth

ELDS will host an exciting HOTPOT BINGO. Door opens at 11.00 am, hotpot feeding time at 12.30 pm and eyes down at 1.30 pm.

Price: 6 games with Hotpot £7.00, flyer on the day £5. Get your ticket before Friday 13 July

For more information or to book, email lisa.puttick@elds.org.uk or text 079 4319 6521

DefaBusiness Exhibition
Saturday 22 – Tuesday 24
Unity Kingdom

Organiser: Nazia Bidi
Contact: The Executive Centre
344-354 Gray’s Inn Road
London, WC1X 8BD
UNITED KINGDOM

Tel: +44 207 164 2140
Email: defa@unitykingdom.co.uk
Website: www.dealfaxexpo2012.com

8th Deaf History International Conference
Tuesday 24 – Sunday 29
The Weston Harbour Conference Centre, Queens Quay West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Deaf History International conference 2012 international conference
2012 Theme: Telling Deaf Lives: Biographies

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGqjM7Ann-k

August

Sonic boat at Cowes Week 2012
11 – 18

The ‘Sonic’ boat to offer you and the experience to race along with many other boats at the world famous regatta sailing.

In the news

SPORT

Manchester City launch BSL stadium tours

Pilot scheme is first of its kind for hearing impaired supporters in Premier League

Manchester City have announced the launch of a pilot series of Etihad Stadium tours to be conducted with a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter alongside the Club’s official tour guides.

The tours, designed for City’s deaf and hearing impaired supporters and their families, in conjunction with the Manchester Deaf Centre, are the first to be introduced by a Premier League club.

The tours will take place on 15 and 29 July, and will each last 60 minutes, starting at either 11am or 1pm. Hosted by BSL trained volunteers, they will include access to City’s Directors’ Box, the Executive Lounge, players’ tunnel, players’ dressing rooms, and pitchside in the team dug-outs.

Chris Holmes, Stadium Tours Manager, said: “Our aim is to make Etihad Stadium as accessible as possible to all our supporters, so we hope the pilot BSL tours will prove popular. If successful, we’d like to make them a regular occurrence.”

Jude Norlier, Operations Manager at the Manchester Deaf Centre, welcomed the launch, “It is a great to see a Premier League club like City looking at new ways to reach out to its hearing impaired fans beyond matchdays, and we are really pleased to be working with the club to make this scheme a reality.”

To book or for further information visit www.mfc.co.uk/the-club/stadium-tours

Advertisement
Coast to coast cycle challenge

Audiologist Leon Cox is just back from the adventure of a lifetime with a fresh understanding of the limits of physical endurance, having pedalled his way 2,500 miles across the US and raised £2,500 for the audiology department at Great Ormond Street Hospital – as well as raising vital awareness of their work.

Leon's employer covered the cost of Accommodation was also varied, including motel stays and nights spent under canvas. Leon had put six months' training into the project, riding near his home in Thame, Oxfordshire with regular trips of up to 50 miles. He said, "Inevitably I felt like giving up at times, but the knowledge that I was doing it for a good cause kept me going." Leon's employer covered the cost of flights and equipment for the trip, while independent record label Hospital Records offered additional support and publicity. Along the route, which followed much of the US's iconic Route 66 highway, Leon found himself dealing with challenges ranging from punctured tyres to vicious dogs, aggressive drivers and every biker's curse – saddle soreness. At one point a puncture meant he had no choice but to walk for three miles in the baking heat. Responsible for his own navigation, it was perhaps also inevitable that he would find himself getting lost occasionally. He added, "I had been cycling a couple of years but wanted to push myself and achieve something. But I didn't realise how mentally draining and challenging this ride would be. My spirits sank sometimes, and things didn't always go according to plan, as you'd expect on a trip like this, especially when I felt like giving up at times, but the knowledge that I was doing it for a good cause kept me going."

"When I got to New York, and realised it was the end of my adventure, I felt quite emotional. "I know what I did sounds a little crazy, but it was for a truly amazing charity, one that doesn't always get the recognition it deserves. Once I have recovered, I will look back and feel humbled that I managed to complete such an incredible adventure." And, as if all that wasn't enough, Leon plans to do it all again next year, across Europe …"

There's still time to sponsor Leon, visit www.justgiving.com/leoncox-lax2nyc and take part in the next Coast to Coast cycle challenge.

Learning to swim with signing cards

A new resource, aimed at swimming teachers, coaches and parents hopes to improve the way in which deaf children are taught to take to the water.

Ed Gould

Jointly launched by the National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCCS) and the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), the resource and accompanying guide have been named 'Deaf Friendly Swimming'. Hayley Jarvis, Inclusive Activities Manager at NDCCS, said that too many deaf children are currently being denied the opportunity to learn swimming. “This is a skill that could be vital in an emergency, but clubs and centres don’t understand how to meet their needs,” she said. “However, we know these barriers can be easily overcome.” The guide is designed to show teachers how, through making simple steps, deaf children can be taught more effectively. According to ASA, swimming centres and clubs will receive training and support in addition to the downloadable guide.

Carole Borough, ASA National Development Manager Disability Swimming, told Hearing Times that NDCCS approached ASA due to the number of enquiries they had been getting about the sport. “They wanted to know how we could help support teachers and coaches and then we went ahead with setting up a partnership,” she said. "The resource aims to address excessive concerns about health and safety and the lack of understanding surrounding deafness at some pools. According to Borough, the major challenge for swimming coaches comes from communicating successfully with deaf learners. "This isn't always helped by the noisy environment in a pool and also sometimes the quality of the lighting," she said. "The teacher has to consider where they are standing and make sure they are positioned correctly on the poolside so that the deaf learner can lip-read.

Research, undertaken by NDCCS, has shown that two out of five deaf children have difficulties accessing swimming pools or classes because of attitudes towards their hearing loss. NDCCS claims that this means deaf children can lack confidence in the water and are liable to fall behind other children of their age.

The resource has gone down well since it was launched in June. “Feedback, so far, from both swimming teachers and tutors of swimming teaching courses has been that the resource is excellent,” said Borough. An example of the major leisure operators has already requested copies for all their swimming teachers across all their sites.

According to Jarvis, by taking simple steps like using hand gestures or visual aids, teachers and coaches can include deaf children in swimming activities. Signing cards have been provided as part of the resource which includes simple instructions like ‘stop’, ‘dive in’ and ‘underwater’.

NDCCS told Hearing Times that other visual cues could be put in place, for example using a starting system with a strobe light. "We welcome this excellent tool which ensures that deaf and hard of hearing young people are fully supported in accessing swimming sessions,” said Borough. "We are looking forward to working with swimming centres and clubs across the UK to help deaf children enjoy the water safely," added Jarvis.