

Access Points

A newsletter from Deaf Access,
Bromley Resource Centre for the Hearing Impaired

Inside This Issue

Page

Director's Letter 2

AGM Invite 3

Life on the Ocean Waves

Deaf Awareness Course

The Future of Bromley Hospitals 4

Still Waiting to Hear

Lover's Leap 5

A Sign of the Times

DeafLink Update 6

Notices & Thanks

Access points is the newsletter of Deaf Access, The Bromley Resource Centre for the Hearing Impaired.

Available to:
'Friends of Deaf Access' -
See back page for
Centre's contact details.

Yes, It's that time of year again -

Deaf Awareness Week - 5th May - 11th May 2008



A
W
D E A F
R
W E E K
N
E
S
S

The aim of this week is to improve people's awareness and understanding of the different types of deafness, as well as highlighting the many different methods of communication.

Here, at Deaf Access on **Thursday 8 May**, Mary Coleman a child of deaf parents, is giving an insight to the World of the Deaf, commencing with a brief history of Deaf Access and the work we do here.

The morning will also include a talk on Deaf Awareness, as well as finger spelling and basic signing.

So please do come along and join in. The event will begin at 10.00am until 1.00pm with a short break for tea /coffee.

See Page 3 for our new course on BSL Awareness. Ed.

Did you Know:

Nearly 15% of the population have some degree of deafness. For every 10,000 people:

- ◆ 10 - Will be born profoundly deaf
- ◆ 20 - Will become profoundly deaf
- ◆ 100 - Will be partially deaf
- ◆ 600 - Will be hard of hearing
- ◆ 800 - Will be mildly hard of hearing

- ◆ British Sign Language (BSL) is the first or preferred language of around 70,000 people in the UK.
- ◆ Over 2 million people in Britain wear hearing aids, maybe another million would benefit from doing so.
- ◆ Almost all deaf and hard of hearing people rely on lipreading to some extent.
- ◆ Many combine signs from BSL with English in order to communicate.

'Being Deaf is About Experiencing the World Visually'

5th- M

A

Y



-11th

Director's Report Susan Craney



Dear Friends,

'Hooray', Spring is in the air! The sight of daffodils always reminds me of Wordsworth and hope, and yet, as I am writing this letter to you, all I am thinking about is end of year reports for funders, dreaming of statistics and feedback forms and funding applications for the future. At times like these you can get bogged down and lose sight of the important things like - 'Why is Deaf Access here?'.
Recently one of our clients left a box of delicious exotic chocolates on my desk with a note (I must tell him that he is like the 'Milk Tray' man, but with more class!

However, as delighted as the team here found the choc's, it was his letter that gave us pause for thought. He has had a hard time with his health and yet he took time to express his gratitude to Deaf Access and to the support we offer.

He wrote:
"Spring is the nicest time of the year, everything is alive and fresh except me – but I guess I should be grateful, there were times during the last year when I thought I wouldn't make 2008.
P.S. Keep the magazine coming, I look forward to it."
It made me reflect on many things; how lucky I am to be reasonably healthy for a start, even though I'm just recovering from a bad cold and throat infection. How many of our clients would echo what he said, as 75% of our client base are over 55. People do appreciate the Newsletter and look forward to it. (At this point, I would like to say Thank you, again, to our Ed., who kindly volunteer's her time each week to deliver this great Newsletter– and has to chase me for my letter each time! Sorry Ed!)

We are now entering our twelfth year and it is so easy to take the centre, the services and each other for granted. So it was nice to be reminded that Deaf Access is for many, a lifeline, for some an occasional

support and others have said, if it wasn't for us they wouldn't be here.

Motivation indeed! So, thank you everyone who has kindly sent us chocolates and donations, but in particularly the cards and notes which are much appreciated by our hard working team.

Talking of Spring and new beginnings, we said a final sad farewell to our Chair of Trustees, Volunteer and long standing support - Pat Jacobs, who



is now living in Spain. I know you will join with me in wishing her well.

Mary Garside, a Teacher for the Deaf has offered to step into the role and we give her a warm welcome!

So I leave you all to read another excellent Newsletter; some serious information and some less so, but we hope you enjoy it and as I always say, Don't be a stranger – do visit us soon!

'Access Points' encourages readers to submit their views and opinions, however we respectfully remind you, that contributor's opinions and statements, made throughout the Newsletter, do not necessarily reflect our views.

**Warm Regards
Sue**



DEAF ACCESS 12TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On behalf of the Chair, and the Trustees of Deaf Access we are writing to invite you, as a Friend of Deaf Access, to be our guest at our Twelfth Annual General Meeting on :

TUESDAY 22 JULY 2008 at 7.30pm at DEAF ACCESS

It will be an informal meeting of the Trustees, Staff, special guests like yourselves and Friends of Deaf Access, followed by cheese and wine.

We do hope that you will be able to attend - and if so, may we request you **RSVP's by 11 July** please.

We look forward to meeting you again.

Kind regards
Sue Craney - Centre Director



LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE

I have been a keen offshore sailor in my time and regularly visit the London Boat Show each year. This year was no exception, as I went with ten members of my Sailing Club in Chipstead, Sevenoaks.

It was a great day. Later in the day when heavy rain was imminent, I passed a stand on the pontoon, opposite Canary Wharf and came upon 'ThunderCats' (Power Boats). They were offering FREE rides on the river at up to **65 mph!!** Never one to refuse something free, in less than five minutes I was kitted out in an enormous wet suit, including large helmet. An International Powerboat Helmsman then took me to the boat and for twenty minutes I had the 'RIDE OF MY LIFE', enjoying every minute! As we passed a big Destroyer moored alongside the Jetty, I even had the pluck to let go of one of the ropes and wave to dozens on the top deck !!

Alan Roberts



Do you have an amazing moment to share with us, for our July edition?



INFORMAL BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE AWARENESS COURSE

In response to popular demand we are pleased to be offering a new 10 week course in BSL Awareness.

This informal unaccredited course is suitable for all levels of BSL users as well as anyone who just wants to learn basic signing for fun. Ideal for people who want to try before committing to a formal course. We will cover basic information about hearing loss, tinnitus, equipment and much more. ***Our focus is: Learning While Having Fun!***

Dates: Weekly from Thursday 5 June - 7 August

Time: 10.30am - 12.30 pm

For More Information: Contact Mary or Frankie:

Tel: 020 8315 2550

Minicom: 020 8315 2552

Fax: 020 8315 2554

Email: information@deaf-access.co.uk

Fee £50.00

THE FUTURE FOR BROMELY HOSPITALS

In February our Director, Sue Craney, attended the meeting of the 'Future for Bromley Hospitals' on your behalf, to find out the latest situation regarding Audiology and the waiting times for digital hearing aids. The meeting, which was very well attended, opened with a long discussion on the lack of cleanliness of Princess Royal University Hospital, which is also of great concern to many, with MRSA being in the news recently.

Susan initially asked about the Plans and Recovery of the Hospital's outstanding Debt and then brought up the subject of waiting times. She asked the panel for clarification on a statement that had been made earlier that by using the extra £250,000 given by Bromley's Primary Care Trust, Bromley's waiting list in the Audiology Department, would meet the government's targets of 18 weeks from referrals until patients receive their hearing aids. This, they stated would be implemented by December 2008.

Unfortunately, other questions on this subject proved impossible due to the high level of participants. It was also felt that in future meetings, perhaps, the panel of people answering the questions should be seated on the platform where everyone can see and hear their responses. As it was, because of their positioning in the hall, it was extremely difficult for lipreaders to follow the full extent of the meeting.

STILL WAITING TO HEAR

It has been recognised for some time that there has been a problem with the waiting times for Audiology services at Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust (BHT), attributable to the advent of digital hearing aids. This has resulted in two problems:

- Increased waiting times for people requiring a hearing aid.

- A long list of people with analogue hearing aids wishing to be considered for a digital device.

Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust has signed up to the delivery of the NHS waiting time target which requires that 90% of all non admitted patients should be dealt within 18 weeks by 31st March, 2008. This is a shared target for the PCT and for BHT.

BHT and the PCT have agreed that the focus of future activity must be on those patients who require a new hearing aid, and that those patients who currently have an adequate analogue hearing aid and wish to replace it with a digital hearing aid, are low priority.

All patients will be prioritised on the basis of clinical urgency and the time on the waiting list. Once this initiative has been delivered, the PCT will expect (and closely monitor) BHT to ensure that the 18 week target will be achieved and maintained for all groups of patients. In a meeting held on 4 February this year it was said this would be achieved by December 2008.

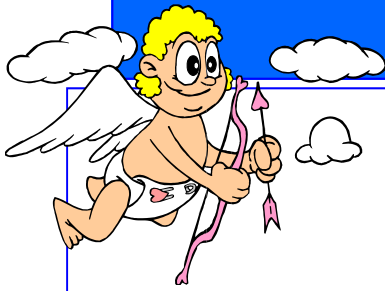
The Department of Health recommends that certain groups of people are treated as a priority, such as:

- Those over 90 years
- Those with dual sensory loss
- Those in economic employment
- War pensioners

BHT has, again, been asked to review how and why the waiting lists became so long, in order to ensure that a similar situation does not arise again. Part of the problem is that digital hearing aids require approximately twice the length of time to install than for analogue appliances.

Excerpt taken from a Report on Waiting Times for Audiology Services
- Bromley PCT - **By Clive Uren**





LOVER'S LEAP !!

Beware all you single people who find yourselves walking through the doors of Deaf Access there seems to be something in the air here Something called cupid's arrow !!

After celebrating the weddings of Sue and Roger in Malta and Dawn and Richard Coffin's wedding in Mauritius, this time cupid's arrow has landed on one of our Trustees - Paul Gibbons.

Yes, romance was definitely in the air this leap year for Paul when his girlfriend, Paulette, popped the question in a candlelit wine bar !! After meeting through the internet and courting for 1 1/2 years, Paulette used the opportunity of this year's Leap Year to propose to our unsuspecting bachelor. Thankfully, we can report that after overcoming his initial shock, Paul accepted her proposal.

Ahhh.... How romantic is that ?? Let's hope we don't have to wait for another Leap Year before Access Points is reporting on the wedding day. **Ed.**



A SIGN OF THE TIMES



'Sign' recently changed its name to 'SignTranslate' as it better reflects the current work of the charity, which is committed to bringing improved healthcare and equality of service provision to Deaf people in the UK.

This web based programme for doctors to use with Deaf people, which was previously known as "Sign Health", has been re-branded as "SignTranslate".

Who is SignTranslate for?

Using SignTranslate, Deaf people can now visit their doctor with an immediate appointment without an interpreter - rather than wait up to 2 weeks or more for one.

Why is it Needed?

It is often difficult to book a BSL interpreter at short notice.

How Does it Work?

Computer shows video clips of questions selected by the doctor from a list- in British Sign Language. A deaf person can point to a diagram on the screen, or answer "yes" or "no" to the doctor's questions. Some Doctors have also signed on for on-line video interpreting which can be used if they need clarification or more information.

It is not.....

A replacement for a live BSL interpreters.

SignTranslate is currently only available in GP's but there are plans to also make it available in Hospital Accident & Emergency Departments. To view a demonstration go to www.signtranslate.com and click on 'demo'.

Roger Hewitt

Further information can be obtained from Roger Hewitt: Deaf People's Ambassador, SignTranslate Ltd, 5 Baring Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2NB.

Access Points

DEAFLINK UPDATE



Concerned that nothing has been heard of the progress of the eagerly awaited Bromley Deaf Link project, and hearing of Kent's new text service for Deaf people to contact the emergency services, Sue Craney contacted Martin Hills of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) at Bromley, and this is what he replied:

The MPS is working as part of a group to introduce a national 999 SMS service. This group is made up of stake holders such as The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, MPS and other police forces, ACPO, BT, RNID and other service providers.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed in that, all concur in the way the system will work. - Effectively, the same as current TYPETALK calls delivered to Emergency Agencies (EA) control room, via voice operator. There will be a training / briefing impact on EA's, as calls are likely to be longer but as the scheme will be for registered users only, then call volume is expected to be very small. The cost of each call will be paid for by Mobile Companies, as is with the 999 service.

The business case was developed by BT in November 2007, and approval for business development by December - January 2008. In March 2008 a detailed technical feasibility study and in April, May and June 2008 setting up of Text Direct, Training and Recruitment of Staff. The system should be available for testing in July 2008. This testing is in three phases over three months, in which the EA's may need to assist. Predicted live date is November 2008.

Martin Hills - Metropolitan Police Service

Deaf Access Would Like To Say Thank You To:

Our Fund Raisers, & Donors; London Borough of Bromley, Dept of Health OFV (UKCoD), City Bridge Trust, Langley Park Rotary Club, Hayes (Kent) Trust, Rotary Club of West Wickham, Children in Need, clients, friends and family members who have made donations to enable us to provide our services.

Bromley Chain, Churchill Theatre, and the many different organisations & individuals who have, and continue to, support us, past and present.

Special thanks go to our team of Volunteers and Trustees. Without them we could not achieve as much as we do. **Thank you!**

Deaf Access

Community House
South Street
Bromley BR1 1RH
(Opposite Bromley Fire Station)

Tel: 020 8315 2550
Text: 020 8315 2552
Fax: 020 8315 2554
SMS: 07732 449 349
Email: information@deaf-access.co.uk
Website: www.deaf-access.co.uk

Sometimes if only deaf people are working in the centre, they cannot hear voice calls. Please do Email, fax or use TYPETALK. We will return your calls as soon as we can.

Thank you for your patience.

Editorial Team

Beryl Baxter
Susan Craney

And Finally -
Something to think about:

Beauty Is Where You Find It