

Summer 2014  Priceless

SI first MAGAZINE

Celebrating Deaf Life

Sewing Bee TV Star
Lynda Lewis

Deaf Artist
Sarah O'Dowd

Deaf life
Lydia Callis

Deaf Sports
Danielle Joyce &
Elan Môn



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Summer 2014

Contents & Editor's Letter

	Page
Lifestyle.....	4 - 20
Entertainment & Arts..	21 - 31
Sports.....	32 - 51
Technology.....	52 - 58
Community.....	59 - 75
Regional Public Services.....	76 - 79

Hello,

Whether you are a reader or advertiser, thank you for supporting SLFirst.

Through the digital publication the reach of SLFirst has now gone past 140 countries worldwide. Starting from such humble beginnings, I am delighted with the progress we are making.

Through the support of advertisers, I am pleased to continue to provide the magazine free of charge. However, to get a copy of the magazine sent to you, subscription is still possible through the payment of a small fee to cover the postage and packing. The page opposite sets out how to subscribe

All about celebrating deaf life, SLFirst is pleased to write about some inspirational deaf people taking life in both hands. In this Summer Edition we are pleased to welcome our new health write Jeanann Doyle.

The on-line magazine has some additional articles that cannot be found in the printed Editions as well as a BSL video translation of every article I publish. You can find it at www.slfirst.co.uk

Thank you for all those who make SLFirst possible.

Sarah
Editor SLFirst



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Costa Rican President Commits to Signed Speeches

by Sarah Lawrence



As a Deaf woman, I know that parts of UK society have a long way to go to be deaf aware. They have even further to go to act on that awareness. But, being typically British, I suppose I always thought that the UK would be amongst the most responsive countries when it comes to valuing deaf people.

With that in mind I was interested to read about developments in Costa

Rica, a country in Latin America, where the incoming President, Luis Guillermo Solís announced during his inauguration speech on May 8, 2014, that he would be using a sign language interpreter at all of the events where he would be speaking.

Making the announcement Estefanía Carvajal, a Costa Rican sign language interpreter who had accompanied the President during his successful presidential campaign was by his side. During his speech the president announced that Carvajal would join his press team at Casa Presidencial. Carvajal overcame any embarrassment about talking about herself in public as she signed the announcement during a press conference at the presidential offices in Zapote.

The president said that Carvajal would interpret alongside him during public speaking events and during activities to discuss disability policy. Casa Presidencial said it was the first time that a Costa Rican administration offered simultaneous sign language interpretation during its events.

Solís said that the decision was a “sign of respect and recognition of the rights” of the deaf community here, which numbers some 70,000 Costa Ricans.

In another forward thinking way, the President set a new world standard for the leaders of countries around the world in valuing deaf people by announcing that he had introduced a new YouTube channel dedicated to the deaf community.

Making such a public commitment, the

President said, “This is one more expression of our commitment and our respect for the human rights of all populations in our country.”

For the first time in India, sign language interpreters were part of a Prime Minister's swearing-in ceremony on the 26th May. Indian sign language interpreters were on duty at the swearing-in ceremony “to ensure that the oath-taking and related ceremonies are interpreted for as many as 18 million citizens of India, who are hearing impaired”

Let's hope a modern, forward thinking, supposedly altruistic country like the UK can make a similar commitment.

Interpreters



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Do you want to be contacted directly for a booking? Do you have a specialism you would like deaf clients to know about? Your advert could appear here.

Do you run an interpreter agency? Contact sarah@slfirst.co.uk to discuss your advert being placed here!

Strawberry Syllabub with Pimm's

from the SLFirst Kitchen

Serves 4
Prepare 45 mins



Ingredients:

225g essential Waitrose British Strawberries, roughly chopped
100ml Pimm's
100g golden caster sugar
300ml double cream
1 pack Duchy Originals from Waitrose Organic Sicilian Lemon All-Butter Shortbread

Method

1 Place the strawberries, Pimm's and sugar in a bowl. Cover and chill for at least 30 minutes, stirring occasionally until the sugar has dissolved.

2 Using a hand-held blender, whizz the strawberry mixture into a coarse purée.

3 When ready to serve, whisk the cream until it forms firm peaks. Gradually mix in about two-thirds of the strawberry purée — the mixture should be soft but still firm enough to hold its own shape.

4 Spoon the syllabub into wide glasses and drizzle over the remaining purée. Serve with the biscuits on the side.

Nutrition 518kcals/2.5g protein/39.4g carbohydrate/34.5g sugars/38.9g fat/24.2g saturated fat/0.9g fibre/0.2g salt per serving, including 1 shortbread biscuit each



"When Summer finally arrives and we are looking for a simple dessert to accompany our BBQ, this might be just what you are looking for!"



Butterflied Chicken Fillets With Lime & Paprika Rub



These thinly-cut spicy chicken breast fillets are full of flavour and brilliant for cooking quickly over the hottest part of the barbecue.

Nut free

Low fat

Gluten free

Milk free

Diabetic (low sugar)



Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 10 - 20 minutes

Total time: 25 - 30 minutes

Serves: 4

Ingredients

4 Waitrose British Chicken Breast Fillets

2 tsp coriander seeds

2 large garlic cloves

Zest and juice of 2 limes

2 tsp Bart Smoked Paprika

½ x 145g bag Waitrose Watercress, Rocket and Spinach

Salad

200g tub Waitrose Fresh Dip

Vine Ripened Tomato Salsa



Method

Make sure your barbecue is really hot. Slice through the centre of each chicken breast horizontally but don't quite cut them in half. Open the fillets out so they lie flat.

Using a pestle and mortar, crush the coriander seeds roughly. Add the garlic cloves and lime zest, then pound to make a coarse paste. Add the lime juice and the paprika, then season and mix again until well blended.

Rub the mixture into the chicken breasts and leave to marinate for 5 minutes.

Cook the butterflied chicken breasts on the barbecue for 5-10 minutes on each side or until cooked through and lightly charred. Alternatively, cook under a grill, set to high. Serve with the salad and salsa.

Cook's tips

The marinade contains lime juice, which tenderizes the meat – but don't leave it for more than the 5 minutes or the chicken may fall apart as you cook it.

When preparing a barbecue make sure the coals are glowing red under a thin layer of grey ash before cooking.

For more barbecue tips go to waitrose.com/bbq



Building Communication with a Deaf Child

by Lydia Callis



Picture this: You are a little kid growing up, constantly discovering incredible new things about the world. Now imagine being surrounded every day by people who do not talk to you, tell you stories or answer your millions of questions. Your own parents and siblings seem to avoid you.

They don't try to teach you, guide you or provide comforting words when you need them. You feel like an outsider in your own home. This is the experience of many deaf children.

For a hearing parent, learning that your baby is deaf might be a bit of a shock. Confusion is a common response, given our society's unfortunate lack of understanding about deaf culture. Excited new parents are delivered the news by medical professionals in a sobering way -- hearing a doctor imply that your child is "disabled" is guaranteed to cause panic! So, instead of accepting the perfect gift

they have been given and embracing the opportunity to explore deaf communication, hearing parents might immediately label their beautiful deaf newborn as defective. They might hunt for a way to "fix" their baby, or try teaching their child to communicate using sound like "normal" people. Or maybe they simply abandon hope that they'll ever be able to relate to their deaf child. This breaks my heart.

Let me tell you a personal anecdote. Last year, I hired interpreters for a large family gathering because my mother and siblings are all deaf, while my mother's family is hearing. Being a CODA (Child of Deaf Adults), I have served as the "interpreter" for many many family events. Finally, I decided to enlist the help of some professionals so I could just relax and enjoy the party.

Throughout the evening, it was moving to witness the interactions between my deaf family and my hearing family using the interpreters. Never before had they been able to experience each other in such a way! With two neutral, professional interpreters relaying even the littlest bits of small talk, we were all able to participate in conversations equally. I saw my hearing aunts really getting to know my deaf nieces for the first time. Almost every member of my family raved about how amazing it was to have interpreters. Every family member, except one.





Growing up the only deaf person in your household can be extremely isolating. If your family chooses not to learn sign language, it is hard to express yourself comfortably. For my mother, the opportunity to communicate with her parents and siblings just felt like it came too late. After a lifetime of feeling excluded from your own family, believing they never really got to know you, how do you make up for lost time? What is there to talk about?

When my mother was growing up, there weren't many resources for raising deaf children and interpreting was only a de-

veloping field. Of course she appreciated the fact that I hired interpreters for our family event but... after decades of not communicating, forming a connection is not so simple. All children want to feel like they belong in their own family and a lifetime of feeling marginalized can't just be erased. Certainly not in one evening.

Deafness doesn't have to be isolating. Since I was raised in a deaf family, I can tell you: Deafness is nothing to be afraid of! The ability to hear sound is not what makes a person whole. It is not what gives a person their personality. The ability to hear sound is not what determines a person's intelligence, and it doesn't have to limit one's life. Perhaps not enough hearing people take note of the deaf community members living happy lives around them. There are plenty of successful business owners, artists and athletes who use sign language to communicate.

Discovering sign language with your deaf infant promises both of you a richer life and a closer relationship. By accepting your child's abilities and taking the time to access their world from a young age, you also give them access to yours. You will be able to share stories and jokes and get to know each other. It is more intuitive for deaf babies to learn a physical language than one which relies on sound. When deaf individuals are not struggling to live a hearing lifestyle in their own home, they can focus on growing in other areas.

Sign language is the most natural form of communication for deaf people around the globe. Research has shown that in any society where there is a concentration of deafness, signed languages have developed. Humans have a strong desire to express ourselves--relationships form and strengthen through communication. For deaf children, having parents and siblings to use sign language with can truly mean the world. Because, when you are a kid, your family IS your whole world.



Jetting Away for a Few Days in Venice

by Simon Deacy OBE



Having visited many parts of Europe, one famous place has eluded me – Venice. I had seen it on programmes over the years, at the end of 007 favourite Casino Royale, but had never found the right moment to book a visit. When a friend sent me a text in September asking if I was interested in staying in Venice in April and then catching a rugby match at nearby Treviso, I jumped at the chance.

Travelling with three other couples, flights were booked with Easyjet and at £110 for a return ticket, Venice was one of the cheapest European destinations to go to. Flying from Gatwick, the great thing about booking with Easyjet is that you can then get half price parking at the airport. I'm not a great lover of early morning

flights when you have to get up at 3 or 4 in the morning to get to the airport. I was pleased that our flights were early afternoon making for a relaxed journey.

As Venice is a little distance from Marco Polo airport, we did a bit of research before leaving to find out how we would get eight of us from the airport to the hotel. We had reserved rooms at the Carlton on the Canal, the hotel situated on the bank of the Grand Canal in Venice, directly opposite the main train station. There is a road option but that would not be a direct route, with either a long walk to the hotel when the taxi could go no further or transferring to a water bus. There was also a water bus direct from the airport which would take us to the opposite bank of the Grand Hotel and then a short walk, or we could jump on a water taxi.

The road and water bus options both cost about €130 for the eight of us. The water taxi was €150 but would take us to the door and would take half the time. So, having landed and picked up our luggage we made the short walk to purpose

built water taxi/bus docking area. Taking eight people and their luggage comfortably, we all boarded the water taxi, a beautiful wooden craft with a covered area and also an outside viewing area at the back. Being gentlemen, we allowed the ladies to have the open viewing area at the back and then laughed mercilessly when they got soaked every time we hit the waves of one of the many boats going in the opposite direction. Within minutes of leaving the airport, you see what seems like a fortress wall rising from the sea, but these are just the outside perimeter buildings of Venice. Through an emerging opening we entered Venice and the taxi slowed to the speed limit allowed on the city's canals.

The water in the canals was dirtier than I had expected and the buildings on the water's side looked dated. They were though purpose built with a lot of boat bays or gated hatches for delivery by boat. Occasionally we past a building that looked more grandious and opulent with a good exterior, chandeliers and heavy drapes.

Emerging from this first canal we turned onto a much bigger waterway which seemed full of other craft and we got our first sight of a gondola being powered by a uniformed gondolier. Suddenly, and despite this being out of season, Venice became vibrant and energetic, a sea of colour and movement. Immediately, you see its uniqueness and its appeal, boats



shuddering past packed with sofas and chairs, Fed Ex deliveries, fire crews, an ambulance and the city's bright yellow buses.

Arriving at 6pm local time, we pulled in directly in front of our hotel so we had to walk a full 8 metres to enter the building. Despite this being out of season, tables and chairs were outside with people sitting under the warm Spring sunshine. Handled quickly by accomplished reception staff, we dropped bags into our rooms and enjoyed an early evening refreshing drink on the bank of the canal.

Whilst water buses and taxis provide an obvious solution to getting around Venice, there is also an extensive system of walkways making it easy to get around on foot. Hotels provide guests with a street map but I decided to buy a city guide which provided much more information. Some of the alleyways are small, but they are all signposted, but you still need to be able to understand a map otherwise you do risk getting lost.



The vast majority of the walkways are wheelchair accessible, but some of the smaller bridges can only be crossed using steps and the three main bridges over the Grand Canal steep and would be present difficulty. Striding out to find somewhere to eat, our location on the Grand Canal and close to the Railway Station meant that there were many cafes,

bars and restaurants within minutes of us leaving the hotel.

This choice also provided a suitable option for most budgets, ranging from Burger King and take away pizza for a couple of euros each, to an extensive range of menus up to €50 and €60 a head. We also experienced a significant range in price for drinks, with a beer (600 cl) in a back street bar costing €4 and



a bottle of beer (300cls) €8 in the hotel. Equivalent differences applied to water and other soft drinks.

Bedding down for the night, we planned a sight seeing tour the following day, heading out for St Mark's Square first and then slowly taking in the sights as we wound our way back towards the hotel. After our typically continental breakfast, we were able to buy water-bus tickets at the hotel reception. Reasonably priced, we chose a one-way ticket, but a 24 hour ticket is available if you intend to hop on and off throughout the day. Making our way to the bus stop, it was good to see extensive signage, including English, giving information as well as instruction about what to do with your ticket.

Sitting outside on the water bus, we enjoyed an opportunity to take in the sights, the tiny canals where the gondolas were in their element, and the use of the canals to support Venetian life. Taking about 40 minutes, the bus ride was more like a mini cruise and is a must for visitors to Venice. For the price of that one ticket you can enjoy a full round trip and that is worth doing.

Getting off at the St Mark's stop, crowd levels went through the roof, the area thronging with sightseers and organised tours. It was quite funny to see groups of 20 to 30 people following in the footsteps of their guides who were holding a coloured flag in the air, the groups crisscrossing as they went from attraction to attraction. I had thought a coffee in the square was a must, but the price was exploitative, so we decided to go one street back for refreshments where a coffee cost a third of what it did in the Square itself. The backstreets, still thronging with people, is where the shopping is, and the offer was extensive with the world's biggest brands on offer.

Spending several hours around the backstreets we found a fantastic restaurant just one street back from the main square where we had the most delicious Italian food all at a reasonable price. The boot shaped beer glasses were also a bit of fun, providing the same sort of challenge as a yard of ale. Slowly heading back in the direction of the hotel, we crossed some quaint little bridges over tiny canals

as well as some of the famous points like the Realto Bridge.

Every now and again we came across busy gondola points where long queues had developed, waiting for their opportunity to enjoy this unique experience. It looked more like a gondola jam to be honest, but I'm sure someone knew what they were doing! At €120 per hour in the day and €150 during the evening, I certainly hope so. Occasionally it felt like we had taken a wrong turn as the alleyway narrowed and high stone walls closed in around us, but this is just Venice. Turn a corner and you are back at a canal, outside an ice-cream parlour or faced with a restaurant menu.

During the evening, stalls spring up on some of the walkways along with a lot of 'looky looky' men, who are trying to sell you anything from sunglasses and bags to fluorescent toys. However, they are respectful when told you are not interested. Walking along the streets, restaurants have people placed outside trying to entice you into their establishment, but you are best advised to look calmly at menus and make your own decision. The range of food available is extensive.

On match day, we made our way to the train station, needing to travel to Treviso, about 20 miles outside Venice. Once again, visual displays greet you and it was easy to buy tickets and find the information we needed about train times and platforms. At €3 it was far cheaper to use trains in Italy than it is in the UK and all the vast majority of signs were in Italian and English. The train itself was a double decker, and the inside was immaculate. Signage at each station was great and even inexperienced travellers would easily know when they had arrived at their station. Treviso was picturesque and had a giant market on the day we visited making the journey there all the more worthwhile.

Enjoying another full day in Venice, we did some further sightseeing but by no means took in all that the city has to offer. Returning home after a thoroughly



enjoyable extended weekend, a return visit was placed in my bucket list as something I would like to do again in the future. Venice was vibrant, unique, with warm and welcoming local people who survive on tourism, and therefore value them. The hotel and the staff had been excellent and with visitors from all over the world staff in hotels, cafes, restaurants and public buildings are all good communicators, prepared to take time and make the effort to ensure understanding.

Deaf Motorbike Paramedic Richard Webb-Stevens

by Sarah Lawrence



**During City Lit's Deaf Day,
I was delighted to chat to
Richard Webb-Stevens of the
London Ambulance Service.
With access to health ser-
vices being such a big issue
for many deaf people, I was
pleased to learn that Rich-
ard, who is deaf, is a motor-
cycle paramedic, a job he
has been doing for six years.**

Born in Hemel Hempstead, but brought up in Chipperfield Village, Richard was diagnosed with Bilateral sensorineural loss from birth. In one ear, Richard has congenital loss and the other is from a trauma during birth, when the umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck. Richard wears two behind the ear, NHS issued hearing aids. "My loss is mainly mid-high frequencies of 70-115db, which means that I struggle with conversation, telephones and TV," Richard explained. "I rely heavily on lip reading even when I have my hearing aids on." The only deaf

person in his close family, Richard was brought up in a hearing world and had many of the experiences suffered by deaf children trying to fit into mainstream.

Richard had his first hearing aids when he was about 5 and like many deaf children, me included, he didn't like wearing them because they were uncomfortable and made him look different. "I grew my hair over my ears to cover them when most of my friends had short fashionable styles," said Richard. Attending mainstream primary and secondary schools, Richard's experience was typical of so many deaf children at the time. The only deaf student in Primary and one of only two in secondary school, Richard was bullied because he was 'different'. Whilst Richard considers his teachers were very supportive and accommodating, he missed out on a lot of instruction and "scraped through academically".

Learning to play the guitar and thereby play an active role in school life through plays and band performances, Richard found that if he did learn lines, he could speak in front of people without looking like a fool and having them laugh at him. Brought up in a family with a strong military service background, Richard's earliest work ambitions were to join the armed services. Aged 16, he applied to the Army, RAF, Navy and the Marines, all of whom turned him down because he failed their hearing tests. Uninspiring, it was nevertheless disappointing, but he felt he had to give it a go to avoid thinking 'if only' for the rest of his life.

With his ambitions for a life in the armed services quickly assigned to the trash can, Richard's desire to serve saw him set out to be a nurse. Beginning his training as a general nurse in Charing Cross Hospital, he failed the course 18 months

in and had to leave. Not one to sit on his laurels and still keen to ‘look after people’, Richard became a lifeguard for two years before finding a job working with adults with learning disabilities in residential care. Two years later and still keen to join the NHS, Richard joined the London Ambulance Service and he has not looked back.

Richard is glowing in his praise for managers and colleagues in the London Ambulance Service describing good levels of support. He puts the good relationships he has enjoyed down to 2 things. “I have always been honest about my hearing loss,” he tells me. “That means I tell people to face me when talking to me and ask them to repeat if I did not hear or understand. The second thing I have done, is to try and come up with solutions to problems or barriers myself, rather than ask others to do it for me.”

“For example, we were going to use the Genesis II radio system. It uses an ear piece and microphone to allow us to use the Airwave radio while riding and dealing with patients. For me, this was a potential problem because of my hearing aids and cannot work without them.”

“I looked into the system and saw that the moulded ear mould had a vented baffle hole to allow the users to hear residual sound while getting hearing protection at the same time. I wouldn’t need this baffle as I hear with my hearing aids so I thought why not use this hole to attach my hearing aid via the tube as per my normal hearing aid mould: So I e-mailed my audiology department, who said it won’t work... So I emailed the hearing aid company, who said it wouldn’t work... So I e-mailed Genesis and Sepura, who said it wouldn’t work, and you guessed it... I e-mailed the company making the ear moulds for us, who thought it wouldn’t work but were willing to try for me.”

“When the moulds arrived I swiftly attached my hearing aids to them via the tubes directly into the baffle holes and did a radio check. The result was amazing, Hey presto, in spite of multinational companies telling me it wouldn’t work



they did indeed work! I was now able to independently hear the radio communications and my surroundings through my hearing aids and it was even better than before.”

A late convert to British Sign Language, Richard started learning about 4 years ago. Despite wanting to learn BSL for some time, it was actually Richard’s wife, who is a Registered Sign Language interpreter, that finally got Richard to take the plunge. Wearing hearing aids for 16 hours a day, Richard explained how uncomfortable that can be, so he started taking them off when at home. That meant his wife could not communicate with him, so both using BSL seemed the obvious solution. Enrolling for Level 1 at Harrow and then Level 2 at City Lit, Richard began using it at home every day, helping him learn the language quickly. Richard now uses BSL regularly in work, either through operational requirements or during the community work he undertakes as well as socially when out with Deaf friends.

Now approaching 16 years with the Ambulance Service, Richard spent 9 years on ambulances and for the last 6 he has been a motorbike paramedic. Working out of Waterloo, he usually works 12 hour shifts responding to a wide range of emergency calls in Central London. “My job is to get to calls quickly,” Richard explained, “getting through the congested areas or difficult to access areas, so that I can assess and treat a patient before the ambulance arrives. When I first arrive I

rely on my hearing aids combined with lip reading to do my job."

Communication in London can be problematic in any case, with the Ambulance Service encountering over 300 languages. Richard openly explains that he is deaf and explains that he needs to deal with someone face to face, have background noise turned off, or needs people to leave the room if they are too noisy. However, being an experienced lip-reader, in very noisy environments, Richard is sometimes able to understand what someone is saying, when his hearing colleagues can not.

Keen to improve deaf awareness, Richard is a member of the London Ambulance Service Deaf Awareness Forum which was set up four years ago by one of his colleagues, Mark Weller. The Forum aims to improve deaf awareness amongst staff as well as forging links with the deaf community. Richard was asked to talk on a London Ambulance Service information video explaining the Emergency SMS service, but only agreed to do it when he was given approval to do a BSL version as well. The BSL video is still available.

An excellent advocate for the deaf community, Richard gives up a lot of his own time to visit schools, clubs and events where he gives talks about being deaf in

the ambulance service, overcoming barriers and how he makes communication work in a high pressured situation.

Whilst Richard's job is literally a matter of life and death, there are also funny moments. He told me how he once attracted the attention of a group of paparazzi waiting outside a famous Mayfair Hotel. In the act of rescuing a lady who had fallen onto a 4th floor ledge, his trousers ripped, giving the eager photographers something unexpected to focus their cameras on!

Still boyishly enthusiastic about his job, Richard gets great satisfaction from the variety his role provides. This has included attending calls to famous places like Buckingham Palace and Downing Street to being an out-rider for events such as the Olympic Games and appearing on BBC's See Hear. Communicating easily with Deaf BSL users in need of emergency medical help, Richard also smiles when people learn he can sign, but weren't expecting it. "I went to meet my wife who was interpreting at a teenage health conference run by the National Deaf Children's Society NDCS. While I waited, lots of teenagers and adults came out of the building. They saw me and my paramedic bike and took pictures as lots of people do, so I signed to them. Their jaws dropped and they ran to get



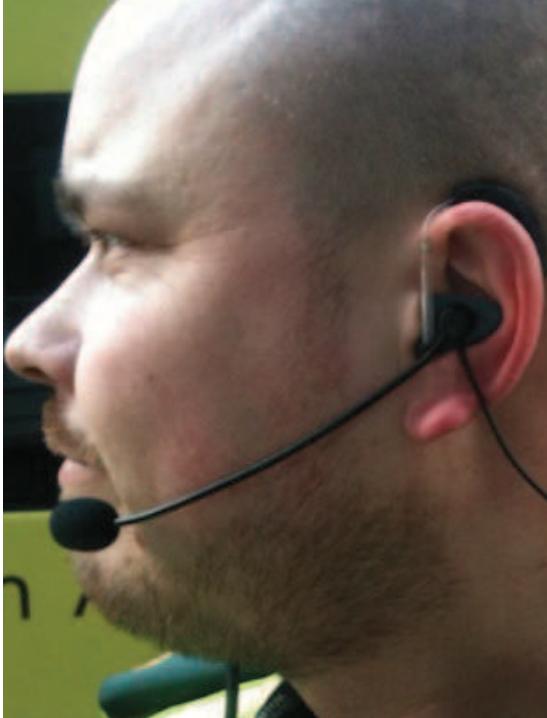
their friends and brought them to meet me. They were amazed that a paramedic with hearing aids could be a Paramedic."

An advocate for the 999 SMS Service, Richard was helping people register for the service whilst at Deaf Day at City Lit. "The EmergencySMS service is an add on to the existing 999 and 18000 services that are available in the UK," Richard told me. "Your SMS text message will be connected to 999 through the Text Relay 18000 service. A relay assistant will speak your SMS message to the 999 advisor, their reply will be sent back to you as an SMS message. If you send another message it is read to the 999 advisor and they send a reply back to you."

"When I first went to Deaf Day and represented the London Ambulance Service on my own, I decided to advertise EmergencySMS as it seems to be the UK's biggest secret and I have been publicising it ever since. The EmergencySMS service enables Deaf, HoH & speech impaired to contact the four 999 services throughout the UK: Ambulance, Police, Fire Brigade and Coast Guard via a mobile phone text message. My aim is for all deaf/HoH & speech impaired people that struggle or can't make a voice call on a mobile to register and know how to use EmergencySMS in the same way hearing people know about calling 999. I still meet people that don't know about it so it still needs publicising."

Giving advice to deaf people about first aid, Richard said, "First aid is a really important skill that everyone should have. Always remember your own safety first before helping someone else as you can't help someone if you end up getting hurt too. Get help by making a noise or flashing a light or running to someone close by if possible. If it is a life-threatening emergency such as chest pain, breathing problems, unconscious patients, severe epilepsy or accidents then use your mobile to text 999 to EmergencySMS which I explain in this link - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhJAyXqhrNQ> -

When looking after a patient keep things basic with ABCs which means checking



the patient's Airway, Breathing & Circulation in that order. Always try and reassure the patient to help put them at ease while you wait for help."

Not one to sit and do nothing for long, Richard is a keen cook and delighted in telling me about his chance meeting with his heroes, 'the Hairy Bikers' at a motorcycle show a few years ago. Richard is also a self-taught guitarist. He cannot read music but plays by ear, working out how to play songs by listening to them through his hearing aids and direct input shoes which give him the best sound he has ever heard by amplifying the frequencies that he can't hear well through his hearing aids. Richard's wife enjoys singing, so if you are lucky you might just come across them doing a gig in one of their local London pubs.



The Silent Killer

by Jeanann Doyle

Irish - born, I am a qualified nutritional scientist and currently training to become a dietitian in the UK. I have had a severe-to-profound deafness since the age of 4 and rely on my hearing aids and lipreading for communication.

I recently came upon the, "Sick of it Report" by the SignHealth Charity for the Deaf and was alarmed to read about the health of Deaf people in the UK in comparison to the rest of the people in the country. Deaf people are more at risk of certain health-related diseases in comparison to the rest of the population.

**SICK
OF
IT**

Poor access to the healthcare system seems to be the main barrier to allowing deaf people to take control of their health which highlights the importance for deaf awareness training among all health professionals. I have experienced the above issues in healthcare services and understand this from the heart. I am extremely passionate about empowering other deaf people in life as well as my studies in nutrition and health. In this article I write about one of the health-related illness mentioned in this report; high blood pressure and how we can make simple changes in our diet to reduce of risks of heart disease and stroke.

"High blood pressure is one of the major causes of heart attacks and strokes. Deaf people are twice as likely as everyone else to have high blood pressure and not know it." - SignHealth (The Deaf Health Charity).

So what's going on in the UK?

FACT: Sadly, in the UK, cardiovascular disease caused 50,000 premature deaths in 2010 and having high blood pressure is a major risk factor.

FACT: £30 billion a year is what cardiovascular disease costs the UK economy.

FACT: By the time you finish reading this, someone will have died from a heart attack in the UK.

FACT: Around 5 Million of us in the UK are walking around with high blood pressure and don't even know it!

FACT: 26% of women and 30% men have high blood pressure in the UK.

FACT: Even though deaf people are twice as likely to have high blood pressure, those who have been diagnosed are 3 times more likely to still not have it under control and less likely to be on medication as the rest of the population.

This may all sound like awful news but hold tough, here is the good news: it is preventable.

Blood pressure... hypertension... Cardiovascular disease...I'm confused...

Let's explain what blood pressure is all about. Firstly, arteries are the tubes that carry blood rich in oxygen and nutrients from the heart to the rest of the body so we function fully. Blood pressure is the pace at which our blood flows through our arteries. If we don't keep our heart healthy, our blood pressure can become too high and we can get hypertension.





This is because the blood is trying to push harder around our damaged arteries known as coronary heart disease

(CHD) and eventually leads to a stroke or a heart attack. Therefore, it is so important to have blood pressure checked.

Cardiovascular disease is a group of diseases relating to the heart and circulation of blood such as those mentioned above; CHD, stroke and heart attack.

Know your numbers!

Blood pressure readings have 2 numbers; (a) one on the top called systolic which is when our heart beats to contract and (b) one on the bottom called diastolic which is when the heart relaxes in between beats. Normal blood pressure for everyone should be around 140/90. If we have Type 2 Diabetes or have had a previous heart attack or stroke then our blood pressure should be around 130/80 due to a higher risk of developing heart disease. Everyone over the age of 40 should have their blood pressure checked as well as their risk of getting heart disease. The best and most accurate way of finding out about our blood pressure is to have it measured at your local GP practice.

Each year in the UK, Stroke causes an alarming 41,000 deaths and heart attacks cause 103,000 deaths. More than a quarter of adults in the UK have high blood pressure and almost half are not receiving treatment for it. So, let's get out there, spread the word, get our blood pressure checked and help reduce these alarming figures!

How can I lower my blood pressure?

We can lower our blood pressure by cutting down on salt, caffeine and alcohol as these all contribute to high blood pressure. We should have more fresh fruit and vegetables as part of a healthy balanced diet as they are a good source of potassium which has the opposite effect to salt on your blood pressure. Also,

by becoming more active, losing weight and quitting smoking. Nearly a quarter of adults in the UK are obese. Carrying extra weight means we need more oxygen and nutrients delivered in our blood which increases blood pressure. Smoking hardens and narrows our arteries making blood pump faster around the body while exercise allows more oxygen into the body for a healthier heart to do its job right!

How much salt is enough?

Our body does actually need some sodium (90% comes from salt) for muscle contraction, nerves and to maintain normal blood pressure. At present, in the UK, the average intake of salt in the diet is a staggering 8.1g (1 and a half level teaspoons). The target should be no more than 6g a day for adults (1 level teaspoon), 3g for children (half a level teaspoon) and babies should have less than 1g a day as their kidneys can't cope with more than this.



Where does all the salt come from?

75% of salt in our foods comes from processed foods. Yes, that means canned soups, ready-made meals, salted nuts, pizzas, crisps, packet soups, sauces, the list goes on! There's also hidden sources of salt such as in bread, breakfast cereals (yes, Special K included) and even in sweet foods such as cakes, biscuits and pastries (as well as being full of nasty sugars and fat). 15% is found naturally in foods such as cheese, shellfish and meats such as ham and pork. 10% is added in cooking or as table salt which could be avoided easily!

How can I cut down on my salt?

There are simple ways of cutting down on the amount of salt we have on a day to day basis.

By Limiting:

Salted snacks such as Bombay mix, crisps and salted nuts
Sausages, pate and cured meats such as salami
Smoked fish (herring, mackerel and trout)



bacon and ham
Pickles, poppadums and chutneys
All types of cheeses
Stock cubes in cooking, soups, sauces and risotto

When cooking, there are tips for adding flavor instead of using salt. Watch any chef programme and you will see lots of different flavourings being used to marinade food. There is no reason why less salt will make your meal less delicious!



Replace salt with:
Fresh garlic
Pepper Lemon Juice
Vinegar/rice vinegar
Spices Fresh/dried
Herbs

How to look out for salt when shopping? This is a brilliant way of cutting down on salt! Firstly, if we look at the back of a packet of crisps we see "GDA" but what does this mean? GDA stands for Adult Guideline Daily Amount and helps us make sense of nutrition information of that food. So how much salt should we have a day? Use this card below for when you go food shopping to help you buy foods that are low in salt. You can follow these easy steps!

1. Check the back of the food packet for nutritional information
2. Read the "per 100g" column only
3. If "salt" reads under 1.5g then this is a good option to buy
4. If the "salt" reads over 1.5g then this food should be avoided
5. The same instructions can be followed for sugars, fat and saturated fats. You can use this link to print off one for yourself to keep in your purse/wallet for the next big shop!

<http://tna.europarchive.org/20120419000433/> <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/whichcard0908.pdf>

If you're looking for useful websites and apps, it can be tricky choosing the right ones that will help you make healthier choices, as there are so many out there! Here are a few popular apps to get you started: Healthy Heart Recipe Finder (British Heart Foundation), Foodswitch UK (scan the barcode of a food item and it will show you healthier alternatives) and My Fitness Pal (tracks calorie intake and fitness levels). Useful websites for more information include British Heart Foundation, American Heart Association, British Nutrition Foundation, Healthy Eating Live Well (NHS Choices) and Change for Life.



High blood pressure is a silent killer as there are no obvious symptoms, hence the name of this article. Remember to think twice about foods high in salt, get active, aim for a healthy weight, drink less alcohol and quit smoking if you haven't already.

Sources for this article:

British Heart Foundation (2014) "Sick of it Report" by SignHealth, The Deaf Health Charity (2014)

NHS choices "Having too much salt, your survival guide"

Food Standards Agency

Joint British Society Guidelines (2014)

"Salt: The Facts" NHS Choices (2013)

Salt and Health Report by SACN (2003)

Department of Health

If you would like to know more information about nutrition and diet for your health, you can contact Jeanann at ann@slfirst.co.uk

An Interview With GB Sewing Bee Star Lynda Lewis

by Sarah Lawrence



As a wonderful advocate for what Deaf people can do, Lynda Lewis will feature in Episode 5 of BBC 2's GB Sewing Bee having won the hearts of many of the programme's viewers. Intelligent and creative in design and delivery, Lynda was generous enough to give us a further exclusive interview, allowing me to ask some of the questions that many viewers will have had on their lips.

1. When did you start sewing, where, how?

I can't remember a time when I didn't sew, my mother was a tailor and I was constantly surrounded by fabric and sewing machines! Until the day she died, she

still did alterations for the shops in Caerphilly, as well as alter and make clothes for people who had known her for years.

2. Are your daughters following on your sewing shoes?

I was delighted when Sarah started to knit and crochet, and I bought her a sewing machine for Xmas a few years ago. Sadly, she hasn't been bitten by the sewing bug like me but hopefully now that Amelia is in full time school she might get the time to get started on a few projects. When friends ask her if she sews, she tells them that she's never needed to as I make anything she wants! I also bought Natasha a sewing machine too and that hasn't been used either.

3. Have you made a prom dress before - why and how did you start, where do your creative ideas come from?

When I was young, I made almost all of my clothes and if I was invited somewhere special, the first thing I would do was get together with my mother and start planning what to make. I think the first prom dress I made was for Sarah but special occasion dresses are really my favourite garments to make. I've made wedding dresses for close friends as well as Sarah's and my own, the last one I made I copied a designer dress for a wedding gift to a friend. When I see a piece of fabric I can imagine how it will look made up. I also like to copy and modify dresses that I've seen to suit the person I'm making it for.

4. Have you made many since the start of the GB SewingBee, what were they and who were they for?

Since the programme, I haven't had much time to do anything! I've made fancy dress costumes for my grandchildren and at the moment I am making summer dresses for Amelia. I've been asked to make items for people since they've seen me on The Sewing Bee, but as I'm working full time I don't have the time or the energy. I spend weekends catching up on housework and more importantly spending time with my family.

“A lot of people have been surprised by my sewing on the programme as I don't really tell people I can sew unless it comes up in conversation”

5. Your sewing talent is showing through and I hope it will inspire more



deaf people - have you met any other deaf sewers since?

I haven't met any other deaf sewers, although there are a few following me on Twitter and they said that I've inspired them and given them confidence to try new things.

6. Have you experienced any barriers during the programme?

In the first episode my interpreter was seen but as my confidence grew I said that I preferred to lip read when the judges or Claudia were talking to me. However, watching the programme on television, it is apparent to me how much I was missing out with the other contestants. My interpreter asked me if I wanted to know when the others were talking, but it totally distracted me, so I said that I would prefer to just carry on with my sewing. As you can imagine, it is impossi-

ble to lip read and sew at the same time!! Also, when we were in the café, I didn't have a clue what the conversations were about unless my interpreter was there.

7. Working in schools, making costumes for plays - which was the most memorial and why?

Working in school I didn't really make costumes for the plays unless a child turned up without one!!! I remember making about 12 outfits for the Day of Dance, and a banner, which looked really lovely.

8. Do you think the public's attitude towards you and deaf people have improved since you've shown the public what Deaf people can do on TV?

I don't know about attitudes changing but I think that a lot of people have been surprised by my sewing on the programme as I don't really tell people I can sew unless it comes up in conversation. Sometimes, I don't get my machine out for months on end and I'm always pleasantly surprised that I can still make anything I try. Deaf people can do anything ... except hear!

9. How did you feel when you saw Emma and what relation is she to you?

Emma is my daughter Tash's best friend. I was totally surprised when I saw that Emma was my model. A few weeks previously I had made her 2 dresses without using a pattern, so needed her measurements to work with. When I received my model's measurements, I commented

that she must be about the same size as Emma. Sarah and Tash were worried that I would guess, but it didn't cross my mind for one minute that it would actually be her.

10. Are the competitors deaf aware, how do they communicate with you?

I don't think the other competitors were deaf aware, they would set out with good intentions but then forget. This usually happens with me ... I wonder if it is because my speech is good.

11. Why did you choose that prom dress material and why that style?

I fell in love with silk fabric on the show. I had never used it before as it is expensive. The fabric I used for the prom dress was 100% shot silk and you really couldn't see how beautiful it was on the television. It shimmered as it moved! I researched prom dress patterns before choosing that particular one and found that short styles are fashionable at the moment. I also wanted to show the judges that I know how to use boning to shape and support the bodice.

12. How did you feel about getting garment of the week for the second time?

What did Emma think of the beautiful dress she was wearing on the programme? I loved the fact that I finished my dress early as the others were rushing about and some weren't finished. I was delighted and Emma wanted to keep the dress, she LOVED it!!!

"I was amazed by the people I spoke to who had been following Lynda on the Sewing Bee, and there are so many new sewing groups in Deaf Clubs, her influence has been amazing"

Richard's Super Car Experience Whets my Appetite

by Sarah Lawrence



Do you enjoy driving? I know I do. All of my life I have wondered what it must be like to drive some of the nicest (and fastest) cars that money can buy. When a friend of SLFirst (Richard) had a chance to do so with a company called 6th Gear, I had to find out more.

Booking was done easily on-line. Through 6th Gear, there are a range of driving packages available, ranging from relatively cheap around £60, to the use of multiple cars costing hundreds. Richard had been bought a good package so was looking forward to his first ever drive in a Ferrari, in his case, the Ferrari F458 Italia



which has a top speed of over 200mph and is often regarded as the best Ferrari in over 20 years.

With a range of tracks available, 18 year old Richard chose to go to the Longcross circuit in Surrey on a Sunday. Wondering if he might be the only person having a drive, Richard arrived at the track to be greeted by big 6th Gear trucks and a line-up of 13 super cars that would have motor enthusiasts like me drooling.

Richard had booked his Ferrari drive for 1.45pm but was required to arrive 45 minutes beforehand. The registration area was well signposted and he was able to register quickly and easily. He bought extra insurance for £25 during registration for minor damage that might be caused to the Ferrari, but this was not needed as the opportunity to cause that slight damage did not really exist.

Following registration, he had a small wait before he was asked to enter the pit area where all the 6th Gear cars are parked during driver change over. Before his drive he was taken on a familiarisation lap in a 3 series BMW, something that he felt was very worthwhile before getting into his super car. "I'm glad that I was able to see the track before I got to drive the Ferrari, so that I had some idea of the track," explained Richard. "I feel I would have wasted my first lap otherwise just gingerly driving around."

Within minutes of finishing that chauffeured lap, he was introduced to his co-driver for the main event. "Walking

towards the most beautiful red Ferrari, I must confess to feeling the adrenalin rise and the excitement build,” Richard told me. “Having wanted to drive a Ferrari for as long as I can remember, I could not believe that I was going to do it, and the fact that I was getting to drive before my dad made it even more special.”

Looked after by an experienced driver and with only 18 months driving experience, Richard was able to pull away smoothly in the Ferrari of his dreams, despite never having used a semi automatic transmission before. Having booked three laps of the circuit Richard was joined on the circuit by an Aston Martin, a Ferrari F430 Spider, Audi R8, Porsche, a Lamborghini and a McLaren, making this quite a line up in the hands of amateur



racing circuit drivers.

Reaching speeds well in excess of 100mph on his maiden drive, Richard found the experience exhilarating, finishing his drive with the broadest possible smile. “It was just amazing,” said a beaming Richard, “I thought I was going fast and then my guide told me there was a Porsche car in front and that was never allowed to be in front of a Ferrari, so he made me speed up to get past. It is just a



huge wow from me, all I have to do now is find a way to buy my own!”

With one final bit of the package to come, Richard waited only a few more minutes before he was invited into the passenger seat of an RS Fiesta. He could have paid £25 extra for this lap to be in a Radical racing car, but plumped for the Fiesta.

Returning to the paddock area less than a minute after he had left, the colour had drained from his face and he alighted the Fiesta with a huge puff of his cheeks, “That was just astonishing,” he exclaimed, “truly amazing!”

With good quality toilets on site, a café area for food and drink, good signage throughout, and a good system of administration, the 6th Gear experience proved to be a huge success as far as Richard was concerned. At the end of his driving experience he was given a certificate and the opportunity to buy some professionally taken photographs of him driving down the main street. Paying £35 for this package, he was also buying the rights over the photos to use as he wished.

Although Richard’s drive had been booked months in advance, there is no need to do so. 6th Gear promote each of their events on their website and there are opportunities to turn up and pay for a driving experience on the day, with a whole range of driving options available.

Having learned all about Richard’s experience, I think it’s time for me to have a go!



Sarah O'Dowd - Capturing the Best of the Northumberland Countryside

by Sarah Lawrence



Coming from an art background, Sarah O'Dowd became interested in painting whilst at school. Living in Northumberland, Sarah has easy access to the dramatic coastal stretches of the North East of England and the beautiful hilly countryside as you travel in land. Enthusiastic and excited about her surroundings, "The colours around the coast and the countryside inspire me", Sarah explained.

Born profoundly Deaf into a hearing family, Sarah was brought up orally and was introduced to British Sign Language by Deaf friends later in her life. Exposed to art by her parents, Sarah used to attend art galleries when she was young. With one of her grandmothers living close to one of the famous Ashington Pitman Painters, Sarah was able to watch him paint, an experience that was invaluable to her as she started painting.

A wife and mother of 10 year-old twins, Sarah has to balance her family life with her painting and manage all that around the chronic fatigue she feels as someone with M.E. (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis). Just managing the energy of 10 year-old twins would be enough for most people!

With years of experience behind her, Sarah enjoys creating her own interpretation of the landscape around her. "My landscapes add up to much more than a record of, 'I was there and it looked like this,'" she commented. Against the backdrop of being Deaf and having M.E., Sarah does not allow her deafness to stop her from achieving her dreams. For those that are interested in taking up painting Sarah advises, "Start young and be exposed to all kind of art."

Enjoying reading, photography, walking and taking her dog out, Sarah also has a great passion for history, but it is her husband and children that make her laugh the most, although the antics of her puppy also brings a frequent smile to her face. Amongst the many positive compliments and comments Sarah has received about her art, one stands out more than most, "My professor of Fine Art at Newcastle University likened my work to Turner during a speech he gave at my solo exhibition at Whitehall, London in 1997."

Ambitious about her paintings, Sarah sells her work through placement in galleries and through her own website. She remains keen to get her work better known and to take part in more exhibitions. She is already booked for an exhibition at the end of June at the Congregational Gallery in Rothbury, near



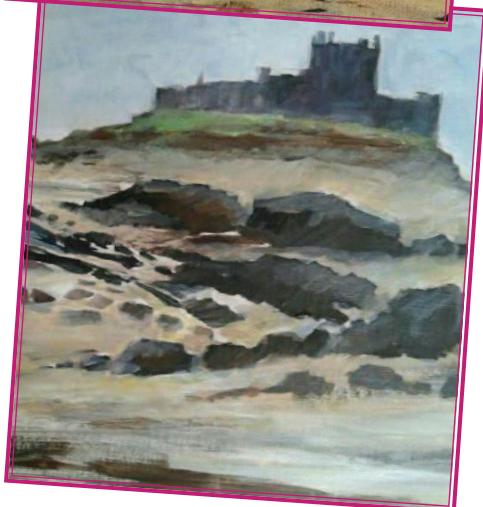
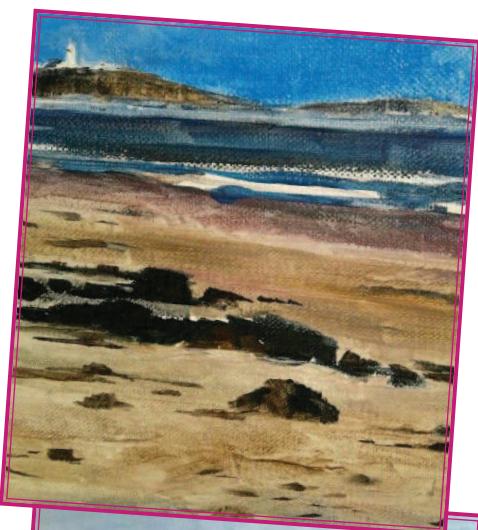
to where she lives. To find our more go to: www.congregationalgallery.co.uk

Sarah uses oil and acrylics on canvas, and also with oil pastels, which working rapidly, she washes down with turpentine to creat a hazy, atmospheric feel to her work. Apart from a forced break from painting because of her M.E., Sarah has exhibited regularly since 1995, when she took part in the Festival Exhibition in Edinburgh. She has since shown her work in London, Newcastle, North Shields, Cockermouth, Leith, Alnmouth, Coldstream and Felton.



Sarah is also determined to fight her M.E., a fight for recovery in which she is making progress. Fiercely determined, Sarah tries not to let anything get her way, but she does admit that during a holiday in Italy she agreed to go on a rather tame looking ride at Garda Land, only to find that they had in fact boarded a high speed roller coaster!

If you would like to see more of Sarah's paintings or are interested in buying from her, please visit her website at: www.sarahodowd.co.uk



Crufts and Deaf Accessibility

by Wendy Bebb



Crufts is a hugely popular annual event, in fact it is the biggest dog show in the world. For a huge number of people involved in this pastime, the aim is 'to qualify a dog for Crufts'. Achieving that ambition is usually the culmination of a year of dog showing, all over the country, indeed, with the relaxation of quarantine regulations, exhibitor come from all over the world.

This year some 22,500 dogs were exhibited at Crufts, including our very own Field Spaniel, Sonnetend Gentle Touch Cochen, known to us as Teisen. Our day started at the very early time of 4.30 am, with Teisen already fed and exercised, we set off from home at 6 o'clock on the journey to the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) in Birmingham. Car parked, we then joined the other exhibitors making

our way to the hall for our specific breed.

What I fail to mention is, I am profoundly deaf and have been since an accident at the age of sixteen. This year at Crufts, I made it my mission to find out just what provision or services are available at this great event for the deaf, after all, here in the UK we have 10 million people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. I have attended Crufts for some twenty-five years and am ashamed to admit I have always relied on hearing people to find

information for me.

Well this time was to be different! The first part of the day was easy, we had written directions guiding us to where we would exhibit our dog. We were delighted when Teisen was awarded second place in her class, thus qualifying her for next year's Crufts.

Excitement over, I set about looking for the Hearing Dogs for the Deaf display. I signed I am deaf and in fairness a young lady with the hearing dogs team managed a few signs and pointed to a notice informing everyone of a puppy training display for later that day, with an interpreter called Tom. Well done Hearing Dogs. I returned to watch a very interesting display, with a signer to assist deaf spectators.

Crufts is hosted by the Kennel Club and throughout the NEC there are various stands dealing with dog issues, so I thought this would be a great starting point for accessibility for either deaf dog show exhibitors, or the



general public who flock to the NEC in droves for this prestigious event. Hm-mmm, after trying unsuccessfully at two different Kennel Club information areas, I was advised to contact them at a later date.

So, for the 2014 Crufts, I was unable to discover whether the Kennel Club will stop and think about deaf people in the future. There is no reduction in entrance fees for deaf spectators or exhibitors and whilst personally, I dont think there should be, BUT come on the Kennel Club, provide the service of a signer to give deaf people an equal standing with your hearing audience. Most of us will have access to subtitled television, however, wouldn't it be great if group judging, for all breed winners, which is watched worldwide, could have a signer, just so the information on each competitor is available for both deaf and hearing.

Crufts is what all of us dog show folks aim for, but it is also an expensive day, isn't it only fair that I am as aware of information on different dogs e.g. their



ages, if they have won anything in the past. I intend to badger the Kennel Club, as Crufts generates huge sums of money, so I would like them to seriously consider the issues I raise, in the hope that next year's Crufts will be far more deaf friendly.

ZOONIQUE WALKTHROUGHS

ANNA'S
WELSH ZOO
our world, your world

MANOR HOUSE WILDLIFE PARK.CO.UK

On the B4318 - two miles from Tenby SA70 8RJ

A circular advertisement for 'Zoonique Walkthroughs'. It features a young girl with long brown hair, wearing a white top and blue jeans, kneeling on straw and interacting with a small brown and white animal, possibly a guinea pig or rabbit. The text 'ZOONIQUE WALKTHROUGHS' is curved along the top edge of the circle. To the right, there is a portrait photo of a smiling woman with long brown hair. Below the circle, the text 'ANNA'S WELSH ZOO' is written in large letters, with 'our world, your world' underneath. At the bottom, there is a graphic of a white rhinoceros and the website 'MANORHOUSEWILDLIFEPARK.CO.UK'. Social media icons for Twitter and Facebook are at the bottom left. The overall background is green.

Viki & Actress Marlee Matlin launch 'Billion Words March'

by Sarah Lawrence



Viki, the global TV site powered by fans, yesterday announced the launch of Billion Words March, a global campaign to champion complete and accurate closed captions across online TV shows and movies. To kick off the Billion Words March, Viki partnered with Marlee Matlin, Oscar winner and Emmy-nominated actress who is a long-standing advocate for closed captioning. Together, Viki and Matlin will work to improve closed captioning and increase accessibility for online viewers in all countries and languages.

The Billion Words March follows the February 20, 2014 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandate outlining new standards for accuracy, timeliness, and on-screen placement of closed captioning, ensuring

full access to television programming for Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing. These new quality standards for closed captioning come into effect on April 30, 2013.

"It's not just a few people who need this. We're talking about hundreds of millions of people around the world who are deaf and hard of hearing but who deserve access to entertainment, no matter what language they speak," said Marlee Matlin, actress and closed captioning advocate. "I support Viki in this cause because they have a unique crowd-sourced subtitling technology that puts the power of closed captioning TV shows in the hands of everyday people like you and me. We can do this together."

Deaf since early childhood, Marlee Matlin has been fighting for the past five years to get companies that offer streaming and online video to include closed captioning for the 35 million Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing.

"With so much technology out there, there were still holes and people were



being left out," Matlin told ABC News. "There's no excuse in this day and age with so much technology out there that's there's not sufficient and 100 percent accurate captions."

Viki invites viewers to join the Billion Words March campaign at www.billion-wordsmarch.com and on Twitter via #billionwords. Supporters are also encouraged to caption TV shows and movies on Viki.com – joining Viki's avid community in the march to reach a billion words translated on the platform during 2014.

"Our mission at Viki has always been to bring down language barriers that stand between great entertainment and fans everywhere," said Tammy H. Nam, CMO and General Manager, Viki. "Our amazing community of fans have subtitled 600 million words to date – that's the equivalent to 50,000 novels – in 200 languages. Our goal is access for all viewers, including hundreds of millions of people who are deaf and hearing impaired worldwide. We can't reach 1 billion words without the help of viewers everywhere, so we encourage everyone to join the effort."

Viki is a global TV site with TV shows, movies and other premium content, translated into more than 200 languages by a community of avid fans. With 30 million viewers each month and over 600 million words translated, Viki uniquely brings global prime-time entertainment to new audiences and unlocks new markets and revenue opportunities for content owners. Viki was named a World Economic Forum Technology Pioneer 2014 and was acquired by Japanese internet services giant Rakuten in September 2013. The company has offices in San Francisco, Singapore, Seoul and Tokyo.

About Marlee Matlin

Marlee Matlin is an Academy Award winning actress, TV star and author, best known for her breakout role in "Children of a Lesser God" for which she received an Oscar and Golden Globe. She also spent seven years on the award winning drama "The West Wing." In 2011, Marlee

joined the cast of the Peabody Award winning ABC Family series, "Switched at Birth." Marlee has also starred on ABC's "Dancing with the Stars" and was a finalist on "Celebrity Apprentice," raising a record \$1 million for charity in one day.

"The opportunity to communicate in sign language, one of the most beautiful languages in the world, is an advantage that deaf people enjoy. It's a language that combines several elements at once with a simple hand movement and facial expression: meaning, affect, time and duration. It's just so beautiful that printed or spoken words can't begin to describe it." - Marlee

Throughout the years, Marlee has helped raise awareness for better hearing health for millions of deaf and hard of hearing children and adults in developing countries, supporting the Starkey Hearing Foundation. Marlee currently serves as a National Celebrity Spokesperson for The American Red Cross and the National Association for the Deaf and was instrumental in getting federal legislation passed in support of Closed Captioning, both on broadcast television and broadband, as well as Text to 911 Emergency services.



Aspiring, Influencing & Achieving as a Deaf Youngster

by Elan Môn Gilford



Foreword by Sarah Lawrence – Being deaf can, and often is, life changing. Sadly, with well meaning hearing people usually advising, cajoling and deciding on what is best, being deaf can end up limiting a youngster's later

life choices. This includes in education, work opportunities, well-being, wealth, health and happiness.

But, it doesn't have to be like that and there are plenty of successful deaf people out there, each one demonstrating what is possible. Don't get me wrong, it will be tougher, there will be barriers, there will be low moments when tremendous durability will be necessary to plough on positively – but it can be done.

Attending a disability conference recently, I had the pleasure of meeting Elan Môn Gilford, a delightful young lady from Anglesey, North Wales. Elan is deaf and at 15 she is an extraordinary young personality whose story is worth telling. This is Elan Môn Gilford, written by Elan herself.

Elan's Story

I am a fifteen year old girl, humorous and full of energy! I live in Llanfairpwll and I am a pupil in year 10, Ysgol David Hughes, Menai Bridge, Anglesey. I have had a hearing loss since the age of 3 and I wear two hearing aids – I am no good without them! Every day is a challenge for me, but this is not a barrier in school or in doing activities or voluntary work.

Sport plays a huge role in my life as I commit over 10 hours a week, including going to 4 or 5 weekly training sessions and a number of coaching sessions at school, for the Urdd, and within my local community. As a pupil at Ysgol David Hughes, I have competed for the school in a wide range of sports, including netball, football, badminton, cross country running, athletics and mountain biking.

Despite my ability across a wide range of different sports, I devote the majority of my time to my main passions within sport, karate and netball. These sports have been where I have experienced a majority of my success.

Five years have passed since I attended my first course with the Urdd. These sessions proved to be very valuable to me,

allowing me to develop and move along the Welsh Netball pathway. I train with Llangefni Netball club and I have won the player of the season award for the past three years. I have captained the Eryri Netball under 14's team in Merthyr Tydfil where I was chosen as one of the twenty best players throughout Wales.

I am now in the Eryri Netball under 16's squad and a current member of the High Performance Netball Club North West Wales, training once a month at Maes Glas, Bangor. As a result, I was invited to the Wales Netball Team trials under 17's last year but the outcome was, "maybe next year!"

Even though I'm classified as disabled, I don't think my disability has affected my ability to compete. Sometimes I have to work harder, but it hasn't stopped me competing at a level I want to compete at.

I am a dedicated member of Zanshin Karate Cymru, Caernarfon and train three times a week. Winning the UKASKO National Championships in Manchester (Kata Gold Medallist) and becoming the UK Kata Champion at my age grade felt like a huge achievement. I was extremely proud.

“Being deaf is not a barrier in school or in doing voluntary work.”

As part of my role as Young Ambassador, I assist with various 5x60 activities during lunchtime, after school and at weekends. Being an Ambassador I have been able to be part of a team ‘Young Ambassadors - Commonwealth Games Media 2014’ in Cardiff. I am a Millennium Volunteer and also assist with Môn Active. I have received my 100 hours volunteering certificate and I am well on my way to receiving my 200 hours certificate for my volunteering work in the community and

beyond.

If I can gain such skills, I think anyone can. I have attended numerous sport courses run by the Urdd and these have most definitely proved their worth in the way they inspire and attract children who are not as sporty. Seeing primary school children benefit from the activities are great - the benefits could be a life changing experience for so many children / young people in Wales.



Currently, I am studying ‘British Sign Language’. After I have finished the course I would like to volunteer with deaf children and young people so that they too can have the opportunity to enjoy and venture to the best of their ability in sport. I feel that it is important for everyone to have equal opportunities to participate in activities regardless of ability or disability.

As a Young Ambassador representing Anglesey, I was fortunate to attend the Disability Sport Wales Stakeholder Conference at the Cardiff City Stadium on the 28th of April 2014. To date, it was the best day ever, I got to be on the ‘Athletes Panel Session’. I met many truly inspirational people/athletes at the meeting and made new friends, even famous friends!

My ability to compete at a high level through mainstream sport has improved my confidence, and through coaching I can prove to others that having a disability doesn't have to affect what you can do!

As recognition of my hard work, determination and success I have been nominated to represent the Urdd on behalf of Anglesey as a Commonwealth 2014 baton bearer at the National Eisteddfod in Bala, North Wales. This news has certainly spurred me on to continue with my efforts even though my schedule is full!

Silence Racing's Caleb McDuff Continues to Progress

by Sarah Lawrence



Round Three of the Bambino Kart Tour, took our ambitious deaf 6 yrs old, Caleb McDuff, to the Eastern border of Gloucestershire, to Shenington Airfield, the home of a 1018m outdoor kart track. The race weekend was greeted by the first prolonged sunshine of the year, although a strong cooling breeze made sure Caleb and his fellow racers did not get too hot in the glorious sunshine.

Having only been to the track once before for a test session, Saturday was a learning opportunity for Caleb, although for a 6 year old, learning racing lines and maximum speeds on the different parts of the track is far from straight forward. With dad Ian slowly learning tricks to improve the karts performance, Caleb was hoping

to close the gap between himself and the fastest drivers in the Bambino class, most of whom were in their second year of racing.

Having made the three hour journey to the track, the GoCompare sponsored driver went through the usual routine of removing his cochlear implants, donning his red balaclava and then putting on his helmet, proudly adorned with a picture of the Welsh Dragon. Still very much a novice, Caleb drove faultlessly, lap after lap, gradually improving his times. Caleb's racing lines are good, but watching on eagerly, dad Ian is looking for Caleb to push the kart to find out what it is capable of on each corner, even if that means spinning off every now and again. Being deaf, and at the ripe old age of 6, it is difficult to communicate those wishes with Caleb, who maintains his no-risk attitude to racing, whilst still averaging more than 40mph around the track.

Ian was introduced to the father of a deaf boy who had competed in the Bambino class last year. Heavily involved in the elite end of motor sport now and knowing everything there is to know about setting up racing cars and karts, the advice given proved invaluable in eking out just that little bit more performance. Unlike cars which slowly lose performance as they





get older, the opposite occurs with racing karts, so the more miles Caleb's kart does, the better it will become.

Finishing up after a long practice day, Caleb had given his all, understandably he is exhausted and needs a good night's sleep ready for RACE DAY!

Waking to clear blue sky, Ian and Caleb were joined by mum Lianne and grandad David. With another long day ahead, Ian is hoping to see Caleb's times slowly get quicker throughout the day, and with Lianne and David able to help keep Caleb occupied in between races, Ian is able to do some fine tuning. Sun lotion applied, and with the Bambinos first on track, Caleb walked to the marshalling area with mum and dad, Caleb looking just that little bit pensive. It takes Ian a few moments to get Caleb into his usual racing mindset with the balaclava not seeming to sit right at first and then his helmet having to be re-adjusted to make him comfortable.

Finally settled, Caleb is ready to Go

Racing! Following this first warm up practice session, Caleb then has four timed sessions throughout the day, making Race Day another exhausting one. The set up at Shenington is excellent and with so many different classifications of racing, the paddock is littered with small father and son outfits to marquees housing what look like professional kart teams.

Being the youngest competitor in the Bambino class and driving a kart that still needs lots of miles on the clock to get it run in, Caleb is not expected to set the fastest lap just yet. Following good racing lines and having superb control over his kart, Caleb started off driving well within himself and the performance of the kart. However, he continued to learn through each session and despite the weekend's exertions, he ultimately set his best time on the last but one lap he drove on the day, a lap time 2 seconds faster than his earlier efforts. With all concerned delighted by his improvement, Caleb has closed the gap between himself and the pace-setters in the Bambino Kart Tour.

Facing a long haul to Round 4 of the Tour, Caleb will be heading for the Larkhall Kart Circuit south of Glasgow on the 21st & 22nd June. Famous for bringing through racers such as David Coulthard, Dario Franchitti and Alan McNish, most petrol heads would love to have the opportunity to drive on the circuit. Planning further testing before that long journey north, Caleb and the whole Silence Racing Team will be hoping to see further progress over that weekend.



National Deaf Tennis Championships

by Sarah Lawrence



Four former champions were among a strong field for the men's and women's singles at the 2014 National Tennis Championships for the Deaf, which took place at Gosling High Performance Centre, Welwyn Garden City from 3-5 May.

Organised by the Tennis Foundation, the Championships are the domestic highlight on the deaf tennis calendar and give experienced and up-and-coming players the chance to compete side-by-side.

Players compete for honours in men's and women's singles and doubles, as well as mixed doubles, while a clinic for adult and juniors and a fun tournament on the first day of the Championships ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for players of all abilities to encourage and inspire more deaf people to take up tennis.

This year's Championships saw members of the National Deaf Tennis Squad aiming to put in eye-catching performances ahead of the announcement of selections for the Great Britain team for the Dresse and Maere Cup, the Davis and Fed Cup of deaf tennis, which will take place in Chattanooga in the USA in July.



West Byfleet-based defending champion Peter Willcox bid for a 12th men's singles title, but was bound to face strong opposition from Wiltshire's Lewis Fletcher, who beat Willcox in 2012 before Devon-born Willcox avenged that loss in last year's final.



Among the players expected to challenge Willcox and Fletcher this year were Surrey's Jack Clifton and Liverpool's Shaun O'Brien. Clifton won silver in the junior boys' singles at the 2012 European Championships before making his Deaflympics debut in Sofia, Bulgaria last year, while O'Brien is a former winner of the British Deaf Tennis Association's Most Promising Player Award.



A talented group of players from Surrey included three-time women's singles National champion Bethany Brookes, who, like Willcox is also bidding to retain the title she won most recently last year. Brookes won two medals at the 2012 European Championships, earning gold in the junior girls' singles and silver in the women's doubles.

"The 2014 National Championship is set to be a fascinating event once again"



Brookes defeated 2005 National champion Beth Simmons in the 2013 final and Oxfordshire's Simmons, the women's singles champion in 2005, returned again this year. She was joined in the field by her twin sister Alex Simmons, a former women's doubles National champion with Beth and a former Deaflympics mixed doubles bronze medallist.

"The 2014 National Championships is set to be a fascinating event once again, with the entry including experienced internationals and some of the sport's rising

young stars," said Catherine Fletcher, Great Britain Deaf Tennis Coach and a seven-time women's singles National champion. "I have played plenty of tough matches against the likes of Bethany, Alex and Beth in the past and will be watching with great interest."



"The men's singles and doubles will also be great events and spectators can expect a very high level of tennis as the likes of Peter and Lewis pit their experience against the up-and-coming players. I'm also very excited by the opportunities we have for players of all ages and abilities and the chance to introduce new players to deaf tennis through our clinic and fun tournament." Entry to the National Tennis Championships for the Deaf is free to all spectators and play is scheduled to begin at 10 am on Saturday, 3 May.



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With over 10 years working with the BBC and ITV, Sarah is undoubtedly one of the most knowledgeable people on the subject of deafness. A BSL user and heavily involved with the deaf community, Sarah is able to deliver the solution you need, designed to maximize the benefits for you, and with everyone's best interests at heart.

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BDF Cup

by Sarah Lawrence

British Deaf Football has a long and proud history in the UK, dating back to 1871 when Glasgow Deaf Athletic Football Club was formed, making it the oldest deaf football club in the world, and also one of the oldest sports clubs. Given the history, it is pleasing to see that deaf football is thriving today with 25 active clubs spread around the whole of Britain.

Whilst some of these teams compete in mainstream football, the majority also take part in the England Deaf Football League as well as in the British Deaf Football Cup. The latter has been running since 1959 and culminates in a finals day when teams compete for the Cup and Plate trophies. The Cup is contested by the two teams who have won in each round of the competition. Teams knocked out in Round 1, go on to compete for the Plate, thereby ensuring all teams have the opportunity to go on a 'cup run'.

This year's finals were held on Saturday 3rd May at Garforth Town Football Club, just outside Leeds.

If you asked players what they wanted for perfect playing conditions, that is what they had, a largely clear sky with wispy clouds, light cooling breeze keeping temperatures to 15°C and a dry grassy surface that still took a stud. It was perfect and be-fitting of these final matches.

Catching up with Vaughan Jenkins, the President and Martin Lewis the Director/Co-ordinator of Great Britain Deaf Football before the games, I was chatting to the men who had been at the helm of British Deaf Football for the last 28 years, the continued popularity of the competition owing much to their commitment and organisational skills.

Talking about Garforth Town FC, Martin Lewis said, "I would like to thank them for their wonderful hospitality, ground staff for a beautiful pitch, for providing wonderful facilities such as dressing rooms, food, drinks and refreshments. Just a great welcome." Looking forward to the game, Martin was enthusiastic about the Cup match, "It will be an interesting game because both teams easily won in the semi finals with Belfast beating Glasgow 3 -1 and Fulham beating Colchester 4 -1. Both teams are on par with each other. It will be very interesting to see what happens."

Vaughan Jenkins, agreed with Martin's comments and added, "Fulham are last year's champions so it will be interesting to watch."

The Cup was being contested by reigning champions Fulham and the team



from Belfast, who were making their fourth appearance in the final in the last 6 years. Looking fit and athletic, these players take their football seriously and I found myself wondering why there had not been a deaf player at the top level of football since Liverpool's Jimmy Case, more than 20 years ago. Speaking casually to some of the young stars of deaf football, they have little doubt that their deafness has held them back.

Maintaining the international standard for representative deaf sport players must have an average hearing loss of 55 decibels or more in their best ear to qualify to play. This meant that many of the players communicate using sign language and the referee, Peter Walker, waved a white handkerchief as well as blowing his whistle to show the game had stopped. "We use a flag or a bib to get the players attention basically", explained Peter before the game. "My two assistants will be raising their flag at the moment in time as well when I've blown, so everybody knows that something's happened that we need to stop the game for." Little things please me and learning that experienced referee Peter was being assisted on the day by young up-coming officials Jordan and Jessica, his son and daughter, made me smile.

With pre-match interviews completed, we were under way. In a cagey start to the game, both teams passed the ball around easily, with little pressure on the man in possession. With early momentum swinging towards Belfast and with skipper Roy McKee barking orders to his players, the first decent chance fell to Belfast striker Brian Babb who was put through on goal, only for Fulham keeper Sam Kemp to expertly smother the shot.



The Fulham mid-field started to gain some momentum in the game but with their defenders playing a high line, it looked as though Joe Wylde had been put through on goal, 9 minutes into the game, only for the touch judge to rule him off-side. With 15 minutes on the clock, it was Belfast who had the first sustained period of pressure with four shots in quick succession inside the box, all blocked by determined defending.

Looking strong and threatening in possession, Brian Babb met a cross on the



20 minute mark to put in a great header on goal, only for Kemp to save superbly, pushing the ball inches wide of the post. With the game starting to look like a one-sided affair, Fulham's hard working Nick Gregory, was put through on goal by a great pass from Jacob Wills, only for his shot to balloon over the bar under pressure from keeper Roy Keating.

In an increasingly even battle, the next great chance was again to be Fulham's, when Wills struck the ball goal bound from 6 yards out, bringing an amazing save from keeper Keating. With Fulham's confidence rising, a foul 30 yards out on the half hour mark, gave Belfast an opportunity to throw their big players forward. With everyone expecting a floated ball into the box, Noel O'Donnell struck a fine attempt at goal that had Kemp clutching at thin air. Catching the underside of the bar, the ball bounced

down and out to the centre of the area, where skipper McKee calmly knocked the ball back into the net, to give Belfast a 1 – 0 half-time lead.

Into the second half, influential Belfast midfielder Richard Beattie continued to impose himself on the game. With just 3 minutes on the clock, the ball was played up to Brian Babb on the edge of the box. With a suspicion of handball, he knocked the ball down and past the defender and found the back of the net with a shot from a narrow angle left of the goal. To Fulham's credit and with urgent signed messages between players, they fought hard to get back into the game and a series of close chances followed from skipper Jonathan Evans and substitute Daniel Hogan. With continued pressure, several further chances fell to Fulham and with tensions rising, a series of fouls followed requiring words of advice from referee Peter Walker.



Despite McKee demanding greater composure on the ball from his midfield players, Fulham continued to press and a good effort from Hogan from 35 yards out brought another good save from Keating. Chances continued to flow from Fulham but it seemed they were destined not to score. Into injury time, their luck was to change when Hogan put in a cross into the box from the right. Defenders failed to clear as the ball reached Ben Lampert who struck the ball into the net, bringing the game to 2 – 1. Knowing there was little time left in the game, Fulham players were asking for a few more minutes, but



the referee brought the game to a close shortly after the re-start, Belfast claiming the GB Deaf Football Cup for the third time in four years.

The elation of the players at the end of the game showed just what this meant to them and all attached to the club. With great sportsmanship from most of the players, Fulham roundly applauded Captain McKee as he was presented with the Cup. Man of the Match, Richard Beattie commented, "This is my third final in 5 years and I never expected to be a man of the match but I am delighted and for my team to win is a bonus. We were nervous at the start, but we quickly focused on the game. We wanted to win for our fans, family, friends and everyone in Belfast and Northern Ireland."

Although on the losing side on this occasion, Fulham's Nick Gregory told me, "Obviously I'm gutted we lost, but I thought it was a very good match, both teams played fair, respected each other and worked hard. They had an opportunity to score both goals, we had plenty of chances but didn't score. A credit and very well done to them. This year the football standard is much higher than it has been in previous years in all games including the first round. It is good to see. In the last 5 years it has been Fulham and Belfast in the finals. Fulham, Belfast, Belfast, Fulham and Belfast this year."

After a brief lunch break attention turned to the Plate final between St. John's Deaf Football Club and Doncaster Trust Deaf Football Club. Under the ever-watchful eye of referee Peter Walker, the Plate final got underway. With many of the players knowing each other through GB

representation, neither team wanted to risk outright attack. The first chance in the game came from a St. John's free kick 25 yards out. Taken by dangerous striker Daniel Ailey, his shot failed to test Doncaster and GB keeper John Atkinson as it sailed over the bar.

Minutes later, St. John's were unlucky when the ball struck the crossbar from a well-taken corner. Despite plenty of possession and a series of chances from niggling fouls, neither Daniel Ailey or Jamie Clarke were able to make the breakthrough for St John's. For Doncaster, striker Andrew Reay looked combative up front, demonstrating excellent skills for a big man and buying his team time by holding the ball up before laying it off to his supporting midfield players.

0 – 0 at half time, St. John's had enjoyed most of the possession, but everyone involved knew this was still anyone's game.

The second half started much the same as the first, with slow paced possession and the Doncaster defence determined not to let Daniel Ailey slide off the challenge and get in behind them. One foul too many saw Peter Wood get a yellow card, and the subsequent free kick was met with a goal bound header, John Atkinson making the save on the line.

Seemingly on top again and waiting for their own breakthrough, St. John's allowed Doncaster to develop an attack, with striker Gareth Denmead going through on goal and drilling the ball into the bottom corner past keeper Hasan Er. Moments after the re-start, impressive Doncaster defender Seon Anderson ventured forward chasing a pass into the

box. Hauled down by Er, the keeper was lucky to receive only a yellow card for the challenge.

Gareth Denmead grabbed his second with a superbly taken penalty to the bottom right hand corner, giving the keeper no chance to make the save.

Memnos Costi came on for St. Johns, instilling some pace into the game. Throwing more players forward, gaps developed and Doncaster nearly went three up, the effort knocked over the bar. With Reay holding the ball up well and with a hard working disciplined midfield, several more chances fell to Doncaster, with Gavin James trying a long range effort that was saved low down.

With the game opening up as the clock wound down, players started flying into the tackle resulting in a few names going into the referee's book. In a final effort to get a break through, St. John's gained some attacking momentum in the game, resulting in a couple of frenzied periods of activity in the penalty area and some last ditched clearances from the superb Doncaster defence, both Ailey and Xavier going close in those final minutes.

When the referees whistle blew for full time, Doncaster were crowned the worthy Plate winners. Receiving the Plate from guest of honour Andrea Hardwick, John Atkinson could not have been more delighted with the result. "What a fantastic feeling. It's the best feeling because we won today and beat St. John's twice within 2 weeks. Our strategy worked and it was well worth all the hard work. Respect to St Johns, there were lots of attacks from them in both games and we've just found a break through."

Gareth Denmead picked up the Man of the Match award, the Doncaster team delighted with the day's work.

Going off without a hitch, the GB Deaf Football finals were a huge success. The players, officials, organisers and Martin Lewis in particular, should be proud of their efforts in maintaining the proud history of deaf football.



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National Deaf Swimming Championships

by Sarah Lawrence



Despite great efforts by the National Deaf Children's Society and some local councils to promote swimming opportunities for deaf children, lots of deaf youngsters in the UK do not consider competitive swimming because of the communication barriers at club level.

In recognition of the inequality deaf people face and to ensure deaf swimmers can compete on a level playing field, deaf swimming was recognised as a disability competitive group in 2006 and is now notified by the S15 classification.

Swimming has been an integral part of the Deaflympics since the 1924 games in Paris and remains well-supported at the pinnacle of international deaf sport. In

the UK, deaf swimming is now overseen by GB Deaf Swimming and they host the national championships, attracting swimmers from all over the UK.

On Saturday 12th April, the 2014 National Deaf Swimming Championships took place at the impressive National Centre for Swimming at Loughborough University. Aged between 9 and 20, many of the swimmers arrived for the championships the night before, giving themselves the best opportunity to prepare properly for the competition. There was a buzz of excitement at the hotel in anticipation of the following days competition.

I asked Assistant Coach, Martin Lee, a little about his role and what he has to do differently when coaching deaf swimmers. A multiple gold medal winning swimmer from the Deaflympics in New Zealand in 1989, Martin told me, "It is important to communicate well and to check that you have been understood. Because the start is by a flashing light, we also have to teach a slightly different start." Ambitious for his swimmers, Martin told me that his greatest challenge is, "to get a deaf swimmer to win a Deaflympics gold medal and get a world record at the same time."

Head coach to the GB Deaf Swimming Squad, Sam Chamberlain would like to see more deaf people enter the sport and compete at national level. "One of my greatest challenges is to encourage and support more deaf swimmers to join the GB Deaf Swimming team in the future," he explained.

Trooping off to the pool at 8 - 10pm, the competitors were given an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the venue, the feel of the water in each venue being a little different. With events from 50 to 200 metres, some swimmers had the opportunity to compete in 9 different events, all within four hours of competition and it is this punishing schedule that helps you understand why swimmers train so hard.

Returning from a training session that would leave most people gasping for breath, these youngsters were in fine fettle, seeming as though they had just taken a quiet stroll around the block. Early to bed, I sensed the following day would leave me in awe of the dedication and fortitude of these deaf youngsters.

Speaking to Nigel Kenny the father of 16 years old Oliver, I was given a real insight into the importance and impact of the national championships. "We have really enjoyed deaf swimming (nationals)," Nigel told me. "When my son was young he was inspired by the older swimmers and found the environment so relaxing and enjoyable as he could communicate with everyone. Since then he has built lasting friendships and even though they only meet two or three times a year, the swimmers have a great bond."

Arriving early at the pool on race day, I was stunned to see just how far 50 metres looks when poolside. The thought of trying to do one length brought shivers to my spine. The venue as a whole was fantastic and befitting for any national swimming championships. With 32 swimmers and 5 'guest' hearing siblings taking part in 19 events, the water was soon a frenzy of activity as the swimmers began their pre-competition warm up. That seemed exhausting enough!

Before the main event we were treated to a preview of the GB team outfits for the upcoming European Championships in Russia, with those swimmers already selected for the team modelling it poolside.

With the officials making their way onto poolside all dressed smartly in white, I could feel expectations rise. Parents and

supporters were gathered in the spectator area and the big digital results board changed to show the names of the four swimmers taking part in the first heat of the ladies 200 Individual Medley. I asked Ian Allchin, a referee at the event whether there were any adaptations as this was a deaf event. "Only for the starting procedure", he told me. "I understand that there is development work going on for a better starting process with a strobe for each lane."



Before the start of the first race, the referee gathered all swimmers at the end of the pool to demonstrate the starting procedure, a flashing light being used along with the usual high pitched beep the starting machine blurs out. Fully briefed and raring to go the first swimmers approached the starting blocks. As they stood on the blocks I couldn't help thinking about how small they looked with that vast expanse of a competition pool ahead of them. Two strokes of butterfly is my life time best and these youngsters were going to do 50m butterfly, followed by 50m backstroke, 50m breaststroke and the final length using freestyle.

In the referees hands, they were called forward, "take your marks", and with



swimmers looking towards the starting machine, the flashing light beeped on and they were off, diving sleekly into the water, before rising to take their first butterfly stroke.

Race after race followed, with some of the best deaf swimmers in the world on show in amongst some relative newcomers. Danielle Joyce, multiple world champion was in the final heat of that first race, winning the race in a personal best (PB) time. With all but one of the swimmers in the first race setting a new PB, there were smiles aplenty amongst the much travelled parents looking on.

In the men's 200 IM, further successes followed with some of the swimmers easily beating their PB time, including the impressive 16 years old Oliver Kenny who took 4 seconds off his previous best time, winning the race in a time of 2:27.31.

In the expert hands of the organisers, referee and officials the Championships ran smoothly, and despite the gruelling schedule, many swimmers achieved personal best times, some of the younger swimmers such as Evie Gallen, Lucy Jordan-Caws, Natasha Milton, Andrew Gallagher, and Ciara Tappenden taking more than 10 seconds off their previous best times.

Following Event 11, there was a short and welcome interval for the swimmers for the presentation of medals for the first six events. Guest of honour to make the presentation was James Mander from

Advanced Bionics UK Ltd.

Back under way shortly afterwards, there were further excellent performances from swimmers in all categories. I particularly enjoyed the two head to head events between twins Lewis and Fraser McCulloch, aged 13, with less than a second dividing them.

At the end of the racing, I was honoured to be asked to present the medals and trophies to the swimmers.

With beaming smiles and rightly proud of their achievements, it was lovely to play even a small part in recognising the huge endeavours of these youngsters.

As with most sports for youngsters, parents play a pivotal role in nurturing their children, supporting their development and getting them to training. Speaking to parents there was significant praise for the National Championships themselves but widespread concern about the lack of financial support for deaf swimming. Additionally, several parents made comments about the flashing light starting system not being available at mainstream swimming events, the lack of equipment such as white boards to write up sets and deaf awareness of some coaches.

It was also a record breaking day, with no less than 26 National Deaf Records being beaten and 5 new Northern Ireland records being set. Four Deaf Welsh age group records were beaten by Emily Noden; Danielle Joyce set two new Deaf Scottish records, and new National Deaf age group best times were set by (11 and Under) Jake Bayley, Zack Merritt, Kieron Harris, Evie Gallen; (12 years) Martha Ryan and Ciara Tappenden; (13 years) Lewis McCulloch; (14 years) Kieran Holdbrook; and (16 years) Oliver Kenny.

You can find out the full results on the GB Deaf Swimming website at [GB Deaf Swimming](http://www.gbdeafswimming.com) or on our results page at [silfirst deaf sports results](http://www.silfirst.deaf-sports-results.com).

Danielle Joyce Swimming into the Record Books

by Sarah Lawrence



Just occasionally, a sporting talent comes along who looks at the height of the bar set by their predecessors, and just jumps right over it. In terms of athletics years ago, this might have been Roger Bannister. More recently, but still on the track, Usain Bolt the sprinter fits the bill. In the swimming pool a youngster named Ian Thorpe took the world by storm. In terms of deaf swimming, there is a Scottish swimmer who is setting the deaf world

of swimming alight and we were fortunate to be given an exclusive interview with Danielle Louise Joyce, aged just 17, but already a multiple world record holder.

Danielle's parents first found out that she was deaf when she was 5 years old. Whilst her parents were troubling over the reason behind her deafness, Danielle was just getting on with her life, and it was only when she received her first hearing aids that she realised how much she had been missing. With little support available outside of their audiology department, Danielle's parents were left frustrated at now knowing why their daughter was losing her hearing and what they could do to best support her.

In her latest audiogram Danielle was found to have a 98db hearing loss in the right ear and 87db loss in her left, with her hearing having declined quickly since she was about 13 years of age. "My hearing loss was moderate and fairly static from the point I was diagnosed at 5 up to 13, but it has declined dramatically since then," Danielle explained. "If the loss continues, I will be profoundly deaf in both ears and will need a cochlear implant."

An impressive student in school, Danielle has achieved great results throughout and is currently Head Girl at the Auchentharvie Academy. She is also a platinum sports ambassador for the school. In amongst her academic results, Danielle achieved an A in music where she played grade 7/8 tuba. Despite being academic, Danielle describes school as "ok". She is currently studying for 2 Highers in Biol-

ogy and Psychology, in which she hopes to achieve A grades in both. Looking beyond her current studies, Danielle is hoping to go to University to study Sports Science, a route that will help her to continue her development as a swimmer.

Taught orally, Danielle is quite good at lip-reading. Having been taught the BSL alphabet by her mother when she was small, she has gone on to learn some British and American Sign Language phrases. Whilst much of her schooling has been a success, Danielle found that she could not continue with French because the listening aspect of the course proved too difficult. She also had some difficulty with music but playing the tuba so well was enough to get her a good grade. "Sometimes hearing teachers in a noisy classroom was just too difficult", Danielle described.

Because Danielle had started school by the time she was first diagnosed with a loss of hearing, her parents left her in mainstream schooling. As Danielle coped well and continued to progress with good results, her parents did not have to look at alternatives. However, they did play their part in ensuring her needs as a deaf student were recognised and accommodated. "Danielle has always been in mainstream school and was only diagnosed with moderate hearing loss in primary 1," her mum told me. "We worked with her secondary school who helped immensely with staff awareness and providing a separate environment for listening exams."

Taking up swimming as a toddler, Danielle joined North Ayrshire Swimming



Club to join her sister when 7 years old. When she first joined the club her hearing did not cause any difficulty with coaching, but as her hearing deteriorated it became increasingly difficult to get the instruction she needed. Progressing well, Danielle had to cut down on her training when she was 11 due to serious tendon problems in her knees and ankles. In September 2011, she then broke a bone in her foot forcing her to quit all sport for a while. At that point, she decided she was not going to return to the pool.

However, with the resulting 3-month forced break from sport and the natural passage of time in respect of her body growing, Danielle's knee problems improved and she found herself back in the gym training and running. Feeling fit and healthy again, Danielle quickly realised she was missing the pool. Her return to fitness coincided with an invitation to attend a small disability swimming event that was being held next to her school. She attended and was encouraged to consider taking part in deaf swimming, an opportunity that she did not even know existed.

Returning to the water, Danielle is delighted with her coach's approach, "My coach understands my problems and we work together to make sure I get to read the sets (training schedule) before I start and she knows she has to face me to make sure I can lip-read her instructions. My coach is fab," she beamed.



Since returning to the pool and throwing herself energetically into her training regime, Danielle quickly improved her swimming times and rose quickly up the swimming rankings. Her return to the pool saw her selected in 2012 to swim for the GB team at the 2013 Deaflympics on the proviso that her times were good enough. In March 2013, Danielle announced that she was well on course to meet the times needed when she broke the Deaf World Short Course Record in the 100m backstroke and 100m individual medley in a National Disability Swimming Event in Sheffield.

Through continued hard work, Danielle reached the targets expected of her and travelled to the Deaflympics in Sophia where she reached the final in seven out of the seven events she took part in. Missing out by inches for a medal, this nevertheless announced to the world that Danielle was a young lady on the move in swimming circles. It was a good experience, "The Deaflympics was amazing", Danielle described. "I was a bit gutted at not getting among the medals. I have made so many friends around the world from the experience. Fundraising was really difficult but my dad helped me get some stuff locally from my schools and shops including us standing at the door of Tesco with a bucket for 6 hours. North Ayrshire Council helped me through their Nurturing excellence scheme."

Danielle's father volunteers a lot of his time to support the administration of GB Deaf Swimming and like his daughter, he is hopeful that deaf sport will gain better recognition and support in the future. When asked what is needed to improve deaf sport, he said, "Funding, publicity and recognition of their achievements as we feel that people do not realise the disadvantage deaf athletes or children are at."

Hungry for further success, Danielle set three more Deaf World Short Course Records in November 2013, breaking her own records in the 100m backstroke and IM, and claiming the world record in the 200 IM.



Travelling to Rochester in the United States in January, Danielle was once again competing against most of the best deaf swimmers in the world. She left this swim meet having performed brilliantly, setting no less than four new world records in the 200 IM, 50, 100 and 200m backstroke. Commenting on her US achievements Danielle told me, "I was over the moon because I managed to beat the gold and silver medallists from the Deaflympics at backstroke. Everyone was so great as well and I made friends with swimmers from countries like Russia, Taipei and of course USA. I was really nervous as I was the only swimmer from GB".

Commenting on her successes, Danielle's father said, "We are so proud of not only her swimming achievements but also her academic and community achievements, especially the way she has coped with the dramatic loss of hearing over the last few years at such an important time in her education. To compete at the level she does after the leg problems she had growing up shows us how determined she is to succeed."

Despite the success, a return to the UK

saw Danielle back into her weekly training regime involving 8 swim sessions, 3 gym sessions and a one to one session with her coach. It is a pretty gruelling programme but with Jess Ennis as her sporting hero, you can see where this young lady gets her inspiration. Despite the seriousness of the sport and the extent of the training required to compete at the top, there are still moments to smile about as Danielle recalled.

"I was waiting at the blocks to start a mainstream race and there were no lights with the starting system, so I needed a 'Tapper'. I use my friend Jen, but she was having a shower, so I told the referee he had to wait and Jen came running round with a towel wrapped around her to tap me to start the race."

With ambitions to win gold at the next Deaflympics in 2017 Danielle is extremely appreciative of the support she has received from mum

and dad. Commenting on their parental role I asked Mr and Mrs Joyce if they had any advice for other parents of deaf children, "Stay positive. Be Pro-active, not just in learning about deafness but getting the best opportunities available in school, sports and other interests that they have and let them know that anything is possible. There is no reason for them not to live a full life."

Whilst Danielle competes in mainstream swimming events, she appreciates the opportunity deaf swimming provides. "You get to compete at the highest level against others who are in the same position as you," she told me.

A thoughtful and articulate young lady, Danielle expressed her desire for people to see the capabilities of disabled and deaf people, rather than the over concentration on what people can't do. Having gone through the arduous ordeal of self-funding to go to the Deaflympics, Danielle is also hopeful that through greater publicity and media coverage, deaf sport will receive greater funding in the future.

Keen to maintain her progress, Danielle competed in the DSE Junior and Youth Nationals at Sheffield at the end of March. Maintaining her superb recent form, Danielle set a further three world records, in the 100 backstroke, 100 and 200 IM. Missing out on a new 50m free-style record by 0.02 seconds this was nevertheless a new European record, a feat Danielle matched in the 100 freestyle where she dropped under 58 seconds for the first time.

**Keen to learn
Danielle's philosophy
behind deaf people
achieving things, I
was delighted to learn
it is exactly the same
as mine, "Just do it."**



iPhone compatible hearing aids

Apple's proprietary wireless streaming technology is being utilised by ReSound LiNX™ to allow users to control their hearing aid and stream audio directly from an iPhone, iPad or iPod touch. ReSound has also developed an app letting the wearer directly control their hearing aid as never before. This Made for iPhone hearing aid is now available in the UK.

Via the app, the hearing aid's settings can be modified through the iPhone or iPad. Wearers can adjust volume, treble, bass etc to suit specific environments – their local restaurant, café, sports stadium, the office, at home – and ReSound Smart app's 'geo-tagging' feature will remember these adjustments when they return to that location. It knows where you are and what you require.

Phone calls are streamed direct to the hearing aid – so there are no distractions or background noise. If the wearer is using their iPhone or iPod touch to find their way around, then the turn-by-turn directions also come directly through to the aids.

For music lovers and film buffs this hearing aid can be used as state of the art headphones by streaming the wearer's favourite music or film track direct from the Apple device.

And if the aid is lost then the app enables you to use the iPhone to locate it – by homing in on the device.

The direct Bluetooth® Smart connectivity (that enables the data exchange between the aid and Apple device) means that the ReSound LiNX™ aid wearer does not need to carry a separate remote control unit. This makes hearing aid usage and control more discrete and less cumbersome.



"There are three things I particularly love about my Made for iPhone hearing aids. First, the sound quality is the best I've ever heard in a hearing aid – totally natural. Second is calling my daughter on my iPhone. Conversation is streamed directly into my aids wirelessly, so the phone can be on the table and I can talk normally with my hands free. Third is being able to adjust the sound settings via the Smart app on my iPhone so they are how I like them. I slide the bass level to halfway – and the treble towards the top – so easy with the on screen sliders. That gives me perfect sound."

-- Vernon, London

ReSound LiNX, the world's smartest hearing aid, combines the best in hearing aid technology with the latest in iPhone functionality – to produce the only hearing aid that can come close to describing itself as 'cool'. It is available from all good independent hearing aid dispensers. To find your nearest visit: <http://www.resoundlnx.com>

Smart Lightbulbs



LG has recently launched a new 'smart lightbulb' in Korea that could be very useful for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people who use smartphones.

The bulb is a fairly ordinary looking bulb but as it's an LED bulb it uses 80% less energy than traditional bulbs and at around 5 hours use per day it'll last for more than 10 years. The smart part of the bulb comes from its built-in WiFi

 and Bluetooth[®] connectivity which allows it to connect to your phone (iPhone and Android).

By using LG's app on your phone it then means you are able to switch the light on/off from your phone and can

even pulse in sync to the beat of music (Android only) to create your own mini disco. Where it gets even more interesting though is that it's able to flash the light when you receive a phone call. This would be a great way to indicate to people that they need to check their phone if they often don't hear it ringing.

At launch, the app doesn't currently offer the ability to flash the bulb for a text message but this could be offered in future updates – and potentially for emails or other notifications too.

The app and bulb also offer the ability to vary the brightness depending on the time of day; so you could have it dimmer in the early mornings so that it doesn't hurt your eyes. One step further than that you can swap out your current noisy/vibrating alarm clock for a fake sunrise in your bedroom each morning to gently wake you with light.

The bulb is launching now in



Korea for 35,000 won which is around £20 at current exchange rates. It should be launching in the UK later this year.

Live subtitles for real life!

by Sarah Lawrence

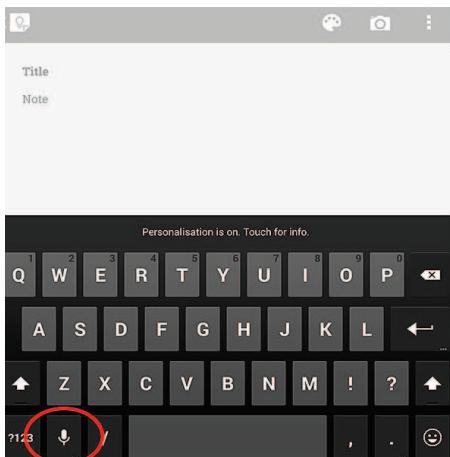
For those of you who would like some live subtitles, I've just discovered a very useful feature that could come in useful for those of you who have an Android phone / tablet (e.g. Asus, HTC, LG, Motorola, Samsung, Sony).

In the past when I needed to know what a hearing person was saying, I've tried to use automatic speech-to-text on older phones and tablets but it didn't work very well. The recognition wasn't great and it was also awkward to use. You needed to activate the 'listening mode' to start converting the spoken language to written text, but nothing would display on the screen until you'd told the phone to stop 'listening'. What happens then is a difficult conversation where you're trying to guess whether the person has finished speaking so you can press stop and read what they said or whether they've just paused for a breath and you've now interrupted them!

However, after this came up in conversation today, I was told that things have improved a lot since then and some software is now able to do voice recognition instantly – or at least very nearly instantly. I saw an example of this on an Android tablet called a Nexus 7 with the built-in Google keyboard. For those of you with an Android phone/tablet who'd like to give it a try, here's how.

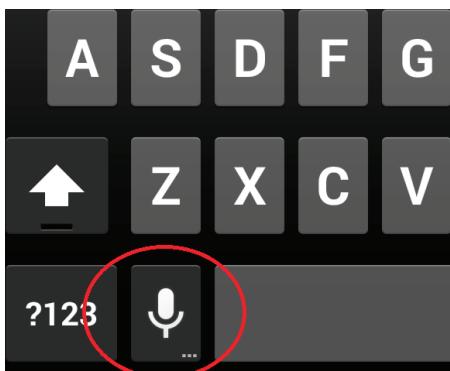
Open any application you can type into; text message, email, notes.

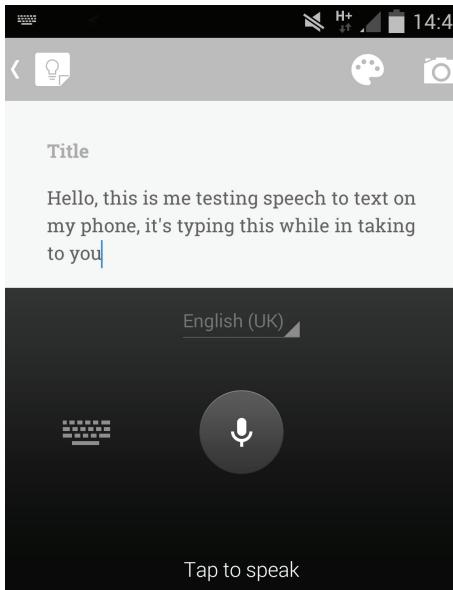
Then have a look at the keyboard, towards the bottom right you'll see an icon that looks like a microphone.



Pressing that icon starts the process and when anyone is speaking, whatever they say will appear on the screen. It's not quite every word appearing as it's said, but it's close – the text appears on screen nearly in real time.

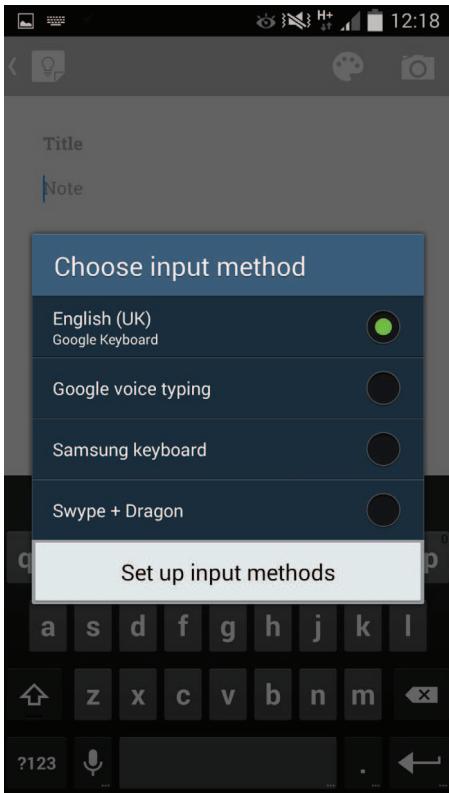
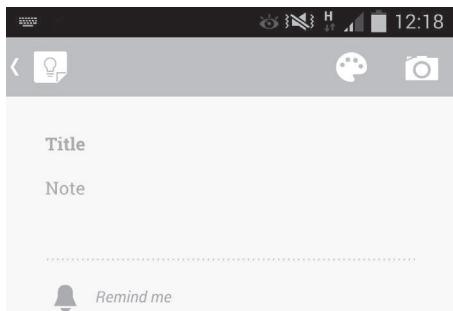
The speech recognition works well, but it's not perfect; of course you will see some words coming up wrong, but when you're in a situation where you know that someone is saying something, you aren't able to hear them and they are unable to communicate with you – this could come in handy.





Some manufacturers change the keyboard to their own version (e.g. if you have a Samsung or HTC phone). If your Android phone or tablet doesn't have this same Google Keyboard, then you can easily install this keyboard from the Play Store by searching for 'Google Keyboard' or by scanning the QR code here to go directly to the right item. When you have downloaded the new keyboard, open the app and it will guide you through the process of enabling your new keyboard.

If you want to switch between the keyboards you have installed then you can do this using the icon for 'switching input method'.



Click into any box you can type in (email, text message, notes, or document) and a new icon will appear at the top-left that looks like a little keyboard.

Open your notifications bar and press that icon which will list your available keyboards to quickly swap between them.

The one that we're using here for the Speech-to-text is the one labelled "English (UK) Google Keyboard" although if you only want to enable it once and then switch back to your normal keyboard you can also choose "Google Voice Typing".

We've tried to find something similar that works on iPads and iPhones but we're currently unable to find anything that works instantly – if you know of an app that does this well, we'd love to hear about it; get in touch ann@slfirst.co.uk

Text to Speech on your phone/tablet

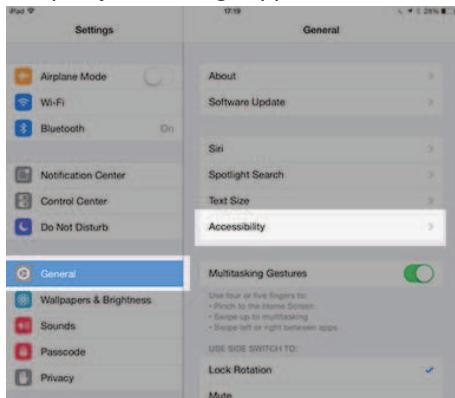
by Karl Jenkins

This is the opposite way to the 'live subtitles' article we have this quarter's magazine; this time we're looking at how to make your phone or tablet speak something that you've typed in. And the good news is, it's easy to do on Android and Apple devices.

Android and iOS phones and tablets both have text-to-speech (TTS) built in – usually as an accessibility feature in the phone settings. However, it's easily missed and often not easy to use unless the app supports it. But here are some easy to follow instructions to get text to speech working on your phone or tablet. First up, here's how to enable it on your iPhone or iPad.

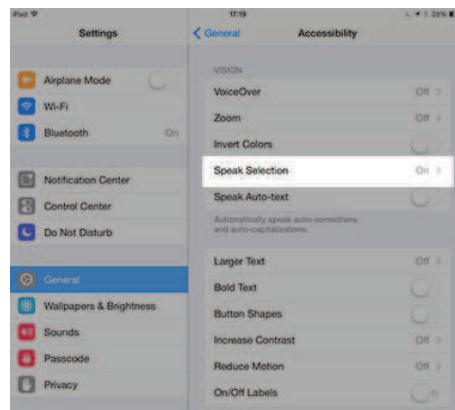
iPhone / iPad

1. Open your Settings app. In the list on

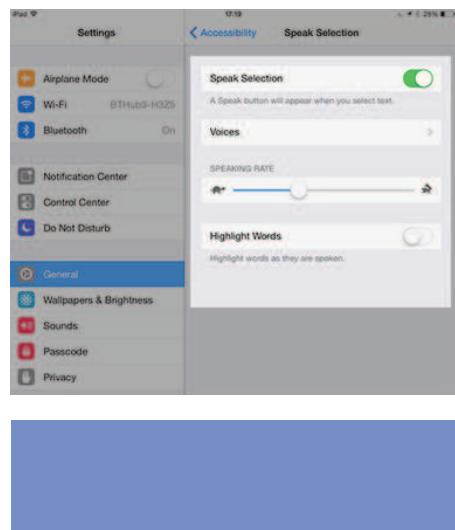


the left, tap on General and then Accessibility on the right.

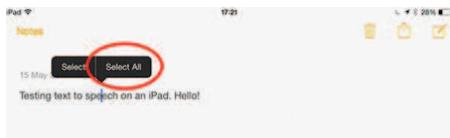
2. Tap on Speak Selection



3. Slide the Speak Selection option to On.



4. Now open any app that you can type in – e.g.. Notes – and type in some text. Press in the middle of the text and choose ‘Select all’



5. Then a new option will appear – press ‘Speak’ to have it say aloud the words you’ve highlighted.

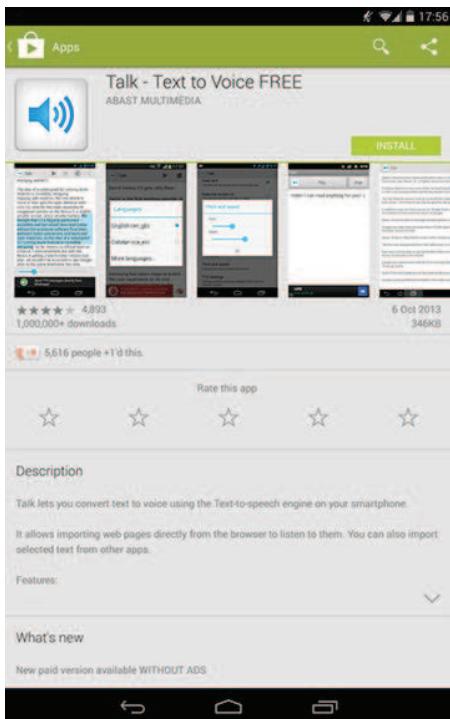


Android

Next up, Android users. Again Android phones and tablets all have text-to-speech installed but it's not as easy to make it speak. To make it very easy to use, I'd suggest getting an app for this – the Play Store has many apps for this if you search for ‘text to speech’, the one we’re using in the example here is called Talk by a company called Abast Multimedia.

“Android and iOS phones and tablets both have text-to-speech built in”

1. Download and install app; you can search to find the app on the Google Play Store or use the QR code here and scan from your phone – just press install to get it (free version contains adverts, paid version without adverts is also available)



2. When you've got the app installed, open it and type in some text



3. Then just tap the play button at the top and your Android phone or tablet will say out loud whatever text you've written. So that's how you can get your phone or tablet to talk to other people; potentially a useful tool for anyone unable to use their voice.

Scan Mailboxes Service

by Sarah Lawrence



Ken & Chris

Two Deaf men based in Texas, USA have recently started their own smart mail scanning and forwarding service. Chris Landry and Ken Brown, both Deaf since birth, have launched their Scan Mailboxes service to replace private and business mailbox rental services.

Around the world many small businesses choose to subscribe to mail storage or forwarding services when they start out so they have a more professional looking business address and they aren't required to give out their home address to everyone. But one common problem is then having to travel to collect your mail.

Ken and his wife had been using mail storage services for a number of years but had become frustrated with having to travel to check them only to find that it was full of junk mail. Then last year Chris asked Ken to keep an eye on his mail while he was going to be travelling for a month; he would scan each envelope that arrived and send it on to Chris. They realised the usefulness of this service but were surprised that no one was offering it already and as a result their Scan Mailboxes service was born.

They think their service is able to benefit anyone who travels frequently, works from home or moves often. Customers use their address instead and include a unique mailbox number (similar to PO Box numbers) so they can ensure the mail scanned in gets to the right person. They also offer the ability to have packages sent there for those people not able to have them delivered to their place of work.

When a new letter arrives their team scans both sides of the envelope and send that to you online. You receive an email notification to let you know that you have new mail, the scanned envelopes and letters can be read on computers, tablets and mobile phones. You can then check to see who it's from and decide what to do with it; you can have the letter opened, scanned and sent to you electronically, forwarded in the post or immediately shredded and recycled. (For all that junk mail you don't want!)

They offer their services worldwide starting from \$9.95 (£5.89)/month with the first month for free - although as it's currently only the one location in Texas, you would probably have to expect some delays in your mail if it's having to travel around the world! If you'd like to find out more about their new service you can check out their website at www.scanmailboxes.com.

See Me, Hear Me opens up lines of communication

by Sarah Lawrence

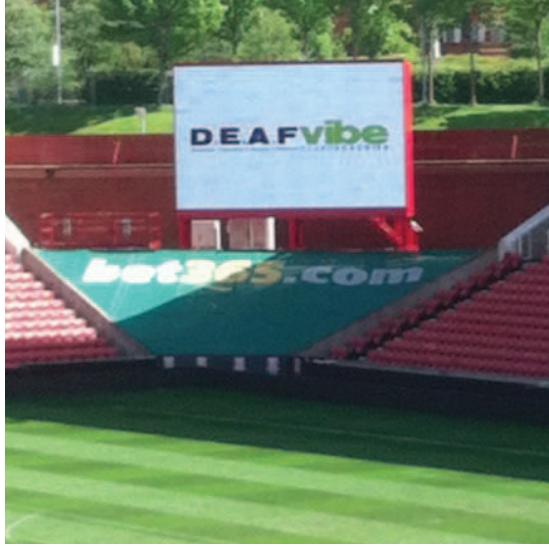
Having had a great time at Deaf Day at the City Lit a week before, I was greatly looking forward to the See Me, Hear Me Event being run by DEAFvibe on Friday 9th May at the Britannia Stadium, home of premiership football team, Stoke City.

DEAFvibe is a Deaf led charity working to support deaf people across Staffordshire, with the event seeking to put deaf friendly service and product providers in touch with deaf people living in the area.

SLFirst had not been to the event before, but having completed the booking form, I thought the following administration and information was excellent, with Alison France, one of the founders of DEAFvibe, ensuring I had everything I needed.

Setting out early in the morning from South Wales, I was pleased to be driven, allowing me to catch up on some of the sleep my early morning start had deprived me of. Clearing the M5/M6 junction without difficulty, we arrived at the Stadium bang on the 8am start. On the road so early to get there and desperate for an early morning coffee, my one disappointment from the day is that there was nothing available when we first arrived to set up. There were already lots of people wearing the lovely DEAFvibe polo shirts ready to help, with registration taking moments and people on hand to show us the second floor and to our stall.

With a lot of exhibitors registered for the event, two large rooms at the Britannia were being used, a much better set up



than at City Lit, with the set up making it easy for exhibitors to visit other stands. Having all the exhibitors in two large rooms also brought a vibrancy to the event that slowly built up as more and more exhibitors arrived. With the lovely guys from the BSL Zone on one side and the ever popular Fire Service on the other, I was looking forward to a good day.

One of my joys in attending events like this, is that I always bump into friends I have not seen for some time and See Me, Hear Me, proved no exception. I also enjoy being in the company of large numbers of 'signing' Deaf people, giving me the opportunity to relax when chatting, without the effort needed when I am in the company of a hearing person or someone who is deaf but does not sign.

The event did not attract the number of visitors enjoyed by City Lit, but outside of London that is not a surprise. That said, we were busy and on our feet for most of the day, with a steady drip of people coming to chat and find out about SLFirst. Having a deaf and hearing person at our stand proved beneficial to help us communicate with everyone. Finally snatching a cup of coffee before the 10am start, the wonderful DEAFvibe team had been around to provide wifi details, to let us know they had interpreters and helpers available and make sure we had everything we needed. There were lots of DEAFvibe volunteers and I thought they were brilliant on the day.



I took the opportunity to grab some quick BSL interviews with some of the exhibitors, asking why they were here and what they hoped to get out of the day. I was pleased that Staffordshire Police had a number of staff involved, all of whom could sign a little and a Sergeant Ruth Templeton who was studying her Level 3. The Fire Service stand also had the benefit of Paul Lewis who was also a Level 3 signer. With lots of BSL users being pushed towards Paul by some of the other members of the Fire Service team, I think they would benefit greatly from getting a few other members of staff trained in BSL in readiness for next year.

Taking the time to walk around the whole exhibition, I was taken by the wide range of services and products that were on show, covering a deaf persons almost every need. DEAFvibe have done brilliantly to attract these 54 exhibitors but I could not help feeling that more of the local Deaf and Hard of Hearing community should support this event and that every county area in the UK should have something similar. The term One Stop Shop is used frequently by Local Authorities - this event showed what a One Stop Shop really looks like!

Chatting to deaf people throughout the day, a consistent comment was about the difficulty in finding information needed about services and products. Events like this help greatly, but there it is difficult to let people know the event is taking place, several people telling me they only knew about the event through SLFirst's social media promotion of the event. Aimed at one in six of Staffordshire's residents and given the reach of the 54 exhibitors

into all walks of life, a combined promotion would help greatly, rather than most exhibitors just leaving it to the DEAFvibe team to promote the day.

With a mix of business, public services and charitable organisations exhibiting, there was something for every deaf visitor. I enjoyed visiting the exhibitors and learning about new services and products. There was a good balance of local services and national organisations and I was struggling to find a question I might have about being deaf that could not be answered by someone in one of the two rooms being used at the Britannia.

Housing, jobs, education, health, safety, entertainment, communication, information and advice. All of these issues were covered by one or more of the exhibitors at the event. It was interesting to see how many exhibitors were deaf-led and just how deaf aware some of the non-deaf-led organisations were. I was surprised to see some exhibitors trying to verbally say hello to someone looking down at items on their stall and getting exasperated when they didn't reply. Despite this being a deaf event, it seemed to take some time before the penny dropped that the person at their stand was deaf. I firmly believe that if a business is seeking to profit from the deaf pound, staff should be deaf aware and know how to attract a deaf person's attention.

It was great to catch up with old friends on the British Deaf History, Zebra Uno, BSL Zone, CODA, SignHealth and Sign-Video stands amongst others and to chat to many of the people who attended the event. I was sad to learn of the anxiety felt about audiology services provided by



Specsavers, especially the lack of referral to other support services.

On the flip side, it was lovely to chat with an elderly lady who had become deaf through age. She explained to me how her children/grand children had slowly taken away her independence and introduced isolation and loneliness into her life. Thanking me for the time I gave her to chat, this lady is the perfect example of why the DEAFvibe's cafe is such an important service, providing ladies like this an opportunity to sit and chat with people who are facing similar issues to her.

The effervescent Alison France, was wonderful all day, helping people out with any questions they had and taking the time to make sure everyone was ok. Asking her why she started holding the See Me, Hear Me event, Alison told me, "Well there's nothing for d/Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind and deafened throughout the Staffordshire and Midlands area. We set this up for everyone to have easy



access to learn about the information and resources that are available for them, because there are far too many barriers out there. This is an opportunity for all, with different interpreters and deafblind guides to ensure that when visitors arrive there is communication support available to assist them get full access to the day."

Like SLFirst, there were other first timers at the event, including Sign Lingual. "The company was set up last year and it our first time here. We hope to receive some feedback from the visitors about what we do to improve our services."

Standing proudly by his new book, Same Spirit, Different Team, I asked author and UK Deaf Sport's, Stuart Harrison, why he was at the event. "It is an opportunity for people to buy one of my books and for me to sign them. I also want to give people the chance to ask me any questions about the book or deaf sports in general." Ruth, Annette and Louise, three of the police team at the event, were pleased to be there and have the opportunity to meet some of the local deaf residents. Ruth went on to say, "For a long time I have thought the police need to improve services with the deaf community."

One of the organisations at both the City Lit event and this one, was SignVideo and I managed to catch up with Heidi Kolvisto Robertson to ask what she thought of the day. "In comparison to Deaf Day in London, it was great to meet many Deaf people who are still receiving new information about SignVideo. Obviously there were less people than London but this gave us the opportunity to have quality time with visitors, to have a more in-depth discussion and to answer any enquiries they have."

Summing up at the end of a long but rewarding day, the remarkable Alison France was still smiling and full of energy. "It was absolutely fantastic," she told me. "I deserve a well earned glass of wine when I get home." Alison, we couldn't agree more, but the hard work of you and your team made for a great day for all concerned.

Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

by Catherine Lansley BA (Hons)



What is noise-induced hearing loss?

Age is the biggest single cause of hearing loss but another common cause of hearing loss is damage to the ear due to repeated exposure to loud noises over time and this is called Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL).

When the ear is exposed to excessive levels of loud sounds over time, the sensitive hair cells inside the cochlea become damaged and once this occurs, it is permanent.

What causes NIHL?

NIHL can be caused by a one-time exposure to an intense “impulse” sound called acoustic trauma, such as an explosion, or

by continuous exposure to loud sounds over an extended period of time.

Those people working in noisy environments or with noisy equipment and were not provided with protective equipment are at risk of developing this condition. It is estimated that throughout the world around 30 million workers are exposed to hazardous noise.

Measurement of Noise

Sound is measured in units called decibels. Sounds of less than 75 decibels, even after long exposure, are unlikely to cause hearing loss. However, long or repeated exposure to sounds at or above 85 decibels can cause hearing loss. The louder the sound, the shorter the amount of time it takes for NIHL to happen.

Here are the average decibel ratings of some sounds:

Normal conversation	60 decibels
Noise from heavy city traffic	85 decibels
Air Compressor	94 decibels
Hilti Guns	103 decibels
Fireworks and firearms	150 decibels

What are the effects and signs of NIHL?

When you are exposed to loud noise over a long period of time, you may slowly start to lose your hearing. Because the damage from noise exposure is usually gradual, you might not notice it, or you might ignore the signs of hearing loss until they become more pronounced. Over time, sounds may become distorted or muffled, and you might find it difficult to understand other people when they talk or have to turn up the volume on the television.

The damage from NIHL, combined with aging, can lead to hearing loss severe enough that you need hearing aids to magnify the sounds around you to help you hear, communicate, and participate more fully in daily activities.

Loud noise exposure can also cause tinnitus—a ringing, buzzing, or roaring in the ears or head. Tinnitus may subside over time, but can sometimes continue constantly or occasionally throughout a person's life. Hearing loss and tinnitus can occur in one or both ears.

Management programs exist for those people with NIHL including counselling and the use of hearing aids.

Can NIHL be prevented?

NIHL is the only type of hearing loss that is completely preventable. If you understand the hazards of noise and how to practice good hearing health, you can protect your hearing for life.

Here's how:

- Know which noises can cause damage (those at or above 85 decibels).
- Wear earplugs or other protective devices when involved in a loud activity (activity-specific earplugs and earmuffs are available at hardware and sporting goods stores).
- If you can't reduce the noise or protect yourself from it, move away from it.
- Be alert to hazardous noises in the environment.
- Protect the ears of children who are too young to protect their own.
- Make family, friends, and colleagues aware of the hazards of noise.
- Have your hearing tested if you think you might have hearing loss.

What should I do if need more advice about NIHL?

At Beeley & Co Solicitors we have a dedicated team headed up by myself, Catherine Lansley who will offer you a free consultation and expert advice about

seeking compensation for your hearing loss.

If you think you may have NIHL then we can arrange for you to undergo an Audiogram to determine this. The audiogram test takes no longer than 10 minutes.

We pride ourselves on our communication skills with each and everyone of our clients and we are always available to advise you on your potential claim. You can call us now or complete our online claim form. Remember, this service is free and gives you the chance to find out how we can help you gain maximum compensation through our excellent services on offer.

If you think you have noise-induced hearing loss, Beeley & Co might be able to help you get compensation.

If you need help and would like to contact us, please call Catherine & our friendly, dedicated staff who are always available to help and answer your enquiries. Contact us to arrange an appointment on:-

<http://www.beeleyandco.co.uk/catherine-lansley/>
<http://www.beeleyandco.co.uk/>

Freephone: 0800 195 2537

Telephone: 01273 748 464 (Brighton)

Telephone: 0161 456 2627 (Stockport)

Email: contact@beeleyandco.com



Deaf Day

by Sarah Lawrence



Deaf for 40 years, I thought it was about time I went to Deaf Day at the City Lit in London. Living in Wales, it wasn't an easy decision with the travel arrangements and length of the day, so I only booked my train tickets the evening beforehand.

Having made the decision to go, I was looking forward to meeting old friends, and hoping to make a few new ones too! I arrived at City Lit around 12pm. It was sunny and outside the building it was bright and colourful with lots of people milling around. My priority was a coffee, so I went for what I thought would be a quick visit to Starbucks first, but unlike any other coffee shop I've ever been to, there was about eight different groups chatting away in BSL. I was in heaven!

With not one familiar face amongst them, I introduced myself to a few of the groups so that they knew I was there and was a BSL user. Sitting there eavesdropping would not have been the right thing to

do! Suitably refreshed and already feeling buoyed by the atmosphere, I was ready to face all that Deaf Day had to offer.

Heading back over to City Lit through Holborn town, I saw lots of people using BSL at all levels. Some were BSL learners, others were Deaf people arriving who stopped by to catch up with others. When I arrived at reception, it was quite funny as there were 4 staff busily serving customers, while one person was sitting on his chair just watching. I asked him for a programme but he could not use BSL which is why he was not busy - quite the reverse role to normal.

I took the stairs to the 4th floor, and entered the first room, where I was confronted by the long arm of the law – a Police stall. It was good to see police officers in there who were able to use BSL - some are currently learning level 6 while others level 1. Pleased to see signing cops but keen to escape, I crept into the next room housing Action Deafness books. Here I saw Craig Crowley and 2 authors signing their books. Whilst on that floor I met lots of familiar faces and I was pleased that people took the time to comment about SLFirst and how they love the website and BSL clips. Kind people told me that the magazine is just what Deaf people need. Their comments made me think about why Deaf people don't share information, even if they know about it with lots of people not knowing about SLFirst.

UK Deaf Sports were next before entering a big room where, in true comedy style, John Smith was sitting near the door teasing everyone who came in, including me. It was good to see lots of familiar faces in that room, Rob and Rachel Wilks were at the back busy passing on information. Frances Elton and Sandra Dowe were lovely to meet and a Deaf Islam group who were giving away small bottles of 'cruelty to animals free' perfume and a DVD. It was around 1pm before I realised I had another 3 floors to go and not really lots of time left.

Making my way down to level 3 I bumped into the lovely Tina Lannin from 121 Cap-

tions on the staircase carrying cupcakes. She kindly gave me one and we chatted briefly about exercising. On the 3rd floor there were not many stalls but big rooms on Art Therapy and Fun Arts and Crafts run by City Lit.

Onto the 2nd floor there were more familiar faces including the Signvideo team. Sandra Duguid from BSLworks, someone I have known for many years, came into the room. It was good to catch up briefly before checking out 121 and the Deaf Umbrella stall. In the next room I met Richard Carter, a Deaf poet who performs using sign language. I also met Ai-Live, and it was great to see how their captions work.

Deafinitely Theatre's stall was busy with Shakespeare Global coming up soon. Moving on to the SignHealth stall, I made enquiries on behalf of a deaf friend at home and was given some good advice. It was also nice to meet Paul Redfern who was explaining BDA's role in collaboration with other organisations on their 'Our Health in your hands' project.

Descending to the 1st floor and thinking I had already seen every deaf person I had ever met, there were lots more familiar faces. It was now 3.40pm and being told there was a 5th floor I decided to go up there before heading back down to level 1. It was much quieter and easier to get around and it was good to meet and catch up with the BSL Zone stall.

Meeting the London Ambulance Service team I was pleased to find they were able to use BSL just like the police earlier. They were demonstrating to a group of deaf people how to register themselves for EmergencySMS. I left there thinking this was set up at least 3 - 4 years ago and yet there are still lots of deaf people who had not registered. Why haven't key deaf people from deaf

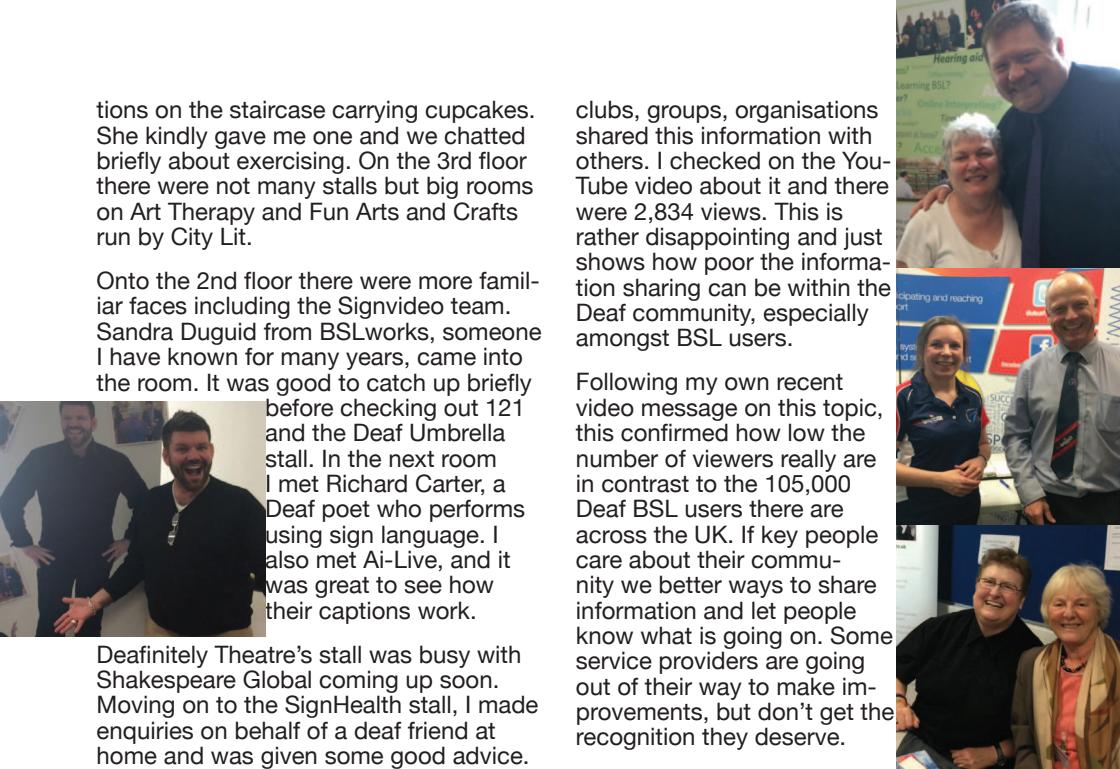
clubs, groups, organisations shared this information with others. I checked on the YouTube video about it and there were 2,834 views. This is rather disappointing and just shows how poor the information sharing can be within the Deaf community, especially amongst BSL users.

Following my own recent video message on this topic, this confirmed how low the number of viewers really are in contrast to the 105,000 Deaf BSL users there are across the UK. If key people care about their community we better ways to share information and let people know what is going on. Some service providers are going out of their way to make improvements, but don't get the recognition they deserve.

Rushing back down to the 1st floor with just 15 minutes left I didn't really have much time to chat. My friends at Signworld were very busy dealing with BSL learners as always. At BSL's new awarding body, the Institute of British Sign Language, it was good to see Peter Jackson and Alan Sharp chatting with some of the learners. I also managed a brief visit to the British Deaf History Society. I asked about the Manchester Deaf Institute building because it is a listed building. The building itself cannot be altered but it was interesting to see change of use inside with a cafe bar and music called Deaf Club. I thought it was an interesting story in itself.

Onto the ground floor, lots of people were packing up to leave but there were still hundreds more people hanging around outside chatting away.

Collapsing into my favourite chair and reflecting on a long day, I must say that it was both enjoyable and useful, and it won't be another 40 years before I attend again!



My Music (with digressions) and Hearing Loss

by Les Birch



I am 91 years old and for the better part of 80 of those years I have been passionately fond of classical music. Sadly, over the past few years, my increasing deafness has meant that much of my recorded music collection has now become little more than a cacophony.

My adolescent formative years in the 1930's were spent in Manchester, home of the internationally famous and well-loved Halle Orchestra. Each winter Manchester Corporation would sponsor a series of 4 so-called Municipal Concerts to which we, as grammar school pupils, were admitted for the princely sum of sixpence (2.5 pence in current coinage). I admit that our initial enthusiasm for these concerts was based solely on the fact that it gave us the chance to meet

the girls from my sister's corresponding grammar school, secondary education in those days being strictly single sex. (I am reactionary enough to believe even now that secondary single sex education is to be preferred to the present system and believe that all pupils at whatever level should face the front of the class instead of sitting around tables with half of them with their backs to the blackboard, or whatever the modern technological equivalent may be.)

In my third year at grammar school a new teacher, Mr Salmon, arrived to take Latin, in which I had just started my second year. It was he who introduced me to the brutality of Caesar's Gallic Wars and the lyricism of Virgil's Aeneid. I was fascinated that we could read the actual words of these two great writers in their original tongue nearly 2000 years after they were first written.



But, this teacher had another talent – he could play the piano. On the days of these Municipal Concerts he would take those of us who were interested and who were going to the concert that evening into the assembly hall at lunch time. There he would introduce us to the pieces that were being played, overtures, symphonies, concertos by playing, for example, the first theme of the opening movement of a symphony. He would then explain how the composer developed this theme and then introduce the second theme and explain how the themes became interwoven. So when we heard the full orchestra playing these very themes later in the day, the music became alive and had a purpose and meaning. I owe that master a huge debt of gratitude for introducing me into this musical world.

At home, sadly, my new found interest in the classics was not fostered by my parents - the sole domestic entertainment in those days was the wireless and they only had to hear the words 'symphony' or 'concerto' for it to be switched off. Nonetheless my mother was musical, she played the piano and insisted that my sister and I should take piano lessons. My sister took to it very well whereas I dropped the lessons as soon as I could, pleading pressure from my academic studies - which was true enough.

I left school in June 1939 to start what proved to be a reasonably successful career in H.M. Stationery Office. I had qualified for university entrance in 1938 but with the prospect of the imminent war looming I had opted for a career rather than face the possibility of an interrupted period of university education. And of

course the war did indeed start just 3 months after I started work. As civil servants we were not allowed to volunteer for the armed services until our age group was called upon to register. It was not until September 1941 that I was able to join the army.

I had been able to attend a couple of concerts after leaving school but tragically the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, where the Halle Orchestra was based, was destroyed by the German air raids on Manchester of 22/23 and 23/24 December 1940. Nearly 700 people were killed during those 2 nights, including an entire family of 4 from our church. (We heard the stick of bombs which killed them whistling down over our house during the attack and always considered ourselves singularly fortunate to escape unharmed). Interesting that a building



could be erected in Manchester in the 19th Century mainly to provide a platform for those two great orators for Free Trade, Bright and Cobden, who finally succeeded in having the vicious Corn Laws repealed in 1846. Interesting too that the building erected to replace it is still called the New Free Trade Hall.

War service left little time for listening to music, although I did manage a visit to the Hamburg Opera House when I was stationed there after May 1945. How that building survived amidst the almost total destruction of that city by the RAF and American Air Force is something of a miracle - a destruction which I consider totally justified as indeed I do all the air attacks on German cities, even including, controversially, Dresden.



After demobilisation I resumed my career with HMSO and having spent 3 years or so in Nottingham, with brief spells in Newcastle and Reading, I finally arrived in London in 1951. By then I had a wife and small son and although money was tight we managed a couple of trips to what was then the new Royal Festival Hall and very occasionally a Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall. It was at the Festival Hall that I first heard a very young Vladimir Ashkenazy playing Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto, a dazzling performance, and there too that I heard Sibelius's Second Symphony for the first time, another performance never to be forgotten. But for the most part our entertainment was the BBC's Third Programme, as it was called in those days, long before television became affordable.



One other unforgettable experience of that time was the great London smog of December 1952. It is estimated to have killed between 4,000 and 12,000 people and I still remember vividly walking to the office with buses being led by men with flares. One good result of the smog was the Clean Air Act of 1956 and after I had lived in the resulting smokeless areas for over 20 years it was a real shock to come to South Wales in 1976 and see chimneys belching out smoke again.

My daughter was born in London in 1954 and shortly after that we bought our first house in the lovely Sussex village of Hassocks, just 11 miles north of Brighton. Money was still tight (when was it not?) but it was here that I constructed my first hi-fi set, buying the components from a wonderfully helpful little shop in Fleet Street. The first record I bought was Brahms's Second Piano Concerto but from then on the music collection and my knowledge of music really took off.

One of my other great passions in life has been France and all things French. This all started during my first visit to Paris as a schoolboy in 1937 - two weeks in Paris, including a 2-day coach tour of the chateaux and cathedrals of the Loire valley, for seven pounds - when, just short of my 15th birthday, I fell in unrequited love with a beautiful girl dancing up and down the steps in front of the Sacre Coeur in Montmartre. I learned French for 6 years and was fortunate enough to become fluent in the language, a gift which I have fortunately retained into my old age. I was fortunate enough too to be involved in the June 1944 landings in Normandy, which led to the ultimate liberation of that country and indeed of the rest of Europe.

It was, I suppose, inevitable that my two great passions, music and France, should come together in the music of that great romantic composer, Hector Berlioz (1803 to 1869). His romanticism was indeed innate and even for a Frenchman he had innumerable affairs. He married, in turn, a concert pianist, an English Shakespearean actress, Harriet Smithson, whom he had seen playing Ophelia in Hamlet, a second-rate Italian singer, Mademoiselle Reco, and finally a charmer from his home village with whom he had fallen in love at the age of 14 because she was wearing pink slippers!

Berlioz also wrote an inspiring arrangement of the French National Anthem, La Marseillaise, all six blood-thirsty verses of it, for two choirs, an enormous orchestra, lacking flutes and oboes, but very heavy in brass and timpani.

My daughter started to play the piano at the age of 10 or 11 and in her first year made such progress that her music teacher insisted that she then also took up the violin. Her progress continued at such a pace that she was shortly awarded a West Sussex County Council scholarship to the Royal College of Music in London. I had to make a career move to Scotland in 1970 and it was here that I heard her first play in public, when she performed quite brilliantly Mendelssohn's Rondo Capriccioso at a concert in her new school, Linlithgow Academy. Sadly, my marriage broke up in Scotland but not before I had heard my daughter play the piano part in Schubert's Shepherd on the Rock, which is set for piano, soprano and clarinet - a charming work. My daughter went on to Aberdeen University where she received her MA in music and where she met a young lecturer, fresh from Oxford and by name Colin Lawson, a brilliant clarinettist. He went on to lecture in Sheffield, where they married in 1982.

He was appointed Chair of Performance Studies at Goldsmiths, London University in 1998 and then Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean of Music and Media at Thames Valley University from 2001 to 2005 when he was appointed Director of the Royal College of Music, where he holds a Personal Chair in Historical Performance. So a wheel came full circle in that my daughter's husband became the Director of the College she attended 40 years earlier.

I hope that you can now understand a

little more what the loss of my music has meant to me. I am pleased to see that research is now beginning to focus more on tackling the enormous problem of making hearing aids more receptive to music. It has very rightly concentrated in the past on making speech intelligible.



Interestingly enough, listening to live music, as opposed to recorded music, is still a pleasurable experience. Since my hearing loss, I have heard my son in law give two performances of the Mozart Clarinet Concerto, the most recent being in 2013 in the new auditorium at the Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. On each occasion I have "heard" every note and this may be because, as I know the work very intimately, the brain "hears" what the ear does not. I have read of this phenomenon elsewhere and clearly it does not work with unfamiliar or new music.

I hope too that you will allow me a brief mention of so-called 'pop music'. As soon as my daughter showed such good musical promise her teacher told us that we should not let her listen to pop music, this being of course the 'swinging sixties'. The teacher said, quite rightly, that her ear could be so easily damaged by this new craze and I, of course, as I suppose a rather strict father for those days, was only too happy to comply. The ban has clearly paid dividends in that my daughter is still happily playing her violin in an orchestra in Harrow.

But I continue to be much saddened by the fact that probably 99% of people in this world pass through it thinking that 'pop music' is the only music and that so-called classical music is not for them. Personally, I cannot stand pop music. I made one exception in my life and that was the music of Abba, and I only came to them 20 years after their original popularity. But when I hear modern pop music (and it is hard to escape it) it just sounds to me like constant repetition of simple themes, and simple words, with these words being positively bawled out. Now, perhaps if somebody could explain pop music to me as dear Mr. Salmon explained classical music some 80 years ago, then it is possible, although highly unlikely, that I could enjoy it. But, I suppose pop music is popular simply because it does not have to be explained and after all instant gratification without effort is the order of the present day. There speaks the grumpy old cynic.

Nicola George

by Sarah Lawrence



Whether you are Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing, or the parent of a deaf child, involvement with audiologists and hearing therapists are likely to be important to you. Whilst seeking to place the SLFirst magazine in every audiology unit throughout the UK, I came across one lady who impressed me greatly because of her approach to her duties.

She was bubbly, all smiles, energetic and passionate about her role. I thought her patients were probably lucky to have her as their Hearing Therapist. She was an excellent communicator to boot. I was so impressed I vowed to return to find out about her and her role. This is the story of Nicola George, a Hearing Therapist at the University Hospital Wales.

Let me start by saying that whilst Nicola agreed to the interview, she is actually

a very humble and modest lady, is not one to make a fuss, and was reluctant to share some of the positive feedback she regularly receives.

As a Hearing Therapist in a busy city hospital, Nicola's duties cover a wide range of issues, including, all ear related disorders including; hearing within normal limits to profound hearing loss; ear diseases; balance; surgery support; education; teaching; deaf awareness; and communication support.

Previously an BSL/English interpreter, note taker and Lip-Speaker, Nicola was first introduced to sign language by a friend who was Deaf. The friend taught her British Sign Language (BSL). "She taught me BSL over the years and I became quite proficient," Nicola explained. "She was a fantastic teacher. She always encouraged me to study formally and I went on to take my CACDP BSL exams after 10 years of fluent signing."

Nicola subsequently went on to study at Bristol University and Barry College before signing up with WCD and RNID as a Sign Language Interpreter. Nicola went on to work in Infant, Primary and Secondary Schools interpreting lessons for deaf children as well as in colleges and universities, note taking and signing for deaf students. Wanting to do more to support the independence of deaf people, Nicola returned to study Hearing Therapy at Bristol University, learning about the causes of deafness.

That led her to her current post, "My job gives me great satisfaction," Nicola told me, "I enjoy giving information and support wherever I can. I take a lot from seeing Deaf and Hard of Hearing people overcoming difficulties and achieving their goals." For Nicola, the role she performs is a very important one as it helps people live with their deafness as successfully as possible. She also helps to break down barriers in communication and supports people to get the most out of their hearing aids.

Passionate about her work, it is no surprise to learn that Nicola receives

thank you cards and personal messages because of the way she performs her role. Asked to tell me the nicest thing anyone has said about her work, predictably restrained, "That I helped change someone's life for the better," she replied.

As with most jobs within public service, Nicola's does not come without its challenges, with the need to deal with people's expectations of hearing aids, close to the top of the list. In an attempt to deal with the issues a deaf person faces, Nicola faces a challenge when trying to get family members to adopt good communication tactics and in encouraging a deaf person to overcome the barriers they have encountered with their hearing aids. Ultimately, Nicola's greatest difficulty comes from her own ambition to restore people's loss of confidence.

Whilst the role Nicola performs is a crucial one, I was surprised to learn that her post does not exist in all hospitals, despite the high levels of patient satisfaction and the 'life-changing' nature of her duties. Interviewing her, it is clear that Nicola has skills and attributes that means she is patient centric, including the ability to laugh with people and make light of situations. Blessed with patience, a thorough understanding of hearing loss, counselling skills, a good understanding of today's technology and life experience, Nicola is also a relationship builder.

In case there was any doubt that Nicola is a thoroughbred in her role, I knew that she had collected a few unused hearing aids. "I have collected throughout the years I have worked in the NHS," she told me. "I have collected as many 'old' hearing aids as possible so that I can show progression throughout the years. They are displayed at events I attend. I even have hearing aids from the 18th Century. People just love them."

Always looking to improve, Nicola feels that access to all the available software on her computer would help her make the necessary adjustments to hearing aids. If money was no object she would also purchase duplicate equipment so that she could more readily loan people

equipment to try it out before it is purchased, without it disrupting the service she is able to give to other patients.

Keen to prevent deafness in the future, Nicola advises youngsters, "to listen to their parents when they say headphones are too loud." She also cautions against standing too close to loud speakers and, "Never put anything smaller than your elbow in your ears," she adds with her usual humour. For those who may be losing their hearing, and understanding the reluctance or denial many people have, Nicola suggests they should get to their GP straight away and get to see a Hearing Therapist as soon as possible.

Nicola, keen on reading, swimming, cycling and badminton, has welcomed the introduction of the All Wales NHS Standards on Communication with people with sensory loss that were introduced late in 2013, but remains worried about the standards being adhered to.

Always looking for ways to provide her patients with advice and information, Nicola has placed copies of the SLFirst magazine in her waiting room, recognising it as a useful and interesting read for anyone who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Asked about the magazine, Nicola commented, "I personally love it and they fly out of the waiting rooms so I guess the patients love it too."

For my part, I am just delighted for Nicola's patients that they have someone so in tune with their needs, not only in delivery of her service, but in helping resolve problems that sit outside her direct responsibility.



A better future for BSL Teaching

by Linda Day & Tessa Padden



No matter how good the learners, without a good teacher they may struggle to make progress. That is as true in BSL teaching as in any subject.

There are many good Deaf BSL teachers, but they are battling against a number of problems:

No specialist training programme for BSL teachers – the first and last proper BSL teacher training programme, run by Durham University, stopped 20 years ago.

No proper refresher training to keep BSL teachers up to date with new developments in teaching and technology.

No strong professional network, to share ideas and support each other.

There is one good organisation, the Association of British Sign Language Tutors and Assessors, but not enough BSL teachers know about it.

That's why we organised the first national conference for BSL teachers at Manchester Deaf Centre on Saturday 17 May,

called 'Let's Make a Better Future for BSL Teaching'.

Deaf people like to meet face to face to discuss issues, as BSL is their native or preferred language. This is the first time BSL teachers had this kind of opportunity.

They want to maintain and improve standards of teaching within their profession and raise awareness of sign language teaching. They want the opportunity for continuous professional development (CPD) and to support each other by sharing ideas and materials.

They want to know how new technology and online learning resources can help them improve their teaching and their businesses.

In other words, they want BSL teaching to be on a par with any other kind of teaching – professional, well organised and doing as good a job as possible for their students.

Signworld led the conference, discussing new technology and how to modernise BSL teaching. People from the British Deaf Association, the Royal Association for Deaf People and the Association of BSL Tutors and Assessors ran workshops about training, CPD and the importance of networking and supporting each other.

We are all united with one aim – to improve BSL teaching all across Britain and make sure that our hearing students become as fluent as possible in BSL.



Signworld



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Signworld is the place to practise and improve your British Sign Language 24/7.

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Accessible Church Services

by Sarah Lawrence

A social media story caught my eye this recently and I found myself reflecting on my own experiences growing up and through adult life. The story was about a decision in the United States about televised church services needing to be captioned.



The case stemmed from a long established legal decision for various church productions to be exempt from the requirement to provide captions for television programmes. The churches and associated TV production companies had made application for this exemption, in effect applying for their programmes to be inaccessible to many deaf people. Since the initial decision, there have been legal challenges with the churches involved always seeking to maintain their discriminatory stance against deaf people. The exemption was



gained through an argument based on cost.

I was delighted to learn that this bulk exemption had been overturned earlier this year, with each church and TV production company now having to make an individual application for exemption. The decision has been received poorly by the churches involved, with some saying that the \$500 involved is more than they can afford.

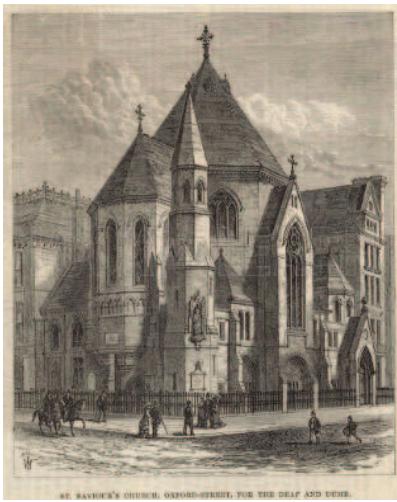
My interest in this story stems from my own experiences of church services in the UK which, by and large, do nothing to make themselves deaf-friendly. At weddings and funerals things are said that I would like to hear, but the church takes no responsibility for including me, it is entirely down to me. For my own father's funeral I was fortunate to have one of the BSL interpreters who often work with me to volunteer to sign the service for me.

It is a topic seldom discussed because of the sensitive nature of any comment on 'the church'. I know that some people will be saying, "If you want an interpreter,



pay for your own, why should the church pay." That is fine, I could pay. I could pay several hundred pounds to attend each wedding or funeral that I wish to go to. That's equality right? As a punishment for being deaf, I should pay for the privilege of getting equal access to these services! Better still, rather than make a fuss, 'just don't come', that is how it feels a lot of the time.

Whilst I believe the church should have been giving consideration to this issue for some time, with more and more people becoming hard of hearing, it is high time they considered the communication needs of their deaf parishioners. However, I also feel that my communication needs are often ignored by friends too. When that happens, it can be very hurtful indeed. People who have known me all my life, people who know I am deaf and have seen me struggle through school and in work, have left me isolated and excluded at church ceremonies too. A typical example was a funeral involving



a close friend some years ago. I wanted to attend to show my respects and the family explained that they would give me a copy of all the speeches that would be made during the service to make sure I was included. Intention was good, but sadly, that did not happen on the day, so I sat there in silence, knowing lovely

things were being said about someone close to me, but unable to hear what was being said. I may sound like a spoiled brat explaining how I felt about my exclusion, but I felt hurt at the time, and years later, the hurt remains.



My concern is met today with the news that the one purpose-built church for deaf people is being put up for sale because there are insufficient funds to pay for the upkeep of the building. The St. Saviour's Church on London's Oxford Street has served the deaf community for more than 140 years.

The church was built with 'signed' services in mind, making sure line of sight was possible for all of the congregation. Unlike most Anglican Churches which are built facing east, St. Saviour's was built facing north, to ensure the best light was available for the service. A significant part of deaf history, the sale of the church will take away the guardian of best practice in respect of deaf-friendly church services.

Important, thoughtful and emotional things take place within the church and I am sad that I do not get a chance to fully share those experiences the same as the vast majority of other people do. Until there is a change in mind-set towards inclusion of deaf church goers, I suppose I will just have to continue to suffer in silence.



South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are warning people of the dangers of leaving electrical items plugged in for long periods of time due to the risk of fire.

Hair straighteners, mobile phone chargers, televisions and other electrical items can cause serious fires if they're left plugged in overnight or when the house is empty.

Follow these safety tips on electrical safety:

Keep an eye out for hot plugs or sockets, scorch marks or flickering light, never get electrical appliances wet and don't put things on top of the television such as vases or candles.



Turn off all electrical items unless they are meant to be left on - like freezers and fridges - before going to bed or leaving the house.



Invest in a heat mat for hairdryers and hair straighteners.
Make sure you have a Residual Current Device (RCD)



An RCD can also help prevent fires. An RCD should be tested quarterly go to www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk to find out more.



Don't overload sockets

Use one plug in each socket. NEVER use them if wet. Use Electrical Safety First's calculator to make sure you are safe.

Test your smoke alarms every Tuesday

Remember, a smoke alarm can only warn you if it works properly.

Visit: www.southwales-fire.gov.uk to find out more about specialist alarms for the Deaf and hard of hearing.

When buying a plug-in charger it is important to be aware of the risks and know what to look out for. Visit: www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk to find out more.



Mae Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru'n rhybuddio pobl o beryglon gadael eitemau trydanol wedi'u plygio i mewn am gyfnodau hir o ganlyniad i risg Tân.

Gall sythwyr gwaltt, trydanwyr ffonau symudol, setiau teledu ac eitemau trydanol eraill achosi tanau difrifol os ydynt yn parhau wedi'u plygio dros nos neu pan fydd y tŷ yn wag.

Dilynwch yr awgrymiadau diogelwch hyn ar ddiogelwch trydanol:

Cadwch lygad allan am blygiau a socedi poeth, marciau llosg neu olau sy'n crynu - peidiwch byth â chael peiriannau trydanol gwlyb a pheidiwch roi pethau ar ben y teledu, megis potiau neu ganhwylau.



Diffoddwch bob eitem drydanol oni bai bod disgwyli iddynt fod ynghynn - fel rhewgelloedd ac oergelloedd - cyn noswylio neu cyn gadael y tŷ.



Buddsoddwch mewn mat gwres ar gyfer sychwyr a sythwyr gwaltt.



Gwnewch yn siŵr bod gennych Ddyfais Cerrynt Gweddillol (DCG) Gall DCG helpu atal tanau hefyd. Dylid profi DCG yn chwarterol. Ewch i www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk i ganfod mwy.



Peidiwch â gorlwytho socedau

Defnyddiwr un plwg ym mhob soced. Peidiwch BYTH â u defnyddio os ydynt yn wlyb. Defnyddiwr gyfrifiannell Electrical Safety First i sicrhau eich bod yn ddiogel.

Profwch eich larymau mwg bob dydd Mawrth

Cofiwch, dim ond os yw'n gweithio'n iawn y gall larwm mwg eich rhybuddio. Ewch i www.decymru-tan.gov.uk i ganfod mwy am larymau arbenigol i'r Byddar a'r rhai sy'n drwm eu clyw

Wrth brynu trydanwr plwg, mae'n bwysig bod yn ymwybodol o'r peryglon a beth i fod yn wyliadwrus ohono. Ewch i www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk i ganfod mwy.

Un Sir Gâr is coming to town

by Carmarthenshire County Council

Un Sir Gar is launching a brand new Hub in Llanelli town centre to help residents get back into work, education and training.

Un Sir Gar is one of a kind and brings together all advice, information, education, voluntary, housing, and employment opportunities in the county.

It is a one stop shop, based in Llanelli town centre, which aims to make life a lot easier for those people who want to return to work, education and training, or are unsure of the right path for them.

Experienced advisers, who have extensive knowledge of all the opportunities and services available, will identify a personal path for each client according to their skills, experience and needs. It could be a job, a community or voluntary post to build confidence prior to searching for paid employment; it could be apprenticeship opportunities with local businesses, work experience with appropriate organisations, housing concerns, or training in a wide and varied range of industries and skills. Ongoing support will also be provided.

As of this summer, Un Sir Gar Hub will also go on the road and visit various locations around Carmarthenshire, to ensure easy access for all residents. Locations and dates will be revealed soon. The hub will open with a jobs fair on Thursday 15 May from 10am.



People who want to return to work, young people looking to commence their working career or those finding it difficult to decide on the right path for them, can all be helped through Un Sir Gar, which is aimed at all age groups.

The project is supported by key partners including Job Centre Plus, Coleg Sir Gar, Careers Wales and Carmarthenshire County Council, who share the ambition to provide a unique, seamless approach to supporting people with learning and employment needs.

**Un Sir Gâr can be accessed at
36 Stepney Street,
Llanelli, or via**

www.carmarthenshire.co.uk

Un Sir Gâr yn dod i'r dref

by Cyngor Sir Caerfyrddin

Mae Un Sir Gâr yn lansio Hwb newydd sbon yng nghanol tref Llanelli i helpu trigolion i ddychwelyd i'r gwaith, addysg a hyfforddiant.

Mae Un Sir Gâr yn unigryw, gan ei fod yn dwyn ynghyd yr holl gyfleoedd cyngor, gwybodaeth, addysg, gwirfoddol, tai a chyfleoedd cyflogaeth yn y sir.

Mae'n siop-un-stop, sydd wedi ei lleoli yng nghanol tref Llanelli, sy'n ceisio gwneud bywyd yn llawer haws i'r bobl hynny sydd am ddychwelyd i'r gwaith, addysg a hyfforddiant, neu yn ansicr o'r llwybr cywir ar eu cyfer.

Bydd cyngorwyr profiadol, sydd â gwybodaeth helaeth am yr holl gyfleoedd a gwasanaethau sydd ar gael, yn nodi llwybr personol ar gyfer pob cleient yn ôl eu sgiliau, eu profiad a'u hanghenion. Gallai fod yn swydd, swydd gwirfoddol gymunedol neu yn gyfreithiol i fagu hyder cyn chwilio am waith â thâl; gallai fod cyfleoedd prentisiaeth gyda busnesau lleol, profiad gwaith gyda sefydliadau priodol, pryderon tai, neu hyfforddiant mewn ystod eang ac amrywiol o ddiwydiannau a sgiliau. Bydd cefnogaeth barhaus hefyd yn cael ei ddarparu.

Yn ystod yr haf, bydd Un Sir Gâr hefyd yn mynd ar yr heol ac yn ymweld â gwahanol leoliadau o gwmpas Sir Gaerfyrddin, er mwyn sicrhau mynediad hawdd i'r holl drigolion. Bydd lleoliadau a dyddiadau yn cael eu datgelu yn fuan. Bydd y ganolfan yn agor gyda ffair swyddi ar ddydd lau 15 Mai o 10 y bore.

Gellir cynnig cefnogaeth i bobl sydd am ddychwelyd i'r gwaith, pobl ifanc sy'n edrych i ddechrau ar eu gyrrafa gwaith neu rhai sy'n ei chael yn anodd penderfynu ar y llwybr cywir ar eu cyfer drwy Un Sir Gâr, ac mae croeso i bob grŵp oedran.

Mae'r prosiect yn cael ei gefnogi gan bartneriaid allweddol yn cynnwys Cyngor Sir Caerfyrddin, Canolfan Byd Gwaith, Coleg Sir Gâr, Gyrfa Cymru. Rhanna'r sefydliadau hyn yr uchelgais i ddarparu ymagwedd unigryw, ddi-dor i gefnogi pobl o ran eu hanghenion cyflogaeth a dysgu.



**Gellir cael mynediad
Un Sir Gâr yn
36 Stepney Street,
Llanelli , neu drwy**

www.unsirgar.co.uk

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