

Chainmail



February 2016



Bromley Chain
a link with deaf people

Newsletter

Registered Charity No. 281051

www.bromleychain.org.uk

Patron: Kathleen Hankinson

Index

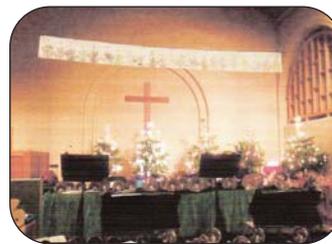
| | |
|---|--------|
| Bromley CHSWG | 2 |
| An Open Invitation | 2 |
| Bromley Chain Chair's First 6 Months | 3 |
| From Nought to Ninety | 3 |
| Thoughts from Alan as he Retires | 4 |
| Double Take | 5,6 &7 |
| Leo Mansell Manager of Deaf Access | 8 & 9 |
| Leading Deaf Charities Join Forces | 9 |
| History of 200 Walks | 10 |
| News from the Deaf Centre | 10 |
| A Glimpse of the Past | 11 |
| First Ever BSL Tour of Dulwich Picture Gallery | 11 |
| KAOS Choir Show Their Hands | 12 |
| Breaking News on Hearing Services | 12 |
| Bromley Chain AGM | 12 |
| Antique, Vintage, and Collectables Fair | 12 |
| Disclaimer | 12 |



**Committee
Celebrate Sinclair's
Chairmanship**



**Alan retires as Deaf
Access Trustee**



**KAOS
show their hands**



**Double Take
Profile of David and Roger Hewitt**

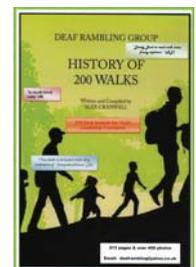


Congratulations



**A Glimpse of
the Past**

**Deaf Access and
deafPLUS join
forces
Local Manager
Leo reveals plans**



**Deaf Rambling
Group's book has
local links**

All this and more - read on!

Editor: Jenny Froude,
Thorndene, 41 South Eden Park Road,
Beckenham, Kent, BR3 3BQ,
Tel: 0208 777 2151
email: jennyfroude@hotmail.com

I

Chair: Roger Vincent-Townend,
30 Ridgeway,
Hayes, Kent. BR2 7DE
Tel: 0208 462 3300
email: chairperson@bromleychain.org.uk

Bromley Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG)

Bromley CHSWG plays an important role in making sure that services for deaf children and young people and their families are coordinated and delivered well. In Bromley we are fortunate to have a really good mix of professionals, parents and representatives from charities and voluntary groups including the NDCS, Bromley Parent Voice, **Bromley Chain** and Deaf Access. This is so important, particularly as deafness is a low incidence disability, and it's been good to see how progress can be made with the help of everyone involved.

It's been a busy year and I thought it would be good to share with readers some of the issues we have been working on.

Perhaps the biggest change for a lot of families was the unexpected transfer of audiology services from St George's to St Thomas' Hospital earlier this year. We want to make sure we understand the impact of changes to NHS commissioning across South East London and how parents are provided with a choice of services at the different hospitals and clinics. We're also looking at the increased use of hearing aids and how this affects the workload of the Sensory Support Service locally.

Newborn Screening has also changed from a community to a hospital based model. We will be looking at performance to see if this has led to improvements.

An open invitation!

Friends of Griffins and Bromley Deaf Children's Society come to CHSWG and we have a small number of parent representatives who give us their perspective on how children are being supported. But there's always room for more! **The next meeting is at the Griffins from 1pm-3pm on Thursday 4 February 2016. If you would like to join the group or even just come and observe a meeting please do get in touch.**

g.manfield@sky.com 07817 478954

We have been discussing speech and language therapy for children. This is currently under review and we want to make sure that children, including preschool children, are receiving the right amount of access depending on their needs.

Also under discussion is access to social care. Local need is currently being assessed and the NDCS has offered some particularly helpful support. Counselling for deaf pupils at Darrick Wood Senior School, initially funded by **Bromley Chain**, has also proved beneficial. Turn to page 10 for a report.

We have received regular updates on market testing of education services in Bromley, a hugely concerning area for parents and local groups. Turn to Breaking News on page 12 for an update.

There is an increasing number of deaf pupils requiring support and a very limited number of specialist places across South East London. We've asked colleagues in education to consider future need and regional commissioning (working with other councils) so that there is the right mix of provision and services in the coming years.

We've also been looking at performance. I am particularly grateful for the work undertaken by the Heads of the Deaf Centres at Darrick Wood Primary and Secondary Schools. It's quite complicated as this can be affected by many things and in deaf children other factors such as consistent use of hearing aids, speech and language issues and attendance are further complications. Our focus will remain on ensuring the best outcomes for them.

The 'local offer', published last September, should set out the services deaf children, young people and their families can expect from a range of local agencies across education, health and social care. The NDCS has recently identified some gaps in Bromley's so we will be working with colleagues to make sure it is as good as possible.

Graham Manfield
Chair, Bromley CHSWG

Bromley Chain Chair's First 6 Months



I took over as Chair when Sinclair Stayner retired in July 2015, after 3 years in office. This is a hard act to follow. I have been on the Bromley Chain Committee for many years and have been a Vice Chair in the past.

At my first Executive Meeting as Chair we had the additional use of an electronic note-taker courtesy of the LBB's Communication Contract with Action on Hearing Loss. This proved most successful. Yes – Bromley Chain is keeping up with new technology!

Following last year's AGM your Committee have discussed the merger of Deaf Access and deaf PLUS. Full details of this merger, implemented this January, are on page 9. We hope our historic link with Deaf Access will not be lost with this change.

At the end of last year we learned that our Patron, Kathleen Hankinson, had moved into a rest home in Bickley where she has, by all reports, settled in and is back to "her old self". We wish her well in her new home.

At this point I should congratulate our two recent members of the Committee: Iman Bahrami and Carmen Salguero. They both seem to have settled in very well to our friendly Committee and Iman is very happy with the electronic note-taking.

Under our charity's Constitution, new Chairs are elected from amongst the Committee Members and they serve a maximum term of 3 years, unlike certain political parties here and in the USA! I have stated that, in

the first instance, I am willing to serve for just a year, but with help from other Committee Members.

Once I had taken over as Chair I was "honoured" to receive two large boxes of archives and Committee Papers. I have indicated that we will have to have a 'working party' to get these boxes into order – new ones have already been purchased.

Now, like all charities, I am making a call for "new blood". Committee membership is not onerous, just 4 meetings a year, plus one AGM (all with tea, biscuits and homemade cake). So don't be shy - you can do it so step forward! (Sign Language Interpreters are booked for all meetings). View our website for details.

I have found some points which may be of interest to hearing aid wearers, as I now have to use one. Firstly, make sure you always have a spare battery with you if you're going to the theatre, cinema, a lecture, or going on holiday. I found out the hard way! Secondly, don't get into the shower with the aid still in your ear.

Finally, something to make you laugh. A close relative's wife, who is hard-of-hearing, answered the phone the other day. It was yet another cold caller salesman – ring, ring. "Hello, we understand you are deaf. We thought you might be interested in our new range of hearing aids". Wife – "Sorry, I can't hear you I'm deaf" and she put the phone down.

I wish everyone a belated Happy New Year and look forward to a productive and interesting Chairmanship.

ROGER VINCENT-TOWNEND

FROM NOUGHT TO NINETY

Spanning the generations **Congratulations** are due to...

...TOM AND MARY FROUDE on the birth of Oliver on 11th November. Just like his sister, Daisy, Oliver was in a huge hurry to "come into this world" as his dad put it, 3 weeks early, at 7lbs 6oz, causing his parents a fraught dash back to Pembury Hospital in the rush hour! (Had he been a girl he was to have been named Poppy which would have been very apt being born on such an unexpected date!)



...SINCLAIR STAYNER on completing his 3 years as Chair of Bromley Chain last June, an event celebrated by the committee with a lunch for him at the Toby Inn, Eden Park.

(Replete committee kindly photographed by our guest, David Hewitt!)

...SINCLAIR STAYNER on reaching the ripe old age of 90 years in January 2016. (And we all know 90 is now the new 70 and are happy that he has remained a committee member!)

THOUGHTS FROM ALAN AS HE RETIRES

To quantify the word 'disabled' I feel justified in listing them as

1. Physical, 2. Sensory. 3. People born with a disability.

Disablement comes as an enormous shock to the system, and there is no doubt whatsoever that one's confidence is truly shattered. Families have to withstand the news with bravado and consider the ramifications that may last a life-time.

I belong to the 'Sensory' list (above) having lost ALL my hearing whilst doing my National Service in 1953 (Coronation Year) due to a drug that saved my life. I was only 18 years old.

With my confidence at virtually nil, I was determined that life should carry on as best as it could and, with help from family and friends, I was persuaded that with a smile on my face, all manner of openings would become reality. I was persuaded to mix with young people, and professional help was given to improve my lip-reading skills. It was one of my greatest thrills to learn that through the country there are hundreds, even thousands, of kind hearted people who serve as full time helpers or volunteers affiliated to many different charities that help afflicted, disabled people live a life as normal as possible. Technology has advanced so much that limbless are learning to walk, sight is

returning to blind people and all manner of gadgets are allowing people to use the phone and immerse themselves in conversations that they thought were beyond them. Subtitles on TV and even more Sign Language are becoming the norm.

With so much help available, in 1982 I joined a charity called **Bromley Chain**, that increased my confidence dealing with others of the same ilk, eventually becoming Chairman for seven years. How I loved the help I was given and the parties we arranged at The Bertha James Centre.

This led to my move to DEAF ACCESS in 1996. Once again, I was overcome by the high standards of help given by Staff and Volunteers. I now had the confidence to give Deaf Awareness Talks to fundraise. I was approached to become a Trustee, known as AOB ALAN !! Grants from Trusts and Council were getting harder to obtain but, with determination from all, we persevered and the merger with deafPLUS is the result we ALL hoped for.

The two donations I have given are in recognition of the outstanding help Deaf Access continues to give d/Deaf people. Long may it thrive.

Always keep a smile on your face, and please remember there are so many worse off than yourself.

Alan M. Roberts (BEM). Retiring Trustee.



David Connolly presented the vase, seen on right of photo

Engraving reads: To Alan Roberts for your involvement with Bromley Deaf presented by Deaf Access and Bromley Chain.



Alan was presented with a glass vase on behalf of both local charities, the names of which were engraved upon it, and was thanked for all his enthusiasm and hard work over the years, and for generously contributing to the cost of the delicious celebratory lunch.

I was invited, having been Alan's note-taker for many years and also to represent Bromley Chain.

Jenny Froude

Frequently mistaken one for the other, Jenny Froude interviews two brothers, Roger and David Hewitt who are familiar to the Deaf world and live in LBB

DOUBLE TAKE

Often moving in the same professional circles but in different capacities, Roger and David are identical twins with a big difference and the “mistaken identity” syndrome can take on a whole new meaning for bemused colleagues, clients and friends!

There lives in Bromley a lovely lady in her mid-90s who can still shed tears when she recalls the meningitis and German measles in 1953 which robbed one of her sons, not only of his hearing but also very nearly of his life. Thus it was from this point that the boys’ lives were destined to follow different paths, sometimes in parallel and sometimes, sadly, not.

Now approaching their 70s, their recall of the illness which was to change both lives is still very vivid but Roger can laugh at the number of years already clocked



David (left) Roger (right)



up, from one little egg, and they are proud that they knew each other before they were born! They share identical DNA but, when the ITV programme on twins (15.7.2015) mentioned that “shared language is an emotional bond” I felt the poignancy of one youngster hearing and the other having to rely on lipreading, and later signing, to keep that bond flourishing. If twins are “more competitive than normal siblings” I somehow sensed that too during our interviews.

David, younger by 12 minutes, remembers his brother spending their 6th birthday in isolation in hospital, little realising how life was about to change dramatically for them. Roger recalls being allowed home after three weeks, and David kneeling before him, face to face, as he lay on the couch. “It was communication of a sort” he muses. However, from that point on, communication was never seen as an issue.

Hitherto dressed alike and treated identically, the boys had started at the local primary school together but now Roger had to go as a weekly boarder to Hurtwood School in Peaslake, 9 miles from Guildford where they lived, before the local education authority (LEA) sent him 240 miles away to Needwood School, Burton-on-Trent, from the age of nine. Roger was homesick but in time it was David who cried as the weekend visits ended. The family had no car so Ovingdean School for the Deaf, near Brighton, would have been preferable but the LEA were adamant and the parents were told not to think of their needs but those of the child. With no Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in those days David accepts that his brother’s deafness “made us poor”, remembering his father spending 18 hours travelling to Burton-on-Trent for a sports day to spend less than one hour with his son.

Initially estranged, their relationship was restored once David could be understood by his deaf sibling, who could “feel the wind of a whisper” in his ear and whose reading was ahead of his brother’s. In time Marcia Bartlett of City Lit was to write of him: “Roger Hewitt is not like the majority of deaf people, his education, intelligence and linguistic ability making him part of the elite minority”. Naturally the brothers were not averse to playing tricks on school staff, David sometimes carrying the suitcase so they imagined he was the resident pupil!

When Roger went to Mary Hare School (motto: *Per Oculos Non Aures* - with eyes not ears) between 12 and 19 years, he benefitted from inclusion with David’s

DOUBLE TAKE

circle of friends in the holidays and enjoyed a much broader experience, socially and educationally, than his hearing peer. Roger claims he never felt resentful. "Deafness is an inconvenience" he explains. "His friends were my friends" and he felt communication difficulties only became an issue after he left school.

While Roger was still in Berkshire at Mary Hare, David, who had left school at 15 to become a Post Office messenger, went at 18 to spend 10 years at RNID in Devon, far from home. At Court Grange training centre he worked with young deaf men who had problems settling down after school (due to oral failures, mental health problems or criminal tendencies) and his experience of having a deaf brother was invaluable as the then innovative centre gave the students skills to make their way in the community. "To me it was my university" he reflects. For David and his colleagues, however, it was an isolated life, lacking social contact and in 1975 he came to Kent and worked with hearing pupils in a community home and was able to give support to Deaf people, teaching cooking and life skills. David attained a Social Work qualification in 1978, when married to Andrea and with two sons, and became a CACDP registered Sign Language Interpreter through a course at the City Lit. In 1980 he became a member of the Social Worker with the Deaf team for the London Borough of Bromley. His skills in both fields were appreciated by the local Deaf community but when in 1992 the Borough wanted him to become a generic Care Manager he opted for redundancy and became a full time interpreter.

"I wouldn't be where I am today without Roger's deafness" he acknowledges. With which Roger readily agrees. "David has benefitted from my deafness; he has never been out of work!" smiling as he adds "by the same token, because I am deaf I have never been out of work either!"

Although in his childhood Roger hated being separated from his family, when in later life he was offered jobs across the country, including Guildford, he chose to go to Manchester! The only deaf man at the YMCA, life was hard for him until he met Bob Peckford, the then trainee social worker whose insight made a world of difference to him. David was Roger's benchmark in many ways but he admits that he had a far broader education than his hearing brother's state education. Over the years of course much has been developed to benefit those with a hearing loss - subtitling, mobile phones, the internet, technology and there have been changes with Access to Work, the Disability Living Allowance, travel concessions, etc. but when Roger was a student there were limited opportunities for a deaf person and carpentry, painting and decorating, gardening or building work were cited as the only suitable options. His

Mother thought he would make a good signwriter but, as he points out, "I achieved a lot more than that!"

Leaving Mary Hare (where he had been Head Boy in his final year) with 12 O Levels and 1 A Level, in Geology, (attributing his failure in Chemistry and Further Maths to poor teaching), in 1966 Roger, whose only memory of normal sound was hearing Frankie Vaughan in a film, standing in the rain on London Bridge, singing *The Heart of a Man*, joined the The Breakthrough Trust*, a registered charity aiming to promote integration between deaf and hearing people. He had four job offers and chose I.C.I. where he remained for 31 years. After an oral education, of his communication it was said "*Roger Hewitt has a degree of mastery of the English language rarely found in the Deaf Community. He can be attuned to in time and needs to be lipread*".

By 1986 he felt there was no need for sign in his home or working life but used it with The Breakthrough Trust. A philosophical change on the part of an oralist, contact with that charity converted him to the benefits of Total Communication in the education of Deaf children. Looking back on his own childhood he admits "I gave my parents a hard time" and feels his father's apparent indifference meant they never got to communicate properly, although he appreciates that in later life his dad came to recognise and respect Roger's skills. His Mother, he reflects, was sometimes over-protective, insisting people talk to him through her, but he is very aware of all the sacrifices his parents had to make and realises, in retrospect, that during the Fifties there was a "dreadful lack of parental and public awareness".

Looking back on his first marriage, Roger feels he and his deaf wife were indistinguishable from hearing couples, with a wide circle of deaf and hearing friends, and although they didn't go to the local pub they didn't engage with the local deaf club either, both feeling the participation of hearing people with The Breakthrough Trust would be more successful. His wife, mother of his two hearing daughters, rejected the deaf world eventually and they parted; his marriage to Susan Craney of Deaf Access in 2006 took place in Malta and David, of course, was both guest and interpreter, alongside his own second wife, Jean! Susan has been very supportive in Roger pursuing his career in the deaf community.

Roger feels that, in the past, public attitude to deafness retarded his progress, careerwise, with discrimination in job applications and he resents the invisibility of deafness, but things have improved marginally in the last dozen or so years (thanks to the Equalities and other Acts). He admits to hating his own voice and the stares it sometimes provokes when its volume and speed ac-

DOUBLE TAKE

celerates, especially in stressful or unfamiliar situations. But none of these downsides have held him back or stopped him from joining Outward Bound courses, visiting and supporting deaf projects in India, South Africa, and The Gambia, meeting MPs, supporting and advising other Deaf people and enriching lives, and much of this at a time when emails and text messaging were unheard of! He feels that he has been given opportunities he wouldn't have had as a hearing person. He goes on to cite David's career as a Social Worker with deaf people "which has given him a broader perspective on life", seeing it as another positive from the situation and David is quick to admit that interpreting has put him in some very privileged positions.

After taking redundancy and early retirement from I.C.I. where Roger had an interesting career path from a Laboratory Technician through to Public Relations, he used his skills and knowledge to set up as a freelance consultant to voluntary organizations working with deaf people. Roger took up a "temporary" post with Deafax in Reading, organizing a Summer School for Deaf people at Thames Valley University, but this temporary post soon became a permanent one within the fields of deafness. Since retirement, Roger's career has been far reaching including Accessibility Adviser to The Department of Transport, Transport for London, London Development Agency, Royal Shakespeare Company, Sadlers Wells, as well as delivery of various Awareness courses, project managing Opportunities for Volunteering for UK Council on Deafness (UKCoD) on behalf of the Department of Health, volunteering with Deaf Access and Children of Deaf Parents (CoDPuk) and acting as General Secretary to the British Society for Mental Health and Deafness. In addition, Roger is the current Chair of Action for Deafness in West Sussex. At one time, David commented that Roger wears 9 'hats' (but not all at the same time!) and he is very much embedded in the deaf voluntary sector. In the mid 1990s he investigated the possibility of having a cochlear implant at the Manchester Royal Infirmary but decided against it, and has never regretted his decision one iota since. He says that C.I.'s are not for everyone, and is comfortable with his deafness.

Of his own career David says "interpreting is interesting and I have been privileged to work in special places, 7

including on royal occasions". But he adds, modestly, "I am never there in my own right; I am always there by default!" Talking to both brothers it is obvious that their worlds have overlapped and occasionally collided, as they put it! Roger is incredulous that David should consider it a privilege to accompany a deaf person to an operating theatre during an invasive procedure! During a hospital seminar at St. Thomas's, David pointed out that if he were ill he could pick up the phone; his sibling can not. Their Chief Executive said that was the "best illustration" to point out the lack of equality.



So, equal in spirit, in skills, in stature, in looks, but not the SAME. As identical twins they share a unique, lifelong bond; as individuals they both deserve our huge respect for their positive outlooks and what they have achieved. David doubts he would have had the mental and physical strength to survive the illness that nearly felled his twin or cope with the profound deafness that followed it, but his career has

had rewards for him and been to the benefit of so many in the Deaf community, including of course his own brother, on whose retirement he was quick to point out that "My life was simple and complete (in London). I had a life in the Deaf world before you came South!" (Throughout its 35 year history David's support for, and interest in, **Bromley Chain** has always been appreciated and we still miss his signing presence at committee meetings). Whether as a paid professional or a very experienced volunteer, Roger has been a "mover and shaker" and a great role model for Deaf people and the Hewitt twins surely complement each other.

I will let them have the last word about their careers.

David: "A lot of interpreters know a lot about a lot of things, but are experts in nothing apart from their work".

Roger: (chuckling), "I know a little about everything but I know a lot about a little and I am an expert in everything!"

Jenny Froude

*now deafPLUS and newly joined with Deaf Access in Bromley (see page 9)

LEO MANSELL, Manager of Deaf Access, shares his Plans and updates us on their Services

We invited Leo, the new deaf Manager of Deaf Access to our AGM last June and he has since asked the Editor to tell Chainmail readers what's currently available at the resource centre in Community House, South Street, Bromley and what his hopes are for its future.

So Leo, firstly your plans for the future?

My plans for Deaf Access's future are for it to be more accessible for all the service residents in the London Borough of Bromley and also offer services to other London Boroughs and other boroughs surrounding Bromley. Also it will be good to have hubs in the LBB, especially for those people who have limited mobility. I want to see Deaf Access work closely with other disability organisations so clients get better access and service.

What are the things currently on offer?

ADVOCACY (BSL/English): The service is for deaf Bromley residents who need help making phone calls, writing letters and emails and also understanding letters and forms. It is always confidential support.

HARD OF HEARING CLUB: 1.30 - 3 p.m. on 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. We invite speakers to the club, to talk on a variety of sub-

jects, leading to lively discussions and exchange of views. Admission: £1.50



BRIGHT DeafBlind BSL: Meet up for a social once a month. It was set up recently by Deaf Access volunteers.

CRAFT CLUB: On Mondays from 4 to 7.30 p.m. for people who are keen to practise their craft skills or learn new ones.

They also help Deaf Access to make items for sale on the Deaf Access Market Stall in Bromley High Street which is once a month on a Friday, to raise money. They are always happy to see new faces as they love gossiping!

LIPREADING CLASS: Thursday afternoons, £50 for 10 week course. These classes are for people who want to improve their lipreading skills and especially for those who have recently lost their hearing. This group is very popular and always full, with a waiting list.

BATTERIES AND HEARING AID MAINTENANCE: Deaf Access provides batteries Monday to Friday, 9.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. for Bromley service residents who need their NHS hearing aid batteries replaced. There is also a clinic run by Hi Kent on the 3rd Monday of the month for retubing, cleaning of moulds and advice on the care and use of aids.

ASSISTANCE EQUIPMENT: On Thursdays. Hands-on Demonstration. Deaf Access have equipment for all types of hearing loss. Residents come and try what works for them. NB: Appointments are needed for this service.

BSL PRACTICE GROUP: On Thursdays, 7 to 9 p.m. Open to everyone who wants to improve their BSL skills. Admission £1.

Deaf Access are keen to set up more new groups in the future. They are looking at possibly setting up BSL courses and a Tinnitus Support Group. If



anyone wants to get involved in setting up new groups or has any ideas for them then please feel free to contact Deaf Access.

What are the office hours?

Deaf Access is open weekdays from 9.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. apart from Fridays when it closes at 1.30 p.m.

How many staff and volunteers?

There are 4 staff and 10 volunteers. Deaf Access are always thankful to have volunteers as they are an important part of the centre. Volunteers are expected to know basic British Sign Language (BSL) before they can apply to volunteer at Deaf Access, because it is good for them to communicate with deaf staff and,



depending on their role, they will be expected to have a check with Disclosure Barred System.

How many are deaf/hearing impaired?

5 of them are deaf (2 have Ushers syndrome).

Thank you Leo! Bromley Chain wishes you well with all your plans.

Tel: 020 8315 2550

Minicom: 020 8315 2552

SMS Text: 077 3244 9349

Fax: 020 8315 2554

Email: information@deaf-access.co.uk

Leading Deaf Charities Join Forces

1st January 2016 brought a change in the Deaf voluntary sector, as two long-established charities formally came together as one. On that day, Deaf Access, the 21 year old charity which provides services to the deaf and hard of hearing communities of Bromley, London, formally transferred its staff, assets and contracts to deafPLUS, the national charity which will be celebrating its 45th anniversary in 2016.

The wider charity will continue to be known as deafPLUS, but its services in Bromley will operate under the Deaf Access name for the next two years.

Gary Williams, Chief Executive of deafPLUS, said:

"We are delighted to be welcoming Deaf Access into the deafPLUS family. Deaf Access provides a very similar range of services to our own, and so it makes good business sense for us to join forces in this way.

Together we will be stronger."

David Connolly, Company Secretary of Deaf Access, added:

"Deaf Access is a small charity and for economy of scale and to access the necessary expertise to take us forward, the board felt the best way to maintain Deaf Access as a viable, strong Service provider was to seek a merger. We therefore approached deafPLUS and are pleased that the merger is now taking place."

David Connolly is a founder of Deaf Access and will be joining the deafPLUS Board with immediate effect.

With Deaf Access added to the picture, deafPLUS will now deliver dedicated services across five London boroughs as well as Somerset, Bath, Hampshire, and Birmingham. The charity also runs a national money advice BSL video helpline and a Southern Counties Employment BSL video helpline. BSL help-lines are accessed via www.deafplus.org. The charity also runs a pan London project to support deaf people who are in work.

For further information contact Gary Williams at garywilliams@deafplus.org or on 020 7790 6147

HISTORY OF 200 WALKS

Mary Campion alerted me to this beautifully produced book from the Deaf Rambling Group (of which her late husband Brian was an active member), written and compiled by Alex Cranwell (who at one time attended Anerley School in Crystal Palace, and, after a career as a quantity surveyor for 30 years, was a Social Worker with Deaf people from 1993, working in both Lambeth and Hounslow boroughs).

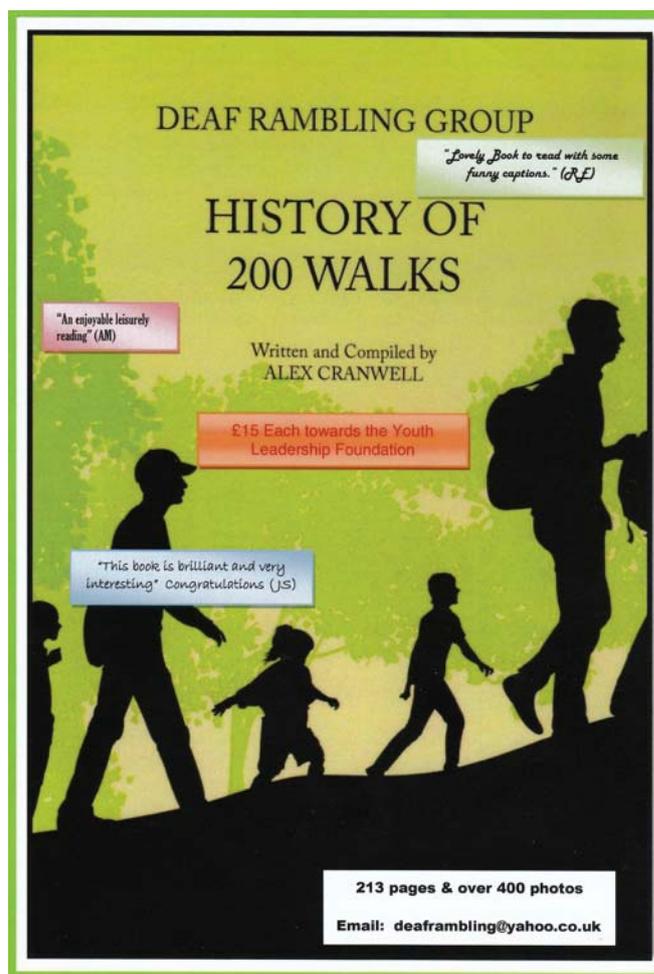
The book is of especial interest to Mary and to **Bromley Chain**, containing as it does several pages devoted to Brian, who was one of our founder members, later chair, and editor of our newsletter.



In 2002, Steven Bloomfield (who was elected as the DRG's first President in September 2015 and funded the production of this book in the same year) donated an award in the shape of a shield, inscribed *In Memory of the late BRIAN CAMPION 1934 - 2001 to be presented to the Most Regular Walker of the Year*.

Very movingly, Mary's letter describing the tragic events in Fiji that led to Brian's death, is reproduced in full, as was a paragraph from their son Paul, while on page 34 is a picture of the silver birch tree planted by Bromley Chain in Kelsey Park in memory of Brian. Local artist Peter Whatman's water colour portrait of Brian, which hangs in Deaf Access, is also mentioned and the following pages in the book show the proud recipients with the handsome trophy over the years.

There was a wonderful review of the book by John A. Hay, MBE, Chair of British Deaf History Society in their Journal (Winter 2015). I found the book full of interesting anecdotes (especially when the Queen slowed down her car in Windsor Great Park for the



safety of the signing walkers oblivious to its approach!) and there are many historical facts about places visited, from Bedfordshire to Wiltshire, and even including the Czech Republic, extracts from newsletters and posters, a reminder of the Dress and Countryside code and, best of all, numerous colour shots of happy walkers and fascinating biographies of them. Copies are available from deaframbling@yahoo.co.uk price £15 plus £2.55 p & p.

Jenny Froude

NEWS FROM THE DEAF CENTRE on COUNSELLING & GCSE BSL

The funding for this Academic year has been agreed by the Head of SEN. The counsellor for the Deaf is seeing four pupils a week on a rolling 10 week programme. If she and our team feel the pupil needs more time after this period, sessions can carry on. Parental permission is sought before counselling begins. Counselling is seen as a very positive experience by pupils. Parental and staff feedback indicates noticeable changes in behaviours. The Deaf Centre is hoping that this service will continue for the foreseeable future. We will again put forward a case for the next academic year. 10

Although the GCSE BSL course is not yet accredited, we currently offer Level 1 and Level 2 to 18 Year 12 mainstream pupils and our Year 10 group of 3 pupils. Louise Swatton and I have attended three training events for this new course. As soon as accreditation is agreed we can proceed with rolling this GCSE course out to all Year 10/11 pupils in the school. We await more news and training.

Sarah Banks, Darrick Wood Senior School



As a loyal and appreciative reader, I asked Brenda to write about her deafened Mother, Doris, in whose memory she has kindly donated to Bromley Chain

A Glimpse of the Past

I take an interest in reading Chainmail, although I do not have a hearing problem. My deceased mother was profoundly deaf for the latter half of her life and so I was very aware of the isolation and disadvantages this affliction imposed. It is very encouraging now to read in Chainmail of the great advances that have been made in hearing aids, cochlear implants, teaching methods and the attitude of deaf people to tackle challenges and lead motivated, satisfying lives.

My mother was born in 1910 and died in 2001. Her hearing difficulties began when she was nine and she had her tonsils removed as a day patient, her uncle giving her a piggy-back to her nearby home afterwards. What a contrast to my own children's experiences of the same operation when they were little, being kept in hospital for two weeks.

Many years later, in her forties, she was rushed to the Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital in London with inflammation of the mastoid. This almost developed into meningitis and she was lucky to survive the operation. The ENT Consultant was appalled at the previous tonsillectomy and directed his students to study the case. A couple of years later she had a mastoid operation on the other ear in the same hospital.

By this time, mother's hearing loss was quite severe, and she was allocated a hearing aid which consisted of an unwieldy plastic box to be worn around her neck, from which a cord connected to a

plastic mould in her ear. This was uncomfortable and was always oscillating. Looking back on her life, I feel sad to recall her gentle patience when she failed to hear yet again. Her last hearing aid was a "bone conductor", which comprised of a metal headband worn tightly over her head, causing a very deep indent in her skull. This, again, was connected to a smaller plastic box worn around the neck.



Mother's consolation was her great talent for all forms of needlework, from dressmaking to embroidery, tapestry and also knitting. In latter years, she would sit in her silent world, stitching away and producing many treasured cushions and pictures. She enjoyed television, too, with the aid of a "loop system" installed around her room.

Many readers of Chainmail will have experienced similar isolation as my mother, particularly older people. She would have been so grateful for some of the facilities now available. She was an intelligent woman but never reached her potential educationally and her desire to study nursing was thwarted. However, I know she would have been delighted if she could see what progress has been made to help people like herself nowadays.

My thanks to Jenny Froude for kindly giving me the opportunity to reminisce about a lovely lady.

Doris aged about 5 years with her father (top left) and dressed up for WI's 80th Anniversary Lunch (centre)

Brenda Heywood

First Ever BSL Tour at Dulwich Picture Gallery: Talk, refreshments and opportunity to reflect on the I am Van Dyck exhibition with John Wilson, on 19th February, 11 a.m to 12 p.m.

Free but Booking essential. Contact: s.fairbairn@dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

(The Gallery hope to run more such events if there is enough interest.)



KAOS CHOIR SHOW THEIR HANDS!

After their visit to Hayes Free Church Christmas Tree Festival, raising funds for Deaf Access (as seen in Winter 2014 Chainmail), we were so delighted and inspired by the performance of KAOS that we sent the Signing Choir a donation.

Their thanks arrived in the most delightful way, via a banner adorned with many different hands, individually decorated, beneath letters spelling Thank You Bromley Chain! It came just in time for this year's annual event and, with Roger's head for heights and my weight on the bottom rung of the ladder, was suspended across the chancel area. It seems that many in the congregation and audiences this year fondly recalled the enthusiastic and talented young signers and singers who made such an impact. We all hope that we may be able to invite them back to Bromley one day so that this time more deaf youngsters can see and hear them.

Jenny Froude

Breaking News on Hearing Services

We wrote to parents in Autumn 2014 to let them know that Education Services in Bromley (of which the Hearing Service is a part) were to be market tested, in the form of a competitive tender. We also held a meeting with parents and stakeholders at Griffins where we discussed what would be involved and what it might mean. The purpose of this information bulletin is to keep you up to date on progress.

As we outlined to you, this was expected to be a lengthy process. This is to let you know that, at their meeting of December 2015, the Council's Executive considered and agreed a recommendation to discontinue the market testing process and therefore the tender has come to an end. The Council will in due course consider other potential commissioning options for Education Services in Bromley. We will keep parents, guardians and families who use the hearing support service, together with members of the Bromley Children's Hearing Services Working Group, informed should any proposals be developed that are relevant to Hearing Services.

Should you have any queries, then please contact me at: laurence.downes@bromley.gov.uk

Laurence Downes, Commissioner, Education and Children's Social Care

EVERYONE WELCOME!

BROMLEY CHAIN

AGM 2016

Tuesday 7th June, 7.30 p.m. at

Bromley Methodist Church, College

Road, Bromley, BR1 3NS

Sign Language Interpreters present
Refreshments. Very limited car parking space

**The Rotary Club of Langley Park
and Deaf Access**

Antique, Vintage & Collectables Fair

Saturday 19th March 2016

from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at

Hayes Free Church,
Pickhurst Lane, Hayes, Kent.
(Entrance £1)

Opinions expressed throughout Chainmail are those of the contributor and not necessarily of BROMLEY CHAIN, which seeks to encompass the full range of hearing loss and all communication methods.

Any opinions or statements may not necessarily reflect our views and should not be taken to imply our endorsement or otherwise of services/products.