

Chainmail



Bromley Chain

a link with deaf people

Newsletter

September 2012

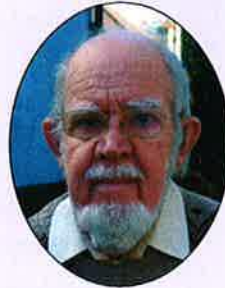


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Meet the New Chair of Bromley Chain



Proud Bridegroom!



Success for Michelle



MBE for Tricia Kemp



Farewell to Andrew

All this and more - read on !

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Editor Writes

In the absence of any copy from our previous chair who resigned from the committee at the AGM and newly elected member Carmen who joined us, it falls to me to report on the year, reiterate our thanks to Andrew for his work as Treasurer and then Chair and to welcome Carmen Salguero back on to the committee.

2012 saw the launch of Bromley Police Deaflink which was held at Deaf Access and attended by 5 of us from the committee, having introduced the concept to the borough when Lewisham Deaflink spoke at our AGM two years previously.

Concerned by the lack of specialist social workers for deaf adults and children we are hoping to meet with the Assistant Director Adult & Community Services to discuss our views as reported at our AGM.

From the Phyllis Mary Kither bequest we have sponsored a deaf student at Hadlow College. Our congratulations go to her, to Tricia and Alex Kemp and to newly weds Tom and Mary Froude, whose stories you will find in this issue.

Editor

Kathleen leaves the committee

It was with huge regret that Bromley Chain accepted the resignation of Kathleen Hankinson, one-time chair and, recently, secretary, due to health problems.

Child of deaf parents, of whom she is movingly proud, Kathleen's input into the Deaf community over the 24 years since her retirement has been immense. A true unsung heroine, she's supported many people, young and old alike, in so many ways, and with her passionate views on services for deaf people (or, rather, lack of them!) been a campaigning voice speaking from a wealth of experience, both personal and professional. We are reliably informed that without her the Communication Service in Bromley, delivered now by Action on Hearing Loss, would not have come about in the 90s.

She leaves a huge gap on the committee, of course, but is assured of a permanent place in our hearts and we shall keep her in touch with Bromley Chain and seek the benefit of her wise advice from time to time, no doubt!

Jenny Froude

VISIT TO GRIFFINS

At the suggestion of BDCS (Bromley Deaf Children's Society) Kathleen, Sinclair and I were able to attend an afternoon Drop In at Griffins in Orpington in July and hear/see Kate Rowley's brilliant presentation on language acquisition and BSL.

As a deaf mother from a deaf family and with one deaf and one hearing child herself, she was ideally qualified to interact and inspire hearing parents of deaf youngsters at the Unit and it was a pity that not more were present, especially those with infants who need baby signing, for which it seems there is no funding. We understand Remark Community are offering Family Signing BSL sessions, free, starting in September 2012.

Having been asked by Multilingual Matters Ltd., the publisher of my book, to write a blog for their website, I was able to base it on the presentation and link Tom's early years on the same site, in the nursery, 29 years ago to his recent marriage and the confidence and amazing use of English language he acquired via signing, and post photos of his wedding showing sign language interpreter Katy Davis after he and Mary had made their vows in speech and sign.

Jenny Froude

FRIENDS OF GRIFFINS

(www.friendsofgriffins.co.uk) is a recently established charity run by volunteers, fundraising for the centre for children with hearing or visual impairment.

Their flyer lists projects such as the purchase of toys, specialist items like iPads or sensory equipment. "Soundproofing the audiology room" is also listed, which does rather beg the question why something so basic and essential as this was not automatically installed at the time the new building, hailed as a state of the art centre, was so recently built?

Editor



Loving Tribute

Sinclair Stayner tenderly holds one of the white doves released to remember Sydney and Nora Gibbs, after the blessing of the wooden bench dedicated to them in Beckenham Place Park on 22nd September. (Full story and more pictures in our next issue.)



Introducing our new Chair

I was born at City Road, London. I lived with my family: my maternal grandparents, parents and sister, in Avondale Square, Old Kent Road. In 1928 the family moved to Chaffinch Road, Clock House, then moved again to Kent House Road.

Monica was 18 months older than me. She went to Alexandra Infant School in Kent House Road. I was there for a few months. The teacher sent me to the school doctor and he found I was deaf. My parents were upset. The GP didn't tell my parents when I had an operation on both sides of my neck when I was 2½ years old.

When my father went to Beckenham Education Department for advice, to find out about my education as a deaf child, the Department staff told my father to go to Greenwich Deaf School but there was no transport in those days. The only choice was a boarding school in Margate. My father was told to pay the fee for the education but he refused, except for clothing and food. In the end, I can remember well, my father took me to the Whitehall Education Department. When

the Minister read my father's letter, he said to my father, 'What is the matter?' When my father told the Minister that he had been told he must pay the school fee, in the end, the Minister said Beckenham Education Department was wrong.

My parents took me to the school and saw the Headmaster, Mr. White, and he showed us the school buildings and the infants' homes. The supervisor said to me, 'Come' and I turned round and saw my parents had disappeared. At that time I thought I would never see my parents again!

At that time Margate School was not only for profoundly deaf children, but deaf and hard-of-hearing of all ages up to 16 years. Sometimes, the hard-of-hearing thought the deaf school was a waste of time.

In the past, I have been Chairman of the Bromley Deaf Club. Now I am a member of 55 Beckenham Deaf Club and keep up to date with deaf issues through Deaf Access, Remark and Bromley Chain. I am pleased to become the Chair of Bromley Chain.

Sinclair Stayner

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

Two summers, 32 years apart. The first was sorrowful as our youngest son, Tom, battled pneumococcal meningitis at 5 months in what was then Farnborough Hospital. The second was joyful when, amazingly, the sun shone on the day in Wadhurst when he married his deaf sweetheart in the beautiful old parish church.

In relinquishing my role as his next of kin I felt yet again my prayers for him had been answered and that he'd met a lovely soulmate (on a ski-ing holiday with deaf friends in 2009) to share his life.

Between marriage and setting off on their Canadian honeymoon, we gave a small party for his local deaf



Tom's niece Zoe (4) was flower girl

Andrew Andreou, our recent chair, who took over from Tom when he moved to Sussex.

and hearing friends and suggested a coin for Meningitis UK *searching for a vaccine* in lieu of gifts for the newlyweds or for our own Golden Wedding. To our surprise £330 was raised for the charity and their autumn newsletter will run a small story about his survival and he and Mary have already featured in their local paper, *Kent & Sussex Courier*, accompanied by a lovely wedding photograph (see left) taken by his old schoolfriend,

Jenny Froude

UNEXPECTED HONOUR

14th February, 2012, was a very special day for me, and not because it was Valentine's Day!

It was the day I went to Buckingham Palace to receive an MBE for voluntary service to children with hearing disabilities. This had been announced in the New Year Honours List and, although I had been asked if I would accept the honour, I have to say that I did not believe it until I saw it in print on 1st January.

My husband, Steve, and two sons, Jamie and Alex, accompanied me to the ceremony at Buckingham Palace which was a very special occasion. The pageantry was quite breathtaking and it was wonderful to see that we can still deal with these occasions in the UK with such expertise. The planning and organisation must have been enormous and yet it all flowed seemingly effortlessly. I had quite a chat with HRH the Prince of Wales who was absolutely charming.

I was very proud and delighted to receive the honour, and will remember the ceremony for ever, but if I am completely honest, what has been the most touching is the number of messages: phone calls, emails, Facebook posts, cards and letters that I have received from CICS families. I treasure every single one.

Until my younger son, Alex, was born profoundly deaf I had absolutely no idea of the devastating and isolating effect that deafness can have.

Over the past twenty years Alex's deafness has led me to get involved in many related causes and take on roles in many organisations and committees. I set up a group to fundraise for a support teacher at the Darrick Wood Primary Hearing Impaired Unit that he attended until he was eleven and sat on committees of several local National Deaf Children's Society groups. I am a governor of Knightsfield School for secondary aged deaf pupils in Welwyn Garden City and am Vice Chair of the National Cochlear Implant Users' Association. For those of you who don't know, NCIUA and CICS acted as user Groups to present evidence to NICE in their technical appraisal of cochlear implants which ultimately led to the availability of bilateral implants for children, and special mention was made of the value of our input. Collecting and collating evidence from our members is the biggest task we have ever undertaken and every parent who sent us their comments for inclusion in the submission should feel very

proud that they played a part in bringing about a huge step forward for paediatric cochlear implantation in the UK. I felt very honoured to also be asked to submit personal evidence as a Patient Expert to the appraisal but was acutely aware of the tremendous responsibility to express facts and views clearly and accurately in a professional manner, but at the same time include my personal experience of the technology and my passionate belief that cochlear implants should be available to all who are suitable and wish to have them.

For many years I have been a Trustee of The Ear Foundation, a charity dear to my heart, that fundraised for the first few cochlear implants in the UK and now provides training courses and resources for parents, teachers, speech therapists and audiologists both in the UK and internationally.



Tricia Kemp with son Alex.

And then, of course, there is my main passion: CICS. My experience of the support my family had from families in America whose children already had implants when they weren't available in the UK led me to realise that the only people who really understand what you're going through is people who have already been through it. This made me determined to use my experience to help others and that was, and still is, what CICS is all about: parents sharing experiences, learning from one another and just being there for the good and not so good times. From humble beginnings of a handful of families we now have a membership of around 1,000 families. That's a lot, but I hope that the group still retains, and always will, a friendly, approachable feel.

Had I not had a deaf child my life would certainly have been very different. Different, not better. I have met so many wonderful and dedicated people whose paths I would never have crossed and made many close and special friends whom I never would have otherwise met. Having a child with a difficulty changes people. For me, I found a determination I did not know I had. I have tried to use this not only to help my own son but to support and inform other parents who are starting out on their deaf baby's journey into a hearing world. Some things have improved since Alex was a baby: early diagnosis of deafness and the possibility of bilateral cochlear implants at a very young age, but although this inevitably provides more hope, parents

still undergo that terrible sense of loss and fear of the unknown that we did twenty three years ago. It is a bond I quickly feel with families joining CICS - I really do know how they feel. There are still no guaranteed outcomes but I do hope that parents of deaf babies meeting the growing number of teenagers with cochlear implants are reassured and comforted by what can be achieved.

It is a very great honour to have been awarded an MBE. I am still amazed that I was offered it! I am very proud, and it is a doubly good feeling to be acknowledged for something about which I feel so passionately. I just hope that in some way it can be used to raise further awareness of the difficulties faced by deaf people of all ages and of the potential benefits of cochlear

implantation.

Finally, although I have had the honour of receiving this award personally, there are many volunteers who have worked just as hard and should be recognised for all that they do. There are too many to mention here but if you know someone who fits that description do make sure that he or she knows how much you appreciate them!

Tricia Kemp

And yet more celebrations were to come when son Alex gained a 2.1 degree in Graphic and Product Innovation at the London College of Communication this summer. We wish him well with his future career.
Ed.

Paralympics visit

The sun shone brightly non-stop and the stadium packed full of excited fans. The Olympic Park was massive and so crowded, a great place to explore on foot and excellent transport links! I felt full of pride for what the British have done for the Olympics and for the world to see and admire. We loved it when the crowds go wild everytime the British compete in the race.

We were fortunate enough to be given a chance of once in a lifetime experience to see Paralympics Athletics, kindly given to us by a friend.



We watched in awe of the amazing athletes giving us great action to watch. The special treat was being in the starting block section and having good view. I admire all these athletes with varying disabilities going out there with great sportsmanship.

Mary commented that she had a fabulous day,



impressed with everything. We spent our afternoon walking around the park and resting on a grass bank to watch big TV action with on screen interpreter.

Tom Froude



National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) say:

SIGN IT, SHARE IT!

As we go to press there is still no specialist social worker for deaf children in the LBB (or for deaf adults, who are directed instead to Deaf Access) so it seems that it could be numbered among the "one in four councils in England cutting vital services for deaf children".

NDCS invite you to sign their petition at www.ndcs.org.uk/save There are no age restrictions so children can sign it too. If every NDCS member or supporter signed the e-petition and shared it with 3 friends they would reach their target of 100,000 and get the opportunity to debate the cuts in Parliament.

(Info from *NDCS Families* magazine, Autumn 2012).

Overawed at the skills and determination prevalent at the Paralympics, I felt DISability should become DIFFability, implying a different ability which seems somehow less negative and more empowering.

Ed.

THE LATE JACK ASHLEY

The depths of human affection and kindness are not plumbed without a crisis. Thus wrote Jack Ashley in 1973 and I used his words to introduce Chapter 1 of my book, for which he very graciously, having read it in manuscript form, did me the great honour of writing a cover blurb.

A tireless campaigner for access for deaf and hard of hearing people, and one of the instigators of live captions on TV, Baron Ashley of Stoke CH was greatly mourned this year when he died of pneumonia in April at the age of 89 years. Awarded an Honorary Degree from Gallaudet University, the world's only university for deaf students, in 1977, he himself elected to have a cochlear implant in 1993, 25 years after he lost his hearing following a minor operation to repair a perforated ear drum.

His autobiography *Acts of Defiance* (Penguin, 1994) gives a fascinating and inspiring insight into this truly remarkable man. May he rest in peace.

Editor

GRAEAE

Alongside the Paralympics, the Cultural Olympiad was held at the South Bank, celebrating the work and culture of deaf and disabled artists, actors, dancers and musicians. I was fortunate to see and hear Jenny Sealey MBE in discussion. Jenny, who became deaf at seven years, was a director of the Paralympics Opening Ceremony. She is now the Director of GRAEAE (pronounced 'grey-eye'), a Theatre Company where deaf and disabled actors take centre stage. Finding her on 'Google', she says, 'Learning BSL felt like coming home'.

Graeae staged an open air production, 'The Garden', on the Terrace of the Festival Hall. Actors signed, musicians played and sang, actors climbed four-meter high sway poles to create stories in the air. Three short stories about love, consequence and hope made a beautiful performance.

And then! in complete contrast, Graeae performed Punk music of the 70s (originally Ian Dury and the Blockheads) to accompany a poignant story and the Queen Elizabeth



Photo: Mary Garside

Hall rocked and pounded in 'Reasons to be Cheerful'. Sign, song, dialogue, captions, audio description were all rich in energy and exhilaration.

Jenny and like minded artists see all aspects of communication integrating in a wider cultural landscape. Look out for Graeae, I give them *****.

Marion Brushett

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE VISIT TO BROMLEY

I was surprised to learn that I had been nominated to attend the Queen's visit to Bromley when she unveiled a tree plaque and crown display in Queens Gardens beside the Glades Shopping Centre.

Undine and I attended in recognition of the 35 years that we have been involved in the setting up of the charity for the deaf, Bromley Chain, and then Deaf Access, and therefore I was representing Deaf Access along with many other people representing various other charitable organisations.

It was a very cold damp day and once through security we mingled with many people in Queens Gardens, saw some marquees with fashion displays



and then stood along a route that the Queen would walk passing through into the Glades and thence to the High Street and away from the town. The tree is understood to be a sapling, one of those donated by an individual to each of the London boroughs to commemorate the Jubilee. This is now being planted in Queens Gardens which also has its central pathway renamed as Jubilee Way.



and then stood along a route that the Queen would walk passing through into the Glades and thence to the High Street and away from the town.

It was by pure coincidence that whilst mingling with the other people we were then asked to move backwards to

central pathway renamed as Jubilee Way.

It was a great day, great celebrations and it was a privilege to attend and I thank those who nominated me to be there for a day we shall always remember.

The Queen's visit to Bromley in 2012 took me back to when she visited to open the Town Centre in the 80s.

Our daughter Sarah was then in the Guide Company who were chosen to represent Guiding in the borough and were in the car park in the Civic Centre through which the Queen walked. Sarah had a posy of flowers which the Queen graciously took and said "thank you". The Guide Captain jumped forward to explain that Sarah was deaf and so the Queen went back to her to say thank you again, ensuring she could lip read her.

David Connolly

CAPTURED ON CANVAS

Brian Champion's replacement memorial tree in Kelsey Park has been painted, at the request of Mary Champion, by local artist Peter Whatman, a great friend of her late husband's, (whose beautiful portrait of Brian, commissioned by Bromley Chain, hangs in the Deaf Access meeting room).

When Mary was looking at Peter's paintings at St. George's Arts Festival in May (an event at which he exhibits and sells every year) she spotted one of Kelsey Park and that gave her the idea of asking him to paint one of the tree.



(After the first tree, presented by Bromley Chain, was planted in the cherry glade I took photographs of it throughout the year to make a small photographic record of it for Mary, showing it in snow, in blossom, in summer and autumn which made a poignant reminder for her when the tree had to be sacrificed during the sewage works).

Peter's delicate touch may not reproduce too well on this page but readers may like to do what Mary and her visitors from far and wide do and go and look at the tree themselves. It is near the Information Centre but bears no identifying plaque, alas, as they are not allowed.

Editor

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

will be holding their twice-yearly

ANTIQUA AND COLLECTORS FAIR

on Saturday 3rd November 2012

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

Hayes Free Church, Pickhurst Lane,
Hayes, Kent.

(Entrance £1)

Lunches and refreshments will be available.

Date for your diary

**Bromley Chain
AGM 2013**

Tuesday 11th June, 7.30 p.m.

at

Bromley Methodist Church,
College Road, Bromley, BR1 3NS

Refreshments

Car parking available

THANK YOU!

Belated but very sincere thanks are due to the local Soroptimists* for their very kind donation of £200 to Bromley Chain. Their interest, experience and support with deaf issues over many years has been much appreciated.

Editor on behalf of the Committee

*Soroptimists International is a world-wide organisation for women in management and the professions.

CONGRATULATIONS

...

...to deaf MICHELLE DOGGETT who completed her part-time course at Hadlow College this summer and is now a fully qualified Professional Dog Stylist Level 3. She gained a Distinction and Merit for theory paper exams during the first year and passed all 3 dog exams during the second year - Cocker Spaniel, Miniature Schnauzer and West Highland Terrier.

Her Diploma will be presented during October and we hope to include a photograph of this event in our next issue. In the meantime we are delighted to hear that Michelle, who has thanked Bromley Chain for supporting her financially with this 2 year studying, has enjoyed the course and meeting new hearing friends and making long term friendships. She writes "I gained not only a professional qualification but more self confidence with hearing people". That's good to know and we are proud to have sponsored such a diligent student and wish her every success with her future plans.

Editor

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

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