

# Chainmail



Winter 2014



**Bromley Chain**

a link with deaf people

**Newsletter**

Registered Charity No. 281051

[www.bromleychain.org.uk](http://www.bromleychain.org.uk)

Patron: Kathleen Hankinson

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**Christmas Signs from KAOS Choir**



**Jane runs for Papyrus**



**Congratulations Emma!**



**Youngest ever proof reader?**



**David Signs Out!**



**Meet Graham Manfield, Chair of Bromley CHSWG**

**All this and more - read on!**

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# CONGRATULATIONS EMMA!

*We are happy to have her update (and Chainmail's first "Selfie"!)*

I finished my teaching assistant course end of July and received my certificate middle of September, passing all units. I am now working some casual shifts at the Griffins which I hope will lead to some part time or full time work, but for now I am enjoying getting my daughter Lilly settled into Darrick Wood Infants School. She is loving it and Freddie in year 3 is enjoying the bigger challenges he faces everyday, known as Homework!

I completed a half marathon (13.2 miles) in September, raising funds for Cancer Research. I am enjoying baking cakes for friends in my spare time and look forward to running the Friends of Griffins' Christmas Market with its chair, my friend Sheena McLellan, on November 22nd.\*

**Emma Broadwell**



*In addition to her own hard work, Emma also kindly credits her pass to Bromley Chain "who gave me the support in the first place and have given me the confidence to continue and grow within the deaf community we have today". Thank you Emma, you did us (and your family) proud! \*And we are happy to hear that the FOG fundraiser went so well!*

**Editor**



From time to time we all feel hurt, scared, lonely, unhappy, angry, bullied, as if we have no friends...

What is concerning is that increasing numbers of young people are becoming involved in websites promoting self-harm, anorexia and suicide. I, along with most people, was totally unaware of the extent of this problem. The statistics are horrifying and getting worse by the day, due to the instant access we have to chatrooms, groups and information on the Internet. This is something that does not discriminate and equally affects Deaf and hearing young people from all backgrounds.

PAPYRUS is a national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide, offering practical help to anyone - parent, sibling, grandparent, friend, teacher, carer, medical professional, work colleague - concerned that a young person may be at risk.

We need to raise awareness to help prevent young people visiting these inappropriate websites, which 2

fuel their feelings, and to instead visit positive and supporting websites like PAPYRUS to access appropriate professional help.

I am pleased that PAPYRUS has set up a confidential SMS service which enables young Deaf people to access anonymous support (the system hides the phone number from the receiver so it is entirely anonymous, unless they wish to make themselves known). There is also an email option. SMS: 07786 209697 email: [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org) (Hearing people can call helpline: HOPELine UK on 0800 0684141 in confidence).

**Jane Whitaker-Douglas, MSc BPC BPF.**

*This information comes from a deaf ex-committee member, a Senior Adult Psychotherapist at South West London and St. George's Mental Health NHS Trust who, for the saddest of reasons, (the death of her 15-year-old niece) has a personal interest in the subject. She has already run a Half Marathon in Richmond to raise funds via HOPEWalk and is planning another in March 2015. If you would like to sponsor her, please contact me for details.*

**Editor**

# BROMLEY CHAIN REPORT

At our AGM in June members heard the Chair refer to our continuing concern about the lack of a specialist Social Worker for Deaf people and the subsequent workload that falls on Deaf Access and Teachers of the Deaf, going beyond their remit.

Bromley Chain's displays at the very successful "Then and Now" exhibition at Griffins in November 2013 was mentioned, as was the subtitling we sponsored for the locally made DVD *Blitz & Bananas* (which the Editor knows for a fact is much watched by her own and her friend's school-age grandchildren who request it repeatedly!)

Members of the committee have attended council meetings with parents from Griffins, sharing their anxiety about the "Market Testing" of the service and meeting other organisations such as the National Deaf Children's Society. We have attended CHSWG meetings, Diversity and the Bromley Parent Voice Annual Conference, where our new portable display board had its first outing! We have also funded a pilot scheme at DWS Deaf

## End of an Era

Over 30 years of David Hewitt's connection with Bromley Chain came to a close when he interpreted at our committee meeting for the last time, prior to his retirement at the end of the year.

As the meeting ended, a Chainmail "photocall" was inevitable, after he had been presented with a garden voucher and a collaged "hands" card. The old photographs on that called up reminiscences of the early days of Bromley Chain, when David was one of several Social Workers with Deaf People in the borough (how times change; now there are none!) then later as a Sign Language Interpreter, when he recalls Bromley Chain meetings had a reputation for rarely ending before 11.30 p.m!

It was David who ran the Communication Service for deaf and hard-of-hearing people, booking interpreters, communicators, lipspeakers and notetakers on Bromley Chain's behalf, before its need was finally recognised by the borough and a contract awarded in 1994 to what was then RNID (now Action on Hearing Loss).

And it was David who recognised the potential in one Kathleen Hankinson who, as a proud daughter of 3

Centre for counselling with some senior pupils and are funding a Stage 4 BSL course for a volunteer at Deaf Access who runs English Practice sessions now that we understand Job Clubs will only accept clients with knowledge of that language.

Rosemary Hackforth rejoined the committee during the year and we sadly had to accept the resignation of Erica Rogers, M.B.E. leaving for health reasons. She had contributed much sound advice since her nomination in 2008. Kim Wood has done sterling work on the new website which is regularly updated and a mine of information! Do take a look at [www.bromleychain.org.uk](http://www.bromleychain.org.uk)

There is still a vacancy on the committee for anyone who has the interests of deaf people at heart, or is a sign language user or learner, involved with deaf or hard of hearing people in any capacity, a parent or sibling. We meet about six times a year and always with BSL interpreters present for signing or voice-over so there are no communication problems.

### Bromley Chain Committee



deaf parents, volunteered her services to the Deaf Community when she retired. He encouraged her to train as an interpreter - and the rest (after years of sterling service which has sadly gone unrewarded nationally) is history as she continues to fulfil her role as our dearly loved Patron, despite health problems and surgery this year.

We will miss not only David's professional skills but also his valued support and enthusiasm for what we try to achieve in the borough as a small, independent charity, able to campaign and inform, and speak up for those who might need our input. And we are, of course, well aware that he will also be sorely missed as an interpreter in areas far beyond this borough!

**Editor**

At a time in the lives of deaf youngsters when parental involvement is more important than ever we invite you to...

## MEET SUPER DAD GRAHAM MANFIELD, Chair of Bromley CHSWG

I joined Bromley Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG) in March 2014 as Chair and it's been a busy few months since then, with much activity as we work through changes to Special Educational Needs legislation and plans which may see substantial differences to the way that education services are delivered locally.

More than 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents with little knowledge of deafness. I believe that an effective CHSWG plays a key role in providing good support and information on which they can rely, and the group's impact is enhanced when parents are actively involved.

Bromley CHSWG is a multidisciplinary group with representatives from education, health, social services, the voluntary sector and parents. The group has a key role in coordinating and integrating the planning, commissioning and delivery of Education, Health and Social Care strategies and services for deaf children and their families. It stands to reason that the group should also be at the heart of developing good quality policies and services which are family friendly and well resourced.

### **We are currently looking at:**

*The accessibility of Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for deaf children. Deaf children are 60% more likely to experience mental health problems compared to other children. I am very grateful that Bromley Chain are sponsoring a counsellor for deaf pupils this term and next. I am sure this will be of significant benefit to the emotional health and well being of our children.*

*The impact of changes to NHS commissioning across South East London and the increased use of hearing aids and how this affects Sensory Support Service workload.*

*The "Local Offer" which details services deaf youngsters and their families can expect from local agencies across Education, Health and Social Care.*



*The "Market Testing" of education services in Bromley, focussing on those relating to deaf pupils since this is an area of huge concern for parents and local groups.*

*The facilities at Darrick Wood School with the increasing number of deaf pupils. A forum to discuss regional commissioning exists so that of low incidence needs, including hearing impairment, will now be considered.*

Deaf children, young people and their parents contribute a unique perspective so it is important that their views are captured and considered. Friends of Griffins and Bromley Deaf Children's Society are represented at CHSWG but, with over 240 children diagnosed with some form of deafness in the borough, I'd like to make sure that all parents and youngsters let the CHSWG know their thoughts and concerns.

Communicating with professionals and parents is really important so I'd like to explore how good quality information about our work is readily available to service providers and users. I will be writing a review in the spring.

**With increasing pressure on service providers, struggling to deal with the impact of budget cuts, it's vital that we all contribute to decisions affecting our deaf children and young people and for parents, in particular, to make sure they have a voice. The CHSWG is just one of the ways they can do this. Please get in touch!**

**Graham Manfield** ([g.manfield@sky.com](mailto:g.manfield@sky.com))

*This article by the father of a deaf daughter is based on one reproduced from Griffin's Newsletter Listen Up! September 2014, with kind permission from the Author and from the Sensory Support Service.*

BROMLEY CHAIN applauds the work of CHSWG and either Marion Brushett or I attend their thrice-yearly meetings at Griffins.

**Jenny Froude**

# KAOS CAME TO BROMLEY!

(yes, it was on 28th November, but it had nothing to do with Black Friday!)

In our May 2013 edition we mentioned the KAOS Signing Choir who'd delighted millions with their National Anthem at the London Olympics' opening ceremony. We had sent them a small donation in appreciation of the Deaf Awareness they'd raised



worldwide - but we never expected to be lucky enough to see and meet them in Bromley!

However, Deaf Access, as the recipient this year of the proceeds of the Hayes Free Church Christmas Tree Festival, invited them to sign and sing at the opening event.

"Magical" doesn't begin to describe it! Despite a long school day, a fraught coach journey through the Blackwall Tunnel on a dreary Friday night, the sheer exuberance and enthusiasm of close on a hundred youngsters, some very young indeed, was a joy! They obviously adore Ali Wood, their inspirational director/signductor and the rapport she had with them was evi-

dent. Infectious too; even non-signers in the audience were trying their hands at signing by the end!



The adult singers and signers, the Angels of Kaos, were a delight too, especially the lovely young woman giving it her all, whose signing was SO amazing I was sure she must be deaf, but I was wrong. Just an obvious natural; having only studied BSL for a few years, she is already at Level 6!

Of course it is no mean task to assemble such a huge number of youngsters and to transport them by coaches from North London (where all the 8 groups meet to rehearse before coming together to perform) and Ali explains it

costs about £1000 to do so. Adding that they like to use their donations to help fundraising organisations like Deaf Access, something reiterated by Suzy, their MD and wonderful pianist!

It was disappointing that there were so few of the Deaf Community and deaf pupils there. Bromley Chain was well represented by six committee members/family and it was a real privilege to be present on such a memorable occasion, which sent us all off after an awesome evening, invigorated by the real Christmas spirit!

**Jenny Froude**



"Their performance produced so much energy they could have lit up the church," says Marion.

# IT CAN BE A CONFUSING WORLD

(especially if you are deaf, have autism or language difficulties)

One young man has seen the funny side of it and we just love his book! Read on for reviews ...

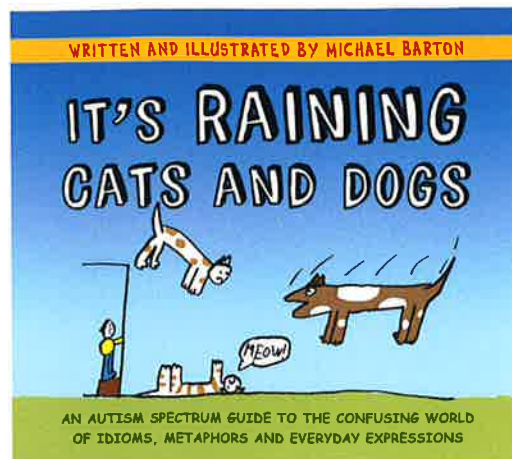
Michael Barton is a young man with a brilliant mind. He has a Physics degree. And yet at school he had difficulty with language and communication. In fact, he still does. Why is this? Because he has autism. His logical brain interprets words literally and so when a teacher told him to "Pull your socks up" and he did, he was in trouble!

In school, when Michael found an expression confusing, he drew a picture and his Teaching Assistant wrote the meaning underneath, e.g. "I was over the moon" meaning "I was very pleased". Michael's folder of drawings has become a book, *It's Raining Cats and Dogs*\*. Here are just a few examples of the expressions Michael illustrates (see bottom of page):

You're pulling my leg  
 You're winding me up  
 He's driving me up the wall  
 I feel like a Pizza  
 Take a seat

Michael spoke at the Annual Conference of Bromley Parent Voice in October. He gave parents optimism for the future of children with autism like himself.

Why am I writing about Michael here? Because his book rings true for children with language



difficulties. Michael's difficulty interpreting idioms and expressions immediately struck a chord with me as this is an area of language which deaf children find bewildering. Idioms, metaphors and double meanings can all be confusing. For educational and entertaining reasons, I recommend Michael's book.

And now that I have written this, maybe I'll "paint the town red"!

**Marion Brushett**

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I (Editor) bought a signed copy for my son to enjoy; here are his comments:

This book makes excellent read to see how someone with autism sees the world of idioms and everyday expressions.

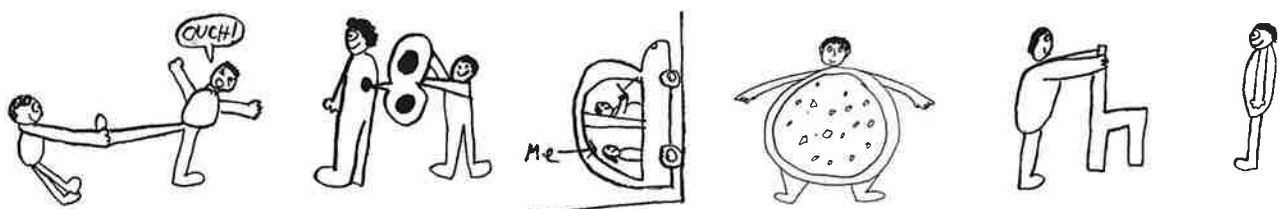
I could relate to this person as being deaf myself, when I see subtitles on TV, watching films or soaps, to see strange use of word expressions and with no one around to explain their meanings I'm often left in a muddle to why it was said in such a way e.g. "feeling under the weather" to express being unwell.

After seeing repeated expressions on TV I was able to interpret the meanings of most used expressions and it all became clear, unlike some who struggle with understanding of English.

The book has drawings which make it fun, to see Michael's point of perspective. It shall be handy for those in educational system.

**Tom Froude**

\*Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2012  
 ISBN 978 184905 283 2



# See It - Sign It!

The years roll away as I watch a tiny 16-month toddler comment, in sign (and voice) on the bird flying past the window, querying “where” with eloquent hands as it disappears from view.

The small boy I see in my mind’s eye (from 32 years ago) is captured on our old home movie, gazing up into the sky, signing “bird”, exactly as his daughter has just done, then endeavouring to form a “b” on his lips before pointing hopefully to his ears, trying to convince me he can also hear that noiseless little bird in flight!

For Tom (profoundly deaf from meningitis at 5 months) the signs were a vital lifeline into language. For his hearing daughter, Daisy, they are a lifeline into the language of her parents.



A baby’s nearly perfect “please”



At 10 months she “proof-reads” the May issue!

From birth she has watched them like a hawk, since 5 months she has been fascinated by her own hands and now she’s absorbing, making and understanding signs in the loveliest, most natural way. Her mother alerted me to the small bird sign Daisy was making unobtrusively, her little hand on the seat of the chair, nearly hidden by her dress, almost like a little whisper to herself, before she lifted it and signed expansively, to announce to us all that she’d spotted a bird!

I just never imagined what joy that sight would bring me!

**Grandma (or Um-Ma) Froude,**  
as Daisy endearingly calls me.

## ACHIEVING ASPIRATIONS

was the apt title of Bromley Parent Voice Annual Conference on 9th October at The Warren. The Forum aims to “inform, involve and influence” and Marion, Rosemary plus lipspeaker, and I, attended and heard Brian Lamb O.B.E talk about the need for S.E.N and Disability System to change and what the Children & Families Act 2014 sought to achieve. He was followed by Jeremy O’Donovan, Learning Access Director at Bishop Justus School on working with Academies, then Peter Lewis, Senior Commissioning Manager of Bromley CCG explained their role and Funke Adeloeye, Bromley Mencap introduced

the “Local Offer”. After lunch we were treated to some “light relief” in an amazing, often hilarious, illustrated talk from Michael Barton, Autism Speaker, Physicist and Musician, on the absurdities of some everyday expressions and signage. (see details of his book on page 6). [www.michaelbarton.org.uk](http://www.michaelbarton.org.uk)

Membership of BPV is free for local parents and carers of disabled children and young adults up to 25 years. email: [info@bromleyparentvoice.org.uk](mailto:info@bromleyparentvoice.org.uk)

**Jenny Froude**

## WORDS OF EXPERIENCE

...from a chaplain on the TV programme *Children's Hospital: the Chaplains* (BBC 2):

*"One thing that doesn't show up on tests is the spirit of the child and the sheer power of love from parents".*

This encouragingly hopeful observation from the bedside of a very poorly baby struck a real chord with me, and I hope it could do the same for anyone suffering a stressful time with a beloved child.

**Editor**

## AN INVITATION TO ALL READERS

### BROMLEY CHAIN AGM 2015

Tuesday 9th June, 7.30 p.m.

at

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

Sign Language Interpreters present

Refreshments

Very limited car parking space

When Daisy's signs became too many to list on the back of an envelope I bought this little Sign It notebook (£1.99 from The Works, Bromley intu) to log them!

**Editor**



## DISABLED FREEDOM PASS RENEWAL

Yet again I see that the definition of hearing loss is STILL not corrected on the questionnaire, despite repeated input from professionals and from me as a parent in the past.

Profoundly Deaf is still listed as 70 - 95 dBHL and Severely Deaf as 95+ dBHL. These, as many of our readers will know, should be reversed. Profoundly equals the greater loss, not Severely.

**Editor**

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

will be holding their twice yearly

## Antique, Vintage & Collectables Fair

Saturday 28th March 2015

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

Hayes Free Church,  
Pickhurst Lane,  
Hayes, Kent.

(Entrance £1)

Lunches and refreshments available

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 of services/products.