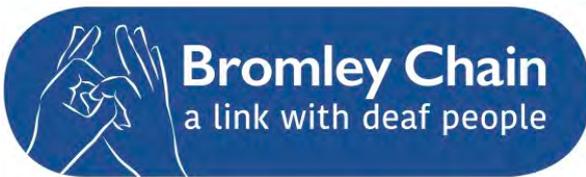


# Chainmail Newsletter

Spring 2019



Registered Charity No: 281051 [www.bromleychain.org.uk](http://www.bromleychain.org.uk)

Patron: Kathleen Hankinson



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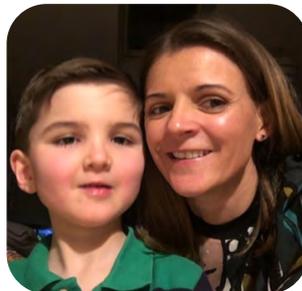
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**Kathleen Hankinson at 90**



**Remembering Erica Rogers**



**We welcome Danielle to the Committee**



**Sad Farewell to Sinclair Stayner**



**TinyTalk is tops**



**Trip to Tromso**



**Meet Beatrice Osborn**



**Kiri and children on Griffins' Open Day**

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

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# Why not Join Us?

We would like to welcome YOU to our AGM this year and invite you to think about joining our committee.

## BROMLEY CHAIN AGM

at

St. George's Church Hall Rooms  
25 - 27 Albemarle Road,  
Beckenham BR3 5HZ

on

Thursday 6th June 2019  
at 8.15 p.m.

followed by refreshments

(near Beckenham Junction train and  
trams, on many bus routes).



Jenny, Rosemary, Roger, Danielle, & Iman with our banner at AGM 2018

We meet on 6 evenings a year at this address and interpreters and electronic notetaker make the access easy for all, D/deaf or hearing.



## THE EDITOR EXPLAINS!

Instead of the usual 8 pages Chainmail is a 12 page edition again this time as, for various reasons, we only managed one newsletter in 2018. The copies are posted or delivered to all on our Mailing List and also go to local libraries, council offices, relevant charities and to Griffins (for staff and parents of deaf pupils). The constraints of GDPR mean we need to be told if you no longer want to receive a FREE copy (see back page).

Highlights of the past year were the excellent Open Day at Griffins (see opposite) especially rewarding for us as Danielle Paul was recruited to join the committee! (see page 4) and another the Oscar for the film *The Silent Child* (see Page 8) but other news was not so welcome. The frail health of Kathleen Hankinson, our Patron, meant she had to move into a Chislehurst nursing home from Ashglade in

Bickley where she had celebrated her 90th birthday last year (see front page). She enjoys seeing her family and faithful visitors, especially her interpreter friends, and Bromley Chain has funded a comfortable but supportive armchair on wheels which has aided her posture.

We mourned the sad loss of Erica Rogers, a previous committee member in April (see page 8) and early this year the chair heard from !Remark that Sinclair Stayner, a founder member of Bromley Chain and a past Chair, had died, in his 90s (see page 7). Another previous committee member, young deaf mother Kiri, is currently undergoing gruelling treatment for a rare bone marrow cancer and we wish her a complete and lasting recovery and a return to normal family life with her lovely children as soon as possible.

# Griffins' Second THEN & NOW Open Day

Last year's heavy snowfalls didn't deter past and present Teachers of the Deaf, current and previous pupils (several with their offspring), partners, parents, grandparents, siblings and friends from attending the Open Day in Orpington on Saturday 17th March last year.

**BROMLEY CHAIN** was there to celebrate the past 40+ years of enlightened Deaf Education in the borough and our shared history. Our small independent, local charity was founded in 1980, mainly by parents of deaf children, and over the years the links have been strengthened via our donations and input in items such as the sign language dictionaries, reading schemes, equipment, sponsorship and, more recently, the funding of a successful pilot scheme for a specialist signing counsellor to work with individual deaf pupils in need of such support.

To share in another Open Day was, as before, a positive and enjoyable experience! Our new Bromley Chain banner had pride of place in the corridor alongside our display stand and served as a reminder to people that we are still Supporting, Sponsoring, Campaigning, Informing and Raising Deaf Awareness in the borough. At least three deaf second generation members have come from the school and risen to become Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer before moving on with their lives. We hope for more one day!



Tricia Kemp on CICS stand



Ex-pupil Kiri with Storm & Junior

FOG (Friends of Griffins) raised funds via refreshments and tombola, DeafPLUS/Deaf Access, !Remark, CICS (Cochlear Implanted Children's Society) and Hearing Dogs were also represented and senior pupils from the Deaf Centre had entered a competition to design a Deaf Awareness poster, each one showing great insight and positive attitude.

With the film *The Silent Child* deservedly winning an Oscar it seemed a good time to showcase the excellent legacy of using Sign Language and Total Communication at Darrick Wood Schools and to celebrate today's visionary and stimulating teaching from the SSS which goes from strength to strength, despite the many challenges in staffing, budgets and added pressure from audiology, speech and language therapy, health and social issues.

**Jenny Froude**



Evie-may and Lilly



Chris and Michael

Famous ex-pupil Chris Fonseca (from the Smirnoff ad) taught Hip Hop to enthusiastic deaf youngsters, siblings and parents, and there were also lyrical signed songs from senior pupils, Deaf Men Dancing, circus skills, dinosaur puppets, painting and art, plus a visit from the local Fire Fighters!



Fred with mum Amy

## Bromley Stars Awards

Months later we were delighted to learn that Gina Rosado won the Leadership Award (nominated by Sarah Banks, Head of Deaf Centre, Lorna Lingard, Head of Primary Base and Wasfee Khan, Senior ToD) and SSS-Hearing Impairment team won The Service Delivery Partnership Award (nominated by Gina).

## Introducing our new Committee Member

My name is Danielle Paul. I have lived in the Bromley borough for the last twenty-two years, recently moving to Orpington to be closer to my son's school. I work full-time in the City of London, within the financial sector. I have two children, Benjamin born in April 2009 followed by Betty in 2013. I joined Bromley Chain committee in June after their call for new members.



Danielle with son Benjamin

This is my story of how and why I have become a member: In 2014 my husband and I felt that Benjamin's speech was somewhat below that of his peers and we arranged for a referral to Speech and Language (S&L) Bromley for an initial assessment. They confirmed that his speech was below his expected level and offered to provide assistance. As part of their usual procedure Benjamin was referred to the Phoenix for a standard hearing test. Being completely oblivious to the complexities of hearing loss my thoughts were very much "well I can converse and he hears me, therefore he isn't deaf". We went along to the appointment and the testing started. I was shocked when the audiology assistant remarked that he wasn't playing the game like he should. It hit me then. My son loves playing games and doing well; there is no way he wouldn't play! The audiologist came to take over, the games went on, until the audiologist confirmed that he suspected that Benjamin was deaf. He was 4 years old at this point. It hit me like a bullet; I walked out of the Phoenix in a complete daze and in

shock. Benjamin was seen at St. George's Hospital which confirmed he had bilateral mild to moderate hearing loss and was immediately fitted with hearing aids. It was later confirmed that he had a progressive hearing loss and now has a significant loss in his left ear.

Completely unprepared for our news we started Benjamin at our local school which was inadequate in that it was an old Victorian building. However, with that said, we had great support from our Teacher of the Deaf who gave me one of the best pieces of advice when he was first diagnosed. "You need to go through this time; it's a grieving period". She was absolutely right; I was grieving for the guilt I felt in not knowing he was deaf and the grief in knowing his life will be different.

Four years on and Benjamin is wonderfully happy. We managed, with the great support of Gina Rosado and Lorna Lingard, to obtain a placement at the Griffins centre (deaf education base). He is thriving at school with a great set of friends as well as obtaining the additional help he requires to succeed in life.

I joined Bromley Chain as I wish to give back to the community the knowledge and experience I have gained over the last four years, to make Bromley a great place to live. I would want to help break down barriers for people to achieve their dreams.

**Danielle Paul**

### SIXTEEN YEARS ON!

Sheelagh was there for the launch of my book\* at an Arts Festival in St. George's, Beckenham and, when my blog appeared on the publisher's website last year, updating Tom's story to coincide with the reprinting, she was kind enough to pen the following:

Jenny's book is, I know, invaluable to medical staff, parents and families in their everyday lives with deaf children. It is also a truly moving human story of one family's journey from having a healthy baby to one who will never hear. It is a tale to break the heart and to warm it once again. I still feel that it stands as a story in its own right as well as a text book. Jenny's first title "Words Are Not Enough" was a brilliant one. It is a great story.

**Sheelagh Spink**

*\*Making Sense in Sign - a lifeline for a deaf child (Multilingual Matters Ltd.)*

### NATIONAL THEATRE

Smart Caption Glasses are a revolutionary new way for people with hearing loss to enjoy performances at the National Theatre. Transcript of the dialogue and descriptions of sound from a performance are displayed on the lenses of the glasses. More information from [boxoffice@nationaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:boxoffice@nationaltheatre.org.uk) or call 020 7452 3961.

# Celebrating Innovative Years of Service for Local People

At the end of 2018 David Connolly, founder member of Bromley Chain, resigned from his current role as a Trustee of DeafPLUS, after 38 years of service to deaf and hard-of-hearing people in the borough. Having seen the three year merger of DEAF ACCESS with DeafPLUS through a successful integration process, leading to 5 years of funding from the LBB, he felt confident of the continuation of the centre (for which Bromley Chain had campaigned, fundraised and supported prior to its opening in 1996 in Beckenham Hospital before moving to Community House, Bromley in 2000).



Alan expressing appreciation (screen shows past highlights).

Past and present trustees of both charities enjoyed a small farewell party on 12th November at which Leo Mansell, manager of DeafPLUS, paid tribute to David's help in making the transition smooth by being

fully involved and fully supportive. "And now he finally trusts me!" he signed (amidst laughter) to which David gallantly protested "always!"

David will continue as a trustee on the board of Community House and he reflected that the centre quickly became a facility

that people envied but that with the Deaf Access trustees ageing and the running becoming more complex, the link with DeafPLUS, which shared the same ethos, gave a broader base to the organisation.

DeafPLUS have been awarded nearly £1m to set up a national information and help online facility.

Retiring, David feels his legacy of recognising the need for facilities for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing people will continue to flourish and he wished the centre all the best for the future. Alan Roberts, one time chair of Bromley Chain and a past trustee of Deaf Access, expressed his appreciation of all that David had achieved over many years.

**Editor**



Sarah (nee Connolly) Rosemary,  
Ann Clavering & Malcolm Hackforth



In at the start of Deaf Access  
(David Rose, David Connolly, Stuart Routledge)

Know what NERDA means? What it takes to be a Sign Language Interpreter? Read on!

# Meet Beatrice Osborn

A mutual friend introduced me to Beatrice a while ago when she was using my book in her Reflective Learning Journal on her Level 6 IBSL course.

Meeting her again renewed my awe of her signing skills, her dedication to studying in her sparse spare time (she works as a Network Delivery Manager at BT), her interest in all aspects of the Deaf community and her delight to be alongside them in an unobtrusive but supportive and sensitive way.

What, I wondered, inspired Beatrice to embark, in 2006, on the long journey she hopes will lead to becoming a Sign Language Interpreter? She lists three things. Firstly, a throwaway remark as a newcomer in the workplace which elicited a response she couldn't understand. The colleague was Deaf. Secondly, attending a church in Forest Hill where Herbert and Wendy Klein worshipped. He worked in Deaf Mental Health at Springfield Hospital and his wife is a sign language tutor. Fascinated to see a couple interpreting for them Beatrice thought "that looks interesting!" Thirdly, already attuned to languages, having done O Levels in French, German and Latin and GCSEs in Turkish and Greek, she saw Sign as another language and decided "I'll give it a go!"

After a BSL Level 1 course at Lewisham, at a cost of £242, she was "hooked", going straight on to Level 2 and finding the second year of that more satisfying once it was in the safe hands of Wendy Klein. When Wendy's church friends moved to the USA qualified signer Esther Thomas assumed their role and Beatrice benefitted from learning alongside her. "I felt God calling me to become an interpreter" she says.

With a full-time job and being chair of a school governing body there was little time to study but Beatrice went to deaf events and did a 6-day Linguistics Course led by Rachel Sutton Spence at Signamic in Rotherhithe. She also enjoyed Deaf History Courses at City Lit with Peter Brown. "What he doesn't know about deaf history isn't worth knowing" she declares.

Moving to a Level 3 course at Signamic for two years, followed by Level 6, was not without its problems when the company became bankrupt and the class moved to



Beatrice signs the Run Director's briefing at Bromley Parkrun.

Greenwich to a company who took over.

Electing to study Level 6 with IBSL, which is a Deaf led exam body, Beatrice needed to re-sit 3 out of the 8 exams but finally achieved the top qualification in BSL in summer 2017. The financial cost of achieving these levels was £4,400 and the toll in time and stress incalculable! She pays tribute to her tutors, Terry Edwards and Agnes Dyab, now chair of BDA.

The next step was researching interpreter training courses. There were two routes: NVQ with Signature or IBSL, or the postgraduate route at Herriot Watt, Edinburgh or University of Central Lancashire, Preston. There was not much choice, with Wolverhampton and Bristol no longer offering postgraduate courses. She opted for Preston, which takes only 18 students a year from the many who apply, was invited for an interview, with a reference from the Chaplain for Deaf People in London, and was successful. The University has run the course for 20 years and the fact that tutors are involved in research was a huge plus for her.

Beatrice spends one weekend every two months in Preston and also benefits from the free membership at a sports centre, the amazing library resources and, as a keen crafter, the proximity of a fabric and knitting warehouse which is a bonus!

Now in her second year, the course is gaining momentum and she has assessments, essays, filming in interpreting situations, preparation and analysis to do, showing evidence of continuing professional development. "I love it" she enthuses.

Fortunately BT offers flexible working arrangements so she currently works a 4-day week, doing longer days to avoid a drop in pay but freeing up time to dedicate to sign language. Qualifying as an interpreter will have cost £10,000 and Beatrice has spent another £4,000 on formal courses.

At the bi-annual Signs of God summer school last year Beatrice found herself on the interpreting team for the first time, which left her "delighted and scared witless in equal measure!" Through a conversation at work she found out about signed Catholic Masses and attends

when she can to expand her church vocabulary. She met a deaf Jesuit priest, Fr. Paul Fletcher, but soon afterwards he was moved away from London but to Preston, so once every two months she is able to support the signed Mass with him at St. Wilfrid's - a God-given coincidence.

In complete contrast, Beatrice is an interpreter for Park-run at Norman Park, Bromley, on a Saturday morning. As a non-runner, with her feet firmly on the ground, she's needed for conveying safety instructions, running etiquette, milestones and special announcements and, alongside Leo and Rebecca Mansell, the number of Deaf runners is growing.

Yet another coincidence in her life occurred at the Tower of London during the Commemoration of the end of World War 1. While queueing with her ticket her BSL radar detected some signing nearby. Turning around whom should she see but Fr. Paul down on a trip from Preston! Immediately going into interpreter mode, with practical help from a deaf-aware Yeoman Warder, she made sure he and his companions could access some of what she describes as a "complex soundscape"!

Married for 33 years to a very supportive husband, Beatrice is at pains to say she is aware that she is from out-

side the Deaf Community - a NERDA, to borrow a term from a visiting American at a Summer School, meaning Not Even Related to a Deaf Adult. However, her sensitive approach to the community in whatever setting means she simply turns up, wants to learn, gets to know people before she is invited to sign, which is the point at which she feels "very honoured". Being flexible (BSL or SSE as chosen by the recipient), adaptable and taking feedback are among her priorities and she feels especially blessed to be in the Deaf Christian community. She tells me that tutors describe interpreting as being a 3rd class of people, with a foot in both the Deaf and hearing worlds and she has heard it said that "a lot of people don't realise they are hearing until they meet deaf people!"

As we parted Beatrice was heading to London to join her regular book club that, surprisingly, also incorporates her favourite hobby, knitting, at which she is incredibly talented and inspirational. (My words, not hers!) I was left with two thoughts - how can just one pair of hands be so doubly skillful and dare we hope that one day we might even see those hands raised to vote or volunteer as a Trustee of Bromley Chain.

**Jenny Froude**

## Farewell to a Founder Member and recent Trustee

### RONALD SINCLAIR-STAYNER (1926 - 2019)

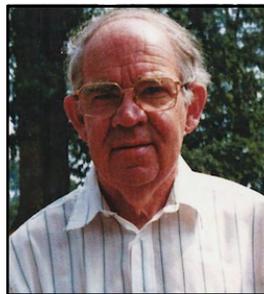
*"He was content and proud of his rich Deaf Culture and sign Language"*

Thus did son Jonathan describe his beloved father, whose life was celebrated at Camberwell New Cemetery on a beautifully sunny afternoon in February.

About 25 friends, including Remark and past and present members of Bromley Chain, assembled to share their sorrow with Jonathan and his father's Carer, Tracey. We saw/heard two beautiful eulogies delivered by them, signed/voiced over with huge affection and respect by Evelyn Davenport, to remember a man described by Fr. John Walker as "much loved and greatly respected".

Sinclair and Olive were married for 57 years but had known each other for 72 years and went to the same deaf school in Margate before going their separate ways, meeting again later in a Croydon youth club. They had 3 children. Sinclair (the name by which most of us knew him) worked making patterns/

templates in woodwork. The couple travelled the world and Sinclair was an avid photographer. Active in local deaf clubs and in Bromley Chain, he was a good communicator and enjoyed a variety of TV programmes, from opera to wrestling and snooker!



Tracey, who knew Ronald for 15 years and was his Carer for the last 5, mentioned his baking cakes for Bromley Chain meetings and his fondness for scones with jam and cream! Describing him as "one in a million" she told of his "charming personality" which had recently won the hearts of all the professionals - doctors, nurses, opticians, carers, social services staff, solicitors and others - with whom he had to come into contact. His departure had left her with "*a heartache that nobody can heal, but love leaves a memory that nobody can steal*".

Rest in peace, Sinclair, alongside Olive and your daughter Jennifer, and Bromley Chain gives thanks for all you did for the charity and for the Deaf Community. You will never be forgotten; you played such a special part in our history and were a true friend.

**Jenny Froude**



## REMEMBERING ERICA ROGERS, MBE (1932 - 2018)

Erica's high profile in the public arena with her work in setting up Freedom from Hunger, a 5 year campaign to bring together all the aid organisations concerned with world hunger, was not something of which we were aware when she volunteered to come on our committee in 2008. It was only at the Service

of Thanksgiving and Celebration for her life that we learned she had on one occasion taken the chair for four speakers, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, Leader of the Opposition Hugh Gaitskell, Leader of the Liberal party Jo Grimond and the Archbishop of Canterbury. At the time it was received she was the youngest person to be honoured with an MBE having been made a member of the UN Food & Agricultural Association. She went on to help with the founding of

Age Concern, highlighting the duty of care large organisations owed to help their employees prepare for retirement.

To our small local charity Erica brought her wealth of experience of government protocol, international charities and sound financial commonsense to our committee meetings for six years and was particularly supportive of Tom, then our young profoundly deaf chair and Andrew, Vice Chair.

Saddened as we were by her death last April we were astonished, humbled and encouraged by the fact that David and their family named Bromley Chain as recipients of donations made in her memory. It says much about the love and high esteem in which she was held that the total reached £1020.

The amount has been ring-fenced and will be used for a one-off item or project to benefit deaf adults and/or children and be something of which we feel she and her family would approve and which could, hopefully, bear her name.

**Jenny Froude on behalf of  
Bromley Chain Committee**

## THE SILENT CHILD

I am sure the deaf world gave a huge thumbs up (good BSL!) to BBC 1 for showing *The Silent Child*, the short, Oscar winning, thought-provoking film on Good Friday last year, and for the *One Show* interviews which preceded it. Huge congratulations are due to everyone involved, especially deaf Maisie Sly who plays Libby, Rachel Shenton as the social worker who teaches her to sign, and Chris Overton, who directed her wonderful film for which the writing, fundraising and work apparently took twelve years!

It's beautifully filmed and each time I watch it I see something new in it. Occasionally it calls to mind a rather withdrawn and lonely deaf child I met once or twice, who couldn't communicate verbally with his brothers or interact much with his deaf peers because he had been denied the chance to sign by his family.

We had our own Black Friday in the 80s when our 5-month old son looked likely to lose his life to meningitis. Profound deafness was the price he paid for survival.

Fortunately John Hurd, his peripatetic teacher, saw that he would need signs and he could soon express himself and, instead of being isolated, could play his rightful part within his hearing family and we could get to know our precious youngest son in his newly silent world. To

see him puzzled in his big pram when woolly mitts cramped his signing as he tried to alert me to the dog he had spotted behind me, or watch him warn a schoolboy friend of his brothers that the apple crumble was hot, are but two of the many memories I cherish! They went into my book (see page 4) celebrating his life and proving what a privilege and delight it had been to bring up a deaf child.

To see Tom now as a husband and proud father, so sensitively aware of his hearing 5 and 3 year olds, both of whom sign, lipspeak and talk beautifully and confidently, is an added joy, as are the delightfully descriptive emails he sends me. Tromso on page 9 is an example!

Hearing people so often confuse speech with language. If the former is sometimes unintelligible to a naive listener, the language that can be acquired via signs is to be valued and treasured. To see it used by our son at a young age, not only for basic needs but also to negotiate, to soothe, to tease, to cajole, to commiserate, to comment, to question, to predict was an unbelievable bonus. To have had the right advice locally at a vulnerable time still seems too good to be true. And is the reason I shed tears as the film credits came up.

**Jenny Froude**

# Celebrating Ten Years, in Tromso!

When Mary told me she would like to go to Norway for our 10th year anniversary of when we first met on our friends' skiing holiday, the first thing she said was Husky Sledding and I knew because of her love for dogs so we agreed a mini weekend away in January.

The sweetest thing my 5 year old daughter, Daisy, said to me at bedtime was "have a good holiday" with sad eyes the night before we were due to fly out (she told us not to go a few hours earlier!) Our 3



year old Oliver didn't seem to understand that we would be away for a few days and they were absolute stars staying with their Nana. During our stay we were able to see and speak to them on our mobile using Facetime.

We enjoyed our time in beautiful Norway, staying in little town of Tromso and had fun with 300 excited dogs waiting for us to go sledding. This was amazing experience with beautiful mountains all around us and white fields where the dogs ran along! It was bitterly cold as we travelled along and our faces almost covered up and hands tightly tucked inside to stay warm. We had to put up with racket of barking and lots of nudging when the dogs are so eager to make a move.

Afterwards we had free time to ourselves, for a wander around meeting the dogs and entered a holding pen to get close with playful puppies and they

enjoyed hands on contact, having a bit of tug of war on whatever they can take hold of! Included in this trip was hot lunch in Sami tent with a fire, having reindeer soup and tasty bread.

On to our next adventure. A 90 minute coach journey in the evening took us to Tamok Camp out in the wilderness, for Northern Lights, with limited lighting around us. The only things out there were a few candles that lit up our paths. Only glimmer of lights came from few Sami tents that were scattered around the forest.

Once we positioned ourselves in the open we didn't have to wait long for the aurora to make appearance. It was unreal and out of this world. We were lucky to have a nice guide who would switch on his headlamp to gesture us something. Because it was a freezing night and everyone was in their bulky warm clothing and our faces covered up it was no good lipreading or signing in the near dark! Hands could only come out for a few minutes to take photos before it starts hurting!

When I got back home in UK I was astounded to read a post on Facebook about cochlear implant users experiencing stinging pain on the implant area in extreme cold where the internal magnet freezes. So this is heads up to all users and parents of young children with implant to be aware but I know this is nowhere near sub-zero freezing like USA had.

**Tom Froude**



# Try not to sign too much with him!

This shocking piece of advice was given to the parents of a baby boy who had just received a cochlear implant. And it breaks my heart.

Having taught Deaf children for 25 years, I am convinced of the inestimable value of signing in helping our children to acquire language and communication and English. I carried this belief into my retirement. But, faced with the prospect of retirement, I could think of nothing worse than staying at home, dusting the skirting boards. So I became a TinyTalk teacher.

## What is TinyTalk?

TinyTalk is a company which runs classes for parents/carers and their babies, both deaf and hearing, teaching sign language, simple BSL signs to help babies communicate before they can speak. I had known about TinyTalk since it was a mere twinkle in the eye of its founder Katie Mayne, a teacher of the deaf. Whilst on maternity leave, expecting her first baby, she read about parents signing with their babies in America. As a teacher of the deaf, she was familiar with sign vocabulary so she tried using some signs with her baby boy, Harry. He began to use the signs and other mums saw what was happening. They became interested and thus TinyTalk was born.

## For how long did you teach TinyTalk classes?

For almost ten years. I started my first classes in September 2008 in South Croydon and in South Norwood. Later I was asked by Katie Mayne to become a member of the training team. So for the past few years I have had the privilege of training new TinyTalk teachers. I'm still involved with the training, although I stopped teaching my own classes in December 2017.

## Describe a typical TinyTalk class!

There is 30-35 minutes of lively interactive singing with signing. During that time the teacher will teach 5 or 6 core signs, with many other signs being used in the songs. There is a sensory activity every week, bubbles, sensory shapes, mirrors and other exciting ways to stimulate the babies. Every third week there is a signed storybook. The second part of the class is social time for the adults and playtime for the babies. There is a wide choice of hot and cold drinks and the refreshments always include chocolate biscuits. We also try to cater for food allergies or intolerances.



Young TinyTalker Amy with Jackie

## And do the babies really learn the signs?

Well of course, it does depend on the adults using the signs with their babies at home, but given that, yes they do! Let me tell you some stories to show what I mean. A family of four, Mum, Dad, Toddler and Baby, was visiting a National Trust property. They were setting off from the car park to see the lake, when the baby reached up his hand from his pushchair and signed, 'milk'. Mum went back to the car, fed him and then re-joined Dad and the Toddler round the lake. Tears and tantrums had been avoided and the family was able to enjoy their day. On another occasion, I was in the departure lounge of Gat-

wick Airport, when I received a text from a mother, telling me that her baby girl, aged 13 months, had just put two signs together and signed that she wanted her 'milk cold'. Again, a potential tantrum avoided and a baby happily drinking her cold milk.

## How do you encourage the parents to keep going with signing at home?

We celebrate every child's achievement by awarding a certificate for their first sign. The Mums are always delighted to share stories of their babies' latest signs and this in turn encourages the other parents to carry on.

## Are there any materials to help the parents to remember the signs?

Yes, we have an award winning Signing Pack, which contains a photo and description of 150 signs used in the classes. Beneath each photo there is space to record when each sign was first used, and when the baby understood the sign, used the sign and said the word. There's a DVD showing all the signs, each with a supporting photo or video clip. At the end of each group of signs, there are songs sung by mums with their babies. And then there are CDs of songs sung in the classes. Some mums put the CD on in the car on the way to TinyTalk class to let their baby know where they are going.

## Does teaching them to sign stop the development of speech/ stop them talking?

This is the question I'm most often asked. I can honestly, hand on heart, say that the opposite is true. Baby signing lays the foundation for all communication.

When babies can sign they learn that the grownups will take notice and respond to them. This motivates them to carry on signing. At TinyTalk we teach our families to speak and sign at the same time, so babies quickly make the connection between the words they hear and the signs they see. This in turn gives them the confidence to try and say the words. So many parents tell me stories to back this up.

Here are some of the things they say: 'His speech is far more advanced than my friends' children who haven't been to TinyTalk.' 'When I took him to enrol for Nursery, they assessed his speech as being off the scale.' 'Signing gave him such a good start with language that now he is reading at a level far in advance of his chronological age'. Faced with these and many other similar comments, I feel angry and upset about the negative view of signing which I used as the title for this article.

### Would you recommend TinyTalk?

Absolutely! TinyTalk classes are so much fun. Parents and carers appreciate being able to socialise with others who are in the same situation as themselves. They are learning an amazing way of communicating with their



Significance of Certificates are lost on little Emily!

babies, giving those babies skills which will stand them in good stead for life.

Chainmail readers who would like to attend TinyTalk classes, please search on line for [www.tinytalk.co.uk](http://www.tinytalk.co.uk), type in your post code and your nearest class should appear. You can also order the lovely TinyTalk resources there.

Aqsa (seen with son Daood on cover) took over Jackie's TinyTalk franchise and is currently on maternity leave.

*Jackie Parsons was answering questions put to her by the Editor, who makes no apology for featuring TinyTalk again in these pages! I only wish they had been around when my deaf son was a baby; he had to wait until he was in senior school to benefit from her inspired input! (with Science rather than nursery rhymes!) With a wealth of experience as a ToD and the fact that her 10 years as a TinyTalk teacher saw her help nearly 1200 little ones on the lovely road to language makes her an expert in the field, be it for deaf or hearing youngsters. Friend, teacher, mentor - she's all that and more!*

**Jenny Froude**



Flowers from Bromley Chain on Kathleen's 90th birthday last year.



David Connolly (centre) with Undine (far left) and Ann, Mary, Marion, Jenny and Roger marked his forthcoming retirement at the New Inn, Hayes as guests of past and present trustees of both charities.

## **BROMLEY DISABILITY PRIDE 2018**

This event, sponsored by Clarion Futures, took place on Sunday 2nd December in the Great Hall, Bromley Civic Centre. It was disappointing that Experts by Experience did not give us prior notice of it as their flyer, which was brought to my attention quite by chance only a day or so beforehand, stated that Sign Kid Walker, Deaf Hip-Hop artist would be appearing and BSL interpreters would be present.

Perhaps next year we could be told in time for details to appear on our website and in this newsletter.

**Editor**

## **The Rotary Club of Langley Park and DeafPlus**

### **Antique, Vintage & Collectables Fair**

**Saturday 9th March 2019**

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

**Hayes Free Church,  
Pickhurst Lane, Hayes, Kent.**

(Entrance £1.50)

## **ACCESS LONDON THEATRE**

I was surprised to see the March - May edition of this invaluable brochure contained only 10 sign language interpreted listings. There were 44 captioned ones and 36 audio described ones plus 10 Relaxed Performances.

Find out more at  
OfficialLondonTheatre.com/access  
or send feedback to [access@soltukt.co.uk](mailto:access@soltukt.co.uk)

**Editor**

## **SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING!**

When gremlins garble subtitles, while it is simply infuriating to a hearing person like me, it does deaf people a real disservice!

On October 12th I watched Princess Eugenie's wedding in Windsor shown live on ITV.

As the vocabulary for royal and religious occasions is fairly predictable I was surprised to read the following:

Household calf rabbely (Household cavalry)

Tee Eire (tiara)

Jes Is Kruz (Jesus Christ)

Awe Sunday (asunder)

Matterie money (matrimony)

Enstings (instincts)

Fortunately when the highlights were shown in the evening I am glad to say these mistakes had been corrected!

And while on the subject of subtitles, during the amazing Rickshaw Challenge on The One Show, for Children in Need, I was pleased to see signing mentioned, but not when it appeared as "maggot on" (Makaton)!

## **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

We need to offer all readers who receive a FREE copy of Chainmail (by post or hand-delivered) the chance to have this discontinued by taking their names off our Mailing List. This can be done by contacting the Editor (details on front page).

If we **do not** hear from you that you wish your name and address to be removed we shall assume that you want to continue to receive Chainmail free once or twice a year in the usual way.

**(Our Mailing List is never shared with anyone else).**

**Bromley Chain**

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