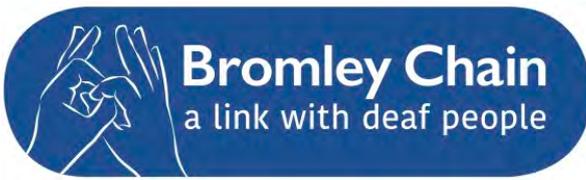


Chainmail Newsletter

Spring 2020



Registered Charity No: 281051 www.bromleychain.org.uk

Patron: Kathleen Hankinson



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Two authors meet!
See why inside



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Project Knole:
Chance for a signed tour



Primary pupils help save Koalas



Our Bursary to
train a ToD!

ALL THIS AND MORE - READ ON

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Bursary from Bromley Chain

Dear Bromley Chain,

I am writing to thank you for your sponsorship of my PG Dip. Educational Studies (Teacher of the Deaf) course enabling me to gain qualified status.

Previously, I have worked with a number of children who are deaf or have language processing skill difficulties and have always been interested in focusing on this area of education. The funding you are providing is enabling me to pursue my long term career ambition by becoming a Teacher of the Deaf.

The course itself has provided me with a wonderful opportunity to develop my understanding of deaf students, which has been both interesting and thought provoking. The course has provided a unique opportunity to learn about and reflect upon ideologies, research and the current provision and practice for deaf students. I can now better understand this unique sector of education and develop pedagogies, which will provide children who are deaf with greater access to, and opportunity for, educational success.

The course has highlighted a number of issues within deaf education that have surprised me. Perhaps, most notably is that 90% of children who are deaf are born to hearing parents, presenting a communication mismatch. However, the reading that the course has directed me to has meant that I now have



Theresa Elliott (Trainee ToD)

a better understanding of how to support not only the young people, but also their parents in overcoming this difficulty by developing language through every day interactions, as well as delivering bespoke language teaching sessions.

It has also been beneficial in that it provides an opportunity to meet with other Teachers of the Deaf, share resources, knowledge and engage in a professional dialogue on a scale not always available.

Currently, I am fortunate enough to work locally with small groups of deaf students within a specialist resource provision so that I can provide the personalised learning experience to support them in achieving their potential whilst still benefitting from having access to a mainstream curriculum and peers. I have had the opportunity to use the theoretical knowledge I am learning on the course in a 'real' setting to further develop my professional practice. For example, by using sign to develop students' understanding of phonics, which they can then apply to reading/writing activities.

The opportunity to work with such a diverse, interesting and unique group of students has been a real honour and I thank you for the funding that you have provided which will result in me being able to pursue this career long term.

Yours sincerely,

Theresa Elliott (Trainee ToD)

Deaf Pupils to The Rescue! (stitching pouches for Koalas)

In January and February 2020, bushfires raged through Australia leaving thousands of animals orphaned and in need of rescue and care. Pupils in the Primary Deaf Base at Griffins were so moved by the plight of these animals that they decided they wanted to do something practical to help.

One day in February, after much research, Griffins held a 'Sewing for Australia' afternoon where the pupils made pouches for rescued animals. Pupils measured and cut out paper patterns depending on the type of animal they wanted the pouch to be used for: small for baby koalas, large for baby kangaroos and joeys. Pupils used the patterns to cut their fabric to size, which they then pinned together. Mrs Lingard (Head of Base) brought in her sewing machine and one by one the pupils carefully sewed their pouches (under adult guidance!).

The pupils enjoyed the whole process from research to the final product, learning new information and skills along the way. They even went on to use their knowledge about the bushfires to write 'newspaper reports' to record the events.

The pouches have since been posted to a rescue hub in Australia and have been put to use in one of the many rescue centres.



A PERSONAL INVITATION TO EVERYONE WHO READS THIS CHAINMAIL!

2020 BROMLEY CHAIN A.G.M.

The foundations for Bromley Chain were laid in 1980 so this is our 40th Anniversary!

We have a history to be proud of - supporting, sponsoring, campaigning, informing and raising Deaf Awareness in the borough - and encouraging young deaf people to become Chairperson. (Two ex-DWS pupils, Tom and Andrew, followed each other in that role in the past).

Without our committee highlighting the need for a centre for d/Deaf people, campaigning and fundraising for it, Deaf Access (now DeafPLUS) in Community House, Bromley would not have come into being.

On our small committee Roger is the longest-serving member and Jenny a close second! We remember the days when there were specialist Social Workers with Deaf People in the LBB, qualified BSL users, working closely with the Deaf Community. And, because Bromley Chain was set up initially by parents of deaf children, strong links have always been maintained with the Sensory Support Service and what is now the excellent Griffins Centre in Orpington.

Our meetings are made accessible to all by Sign Language Interpreters and an Electronic Notetaker and the committee consists of deaf, hard of hearing and hearing people. If you or anyone you know have a deaf child, family member, friend or colleague or if you simply take an interest in deaf issues, do please consider joining our committee! Some new young blood would be wonderful!

We meet only about five times a year at **St. George's Church Hall rooms, Albemarle Road, Beckenham**, on a Thursday evening from 7.40 to 9.40. Come along to our

**A.G.M. on Thursday,
11th June at 8 p.m.**
(followed by refreshments)

to meet us and see just how easy and interesting it is! A warm welcome awaits you (and no pressure!)



Coincidences!

Churches that serve a community not just a congregation are very special and I count the one I attend as just that. Last year found me experiencing several coincidences in relation to deafness which came right out of the blue (some resulting in more readers of my book *Making Sense in Sign - a lifeline for a deaf child.*)

First was meeting Frances, a ToD who hadn't worked in the borough herself, but has a close friend, no longer local, who was a teacher here and taught Tom at Darrick Wood. Then there was Pamela who, at an Arts Festival reception, heard me mention deafness in passing and told me her great nephew was to be the youngest baby at GOSH to receive bi-lateral cochlear implants. He later featured in the Paul O'Grady TV series on the hospital and it was fascinating to see him responding to sound at the switch-on, although I did wish Paul himself had not seen fit to be banging a tambourine when it was simply the sound of his parents' voices the little chap should, hopefully, be hearing. Later when I met Pamela again at a Helen Pankhurst evening I happened to be sitting next to Mary Garside, so was able to introduce her as my ToD friend seconded to the cochlear implant team over 20 years ago when Tom had his implant at GOSH at the age of 16 and had to suffer the indignity of fitting his 6ft2in frame into a bed on Peter Pan Ward!

Moving on, there was Robert, then an enchanting toddler ensconced in the arms of his mum with whom I went to share the Peace with my hands during a service and he leaned forward to kiss me instead. I was so delighted I automatically signed "oh thank you; that was really special" and then, afterwards, apologised to his paramedic mum as I thought she must have wondered what I was doing! Not a bit of it! She said he wasn't at all fazed as he already knew the sign for "Thank you", having been to baby signing classes!

On the bus going home one Sunday after church I met Karen and we caught up on news in sign both, funnily enough, laughing and signing "good luck" to each other at the same time as I went to get off. As I did so I noticed a woman smiling and looking interested in the exchange and, as I returned the smile, I realised she looked familiar. She had been a teacher in the mainstream when I was working at Darrick Wood, hence the interest!

Buses provide chance encounters as I discovered when, just about to alight, I thought I recognised a man sitting near the door. We smiled somewhat hesitantly at each other, I said "Bob?" and he said

"Jenny!" and asked if we still lived in the same house. He was our lovely postman when Tom was only about 3 and had left that round long years before we moved in 2008! I mentioned him in my book about Tom because his was the first name our son had picked up without me telling him and to hear him say "Bob" is something that will always stick in my mind. Recently I asked each of our 3 sons separately if they remembered the name of our postman in Stanley Avenue and each one said "Bob" without any hesitation!

Clearing out some old paperwork I found a list of people, parents and professionals, who were at a seminar on deafness at Guy's Hospital in 1988. Looking under P to see if Jackie Parsons had been there, long before I was to meet her as a ToD, I didn't see her name but I did spot that of Tom's mother-in-law Jan! So we were linked as parents earlier than we had thought!!

A deaf man I eventually recognised as a pupil at Darrick Wood in the 80s, during Tom's early days there, occasionally pops in to the church and I explained in sign what was happening in the service. Afterwards another man commented on my signing and said he had a client who interprets in all the major London theatres. Is her name Donna? I queried. And of course it was! Small world - but the biggest coincidence is yet to come...

A very dear and close schoolteacher friend has gone to live in Eire and joined a book club to meet new people. During one discussion she met another teacher who it turned out had been a ToD in Boston for 30 years! She explained to my friend that her niece had been so fascinated by the deaf children that she became a ToD herself and went on to a London University to do a PhD. As I read the email, very late at night, I thought of someone I remembered doing some language research with Tom and his peer group in DWS Senior School in the mid 90s. Too much of a coincidence I thought but couldn't resist putting on the end of my emailed reply "don't tell me her name was Mairead MacSweeney!" Yes, you have guessed, it was! Mairead is now a Professor at DCAL-UCL (Deafness Cognition and Language) and my book was going to be discussed at the book club meeting in Gorey. I wish I had been a fly on the wall!

All these encounters have been heartwarming in their different ways. Why not send me some of yours for the next Chainmail?

Jenny Froude

CHALLENGES!

Some years ago Canon Derek Carpenter, a previous Rector of St. George's, Beckenham who had always been very supportive of my deaf son, Tom, introduced me to Ella Dove, a youngster who had just got a job in the fiction department of *Woman's Weekly*, a magazine on which I had worked for 15 years before my sons were born. Ella then did an excellent feature on Tom (a previous Chair of Bromley Chain) about the way his 16-month-old hearing daughter Daisy was already signing with her deaf parents.

After the interview I remember taking Ella to the station, from where she was travelling to UCL to meet her sister, then studying to become a Speech & Language therapist, for a Christmas sung and signed choir event. She said afterwards that it rounded off the day very appropriately!

Just 18 months later I heard from Derek that this delightful young journalist had suffered a freak accident, falling while running with her sister on a deserted canal path, resulting in the amputation of her right leg. She was only 25 years old, living life to the full and loving her new job on *Good Housekeeping* magazine. It is hard to imagine the anguish she went through, physical and mental, with eventual rehabilitation and the long, painful walk back to her previous health and strength. But Ella, with the support of a wonderful family and friends, fought her way back and has now written a debut novel based on her experiences.

Five Steps to Happy was published by Trapeze Books last year and I went to Maidstone to her book signing at Waterstones where I was delighted to see a lively queue at her table, while copies of the biography of a certain prime minister, piled high by the door, were being totally ignored!



Jenny and Ella

Ella had already had good publicity in the national press, colour supplements, evening papers and glossy magazines and also been interviewed on radio and TV when the hardback came out and now it is out in paperback. The book is lovingly dedicated to her sister Althea, now a qualified SLT, who was running with her when she fell and who has been at her side through all the angst which followed that fateful Sunday morning in Stratford.

Despite a busy career, Ella has made time to help others by supporting the Limbless Association and Barts Charity as an Ambassador, visiting new amputees and giving talks. Always positive, she lists amazing new experiences she has enjoyed with her prosthetic leg - climbing the O2 Arena, blade running, wild swimming, travelling to far-flung places, London's Moon Walk half marathon trek in aid of Breast Cancer and dancing with Paralympian athlete and *Strictly Come Dancing* contestant Jonnie Peacock M.B.E. "Between us we

literally have two left feet" she wrote in *Good Housekeeping*, beneath a stunning photograph!

Since the interview with us in December 2014, at the same time as Tom and Mary's daughter Daisy has been finding her feet, maturing and enjoying the challenge of growing up bilingual, Ella has been facing the challenge brought about by a life-

changing accident. Both are absolute stars in their own way. When life changes, as Tom's did when meningitis struck at five months, and as Ella's did on a May morning, strong characters can survive to tell their stories (and make their parents so proud!)



Ella, Tom, Daisy, Mary

Jenny Froude

HEARING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

how a CROS aid helped a student

My name is Laura Harries and I am currently in my fourth year at Durham University studying Natural Sciences. In 2007 after contracting meningitis and septicaemia I lost the hearing in my left ear and was diagnosed with a profound mono-lateral hearing loss. This means I have no discernible hearing in my left ear and since my very first audiology appointment I was repeatedly told there was nothing that could be done as both cochlear implants and hearing aids would not work for the type of hearing loss I have.

However, in my second year at university, having been discharged from paediatric audiology at home in London, I was referred to the local ENT department by my Durham GP. Having undergone my usual hearing test I was then seen by the consultant who asked me if I'd ever been offered CROS (Contralateral Routing Of Signals) aids as a child. Up until this point not only had I never been offered CROS aids, I'd never even heard of them before!



Based on technology patented in 1964 CROS aids were initially connected by a wire around the back of the head or mounted onto glasses as the first wireless CROS aids weren't invented until 2004. CROS aids are worn on both ears and the one in the ear with hearing loss takes sound from that side and transmits it to the aid in the other ear. This aims to replicate two-sided hearing in a way that conventional hearing aids do not for people with mono-lateral hearing loss. Bi-CROS aids which incorporate the function of hearing and CROS aids into one device also exist.

In the following appointments my CROS aids were ordered and fitted and in March 2018 I wore them for the first time. The difference they

have made to my life in the past two years is incredible; for the first time in over ten years I have some degree of directionality to my hearing, and when someone is stood to the left hand side of me I now more often than not notice when they talk to me.

MMR (MEASLES, MUMPS & RUBELLA) IN THE NEWS

With the NHS flagging up its concern about the less than perfect uptake of MMR, with past scares seeing parents shunning this immunisation, resulting in many serious cases of measles and mumps, I am surprised that I have seen no interviews or read any articles about the risks of the highly contagious virus Rubella which can severely damage a developing foetus if contracted by a woman during early pregnancy. Just like CMV (Cytomegalovirus) it can cause deafness, from partial to profound, and youngsters who missed out on the MMR programme offered to infants could not only develop German Measles but unwittingly pass it on to those of child-bearing age in the community who are unprotected.

I believe it was the "bulge" in Rubella in the Seventies which led to an increase in the number of deaf children and the need for what were then called Units at Darrick Wood Schools to meet the demand for Deaf Education in the borough. The rest, as they say, is history but it leads me to wonder if numbers of infants born deaf will increase and how systems - Education, Health and Social Services - locally and countrywide, will cope with its many implications.

While pondering this I read the attachment from NDCS (National Deaf Children's Society) sent to CHSWG (Children's Hearing Service Working Group) members that, although numbers of deaf children are already going up, there has been a 12% fall in the numbers of Teachers of the Deaf in England since 2011. The NDCS is campaigning for the Department of Education to invest in a new bursary* scheme to fund the training of the next generation of ToDs. See www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/why-the-government-needs-to-invest-in-teachers-of-the-deaf/

*Thanks to a previous discussion at a CHSWG meeting I had already alerted the Bromley Chain committee to the difficulty in finding enough specialist teachers, common to all local boroughs, and we unanimously decided to offer a two-year Bursary for the training of a local teacher, already working in mainstream at Darrick Wood Senior School, to become a ToD. Read her letter on page 2.

A VISIT TO KNOLE

Last October, Rosemary Hackforth, our charity's Chairperson and Roger Vincent-Townend, a committee member, visited the National Trust's property Knole in Sevenoaks. A meeting had been arranged with the National Trust's local Volunteering & Community Involvement Manager, Karen Shannon, who is very keen to support special visits for small

groups of disabled members. With this in mind, **Bromley Chain** is considering funding such a visit of a small party of no more than **10 Bromley residents** (Our Constitution restricts it to only Bromley residents) who would be accompanied by a **BSL interpreter** for a one hour 'Highlights' tour round the property. Any non- NT member would have to just pay a standard entry fee. It is likely that the tour would be early on a Friday in May before the house formally opens to the general public, but not in holiday time. You will have to make your own way to Knole, either by car or public transport, but be warned that there is a



long steep driveway to the actual house from the main Sevenoaks Road. In this case you may wish to consider joining together with car-owning friends to share the travel costs. After the escorted tour has ended you would of course be at liberty to revisit the house at your leisure, visit the special Conservation Studio to see the wonderful work of preservation and repair that

is being carried out to the house and its contents, and on clear days, climb up the Gate-house Tower with its spectacular views out over the Sevenoaks Weald, and ramble in the extensive grounds. And there is of course, the café/restaurant on site and the car parking is free to NT members.

Roger Vincent-Townend

If you are interested in such a Bromley Chain funded and arranged visit, please contact Rosemary on her email address on front page ASAP.

Breaking Barriers

Many years ago I remember men pollarding trees in the road outside our house, in a high and chilly wind. Going out to offer them all a hot drink, the foreman indicated that the man up in the tree was deaf. The look of surprise and joy on that man's face as I looked up and signed "coffee?" to him was a revelation to me, the mum of a then very young deaf child. Such a small gesture but making such a huge difference to someone, I realised.

Now my son has been in the workplace for 20 odd years of course I realise what impact a signing colleague can make. That's why 17-year-old Ben Robinson made my day when he was a student at John Lewis last year. Noticing a colleague signing with Tom, he saw how his face lit up at such communication, and determined to learn some sign language himself. Not only to learn but, as result of



Ben and Tom

his new deaf awareness and enthusiasm, to run a London Landmarks Half Marathon to raise money for the NDCS in March 2019.

Ben and Tom were interviewed for the *Kent Messenger* and William Janes' article about them appeared on kentonline. Ben is now on his Gap Year in Canada and Alex, the first keen signer, has left the company, as have other good friends of Tom's, so he, alas, is back to feelings of isolation at work and I am sad for him. I certainly related to a story in the *News Shopper* recently

of a Patient Record Team at Orpington Hospital learning to sign for a deaf clerk, which was a job Tom did successfully for four years at St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington (without the benefit of an interpreter other than for team meetings) before he moved to Sussex.

Editor

GOOD TO GO.....

This edition of Chainmail is out later than we would have liked, for various reasons, one being that our old computer decided to go slow and the new one decided it would change a number of the features to which we had become accustomed! It has taken several visits from the wonderful Richard Lovell www.itservices4business.co.uk

E: info@itservices4business.co.uk

T: 020 8650 7856

For us to get to grips with it so sorry for the wait but we hope it was worth it!

Editor

HEAR TODAY EXHIBITION

Bromley Chain has been invited by the organiser, Steve Cockerel, to book a stand at the above which takes place on:

**Saturday 16th May, 2020
from 10.00 to 16.00**

at

**Orpington Methodist Church Hall,
19 Sevenoaks Road,
Orpington, Kent, BR6 9JH**

(Free admission)

It is to be “an informative event featuring technology and services that improve the quality of life for people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing”.

Hearing aid manufacturers, hard-of-hearing equipment retailers and national and local charities will be represented.

Representatives from Bromley Chain will be manning our stand. Do look out for our pop-up banner and stand and do please come along to say or sign Hello!

GOOD TO KNOW

As a volunteer Editor it is always encouraging to have a few words of appreciation. Here are some of the comments received after the Spring 2019 issue:

“Full of very interesting news and information, It is excellent and you have worked hard”. R.H.

“Lovely!” J.M.

“Great piece by Tom on Tromso trip”. J.P.

“What an excellent edition! Well done on putting together a thoroughly interesting and varied magazine”. E.D.

“I always enjoy reading Chainmail”. L.M.

“Many congratulations. What a great edition of Chainmail with that lovely piece about Erica. All the family were very happy with it”. D.R.

TESTING FOR MENINGITIS

Research is underway to develop a new test for meningitis reports Andy Hopkinson on the charity Meningitis Now update

A rapid test to diagnose severe illnesses, using personalised gene signatures, is being developed by scientists at Imperial College London. The new approach could speed up diagnosis times for many serious conditions in under two hours.

Read the full article on the Imperial College London website.

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.