

College of the Holy Cross

CrossWorks

Outreach

Newsletters

7-1-1987

Outreach, July 1987

Follow this and additional works at: <https://crossworks.holycross.edu/dca001-outr-gbr-1982>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), and the [Disability Studies Commons](#)

Repository Citation

"Outreach, July 1987" (1987). *Outreach*. 14.

<https://crossworks.holycross.edu/dca001-outr-gbr-1982/14>

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the Newsletters at CrossWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Outreach by an authorized administrator of CrossWorks.

OUTREACH



Vol.9 No.2.

July 1987

30p



*Association for the Catholic Deaf of
Great Britain and Ireland*

A Prayer

Almighty God, in your great love and mercy, You inspired St. John of Beverley to REACH OUT to a deaf child, and teach him to know You. Grant, through his intercession, that our hearts may be open to listen to Your Word, that we may be filled with love and compassion for one another, and that we may ever grow in knowledge and love of you.



Amen.

Published by : The Association for the Catholic Deaf of Great Britain and Ireland.

Editor : Sr. Denise Gardiner

Sub-Editor : Rev. Peter McDonough

Editorial Office:

13 Westbourne Crescent, Whitchurch, Cardiff. CF4 2XN Tel: (0222) 627727

* * * * *

Opinions expressed in **OUTREACH** do not necessarily reflect the policy or opinion of the Association for Catholic Deaf.

OUTREACH is published three times each year : in March, July and November.

Articles, letters, reports, etc., should be addressed to the Editor, and will be carefully considered. Photographs and pictures should be submitted with the understanding that they may not be returned. PHOTOS must be CLEAR, and preferably black and white.

Deadline for submission of copy for the next issue is **20th September, 1987.**

Illustrations and/or photos to accompany copy are much appreciated.

CONTENTS

	Page
Editorial	1
Obituary	1
I Remember, I Remember	2-3
Chaplain's Column	4
Conference '87 Recalled	5
Regional News Round	6-7
Deo Gratias (For Mary Braidwood R.I.P.)	8
On the Education Front	9-10
The RIGHT to attend a Catholic School	10-11
A Late Starter	11
Do you know about homelessness ...?	12
RNID Enquiry	13
Dinner-Dance Re-union	13

Cover story :

Having fun at Conference '87!

Mrs. Joan Ingram and Mrs. Mary Masterson with a Morris Dancer

EDITORIAL

The tragedy of human life is not that we are evil, but that we so often fail to look, to truly SEE. We so easily disregard others, or even shut them off - wrapped up as we are with our own little concerns. Isn't it true that we must sometimes experience the death of a person before we learn to treasure his life. Often it is only when a person can speak to us no more that we become conscious of his words. We finally understand what a person wanted to say when we are distressed at the realisation that we shall hear his voice no more. Strangely, we need a certain amount of darkness in order to observe the light.

Mary Braidwood was assistant Editor of Outreach with Fr. Cunningham from 1981-1985. She sometimes wrote the Editorial. I find myself now looking back through old issues and realise that I am "listening" with attention as never before, to what Mary had to say. It is only now, when she will write for us no more, that I am really reflecting on her words.

In Autumn '83 she wrote: "The most important time is the present moment, but it does us no harm to look back sometimes, in love. It has to be 'in love', otherwise the past can rise to haunt us. So we look back on our past experiences, see the failures and the successes and learn from them". Well spoken Mary! Thank you for sharing your simple wisdom with us.

Concerts where clapping is banned

A BRILLIANT blind organist brought the house down at a concert in an abbey. But he left church officials completely cold.

Audiences have been told that in future, they must show their appreciation in total silence.

Prebendary Geoffrey Lester who runs Bath Abbey, said: "Some people like applause and some don't - we don't. I don't have to explain our decisions to the public. The church is not a public place".

But the star of the show, organist David Liddle, 26: said: "I think God gave performers their talents and in applauding them you are applauding God".

OBITUARY

I first heard of Mary Braidwood when I read some of her poetry in the Mary Hare Grammar School annual magazine. Years later, she called to St. Vincent's Centre for the Deaf in Glasgow. At the time she was studying for her degree in Biology and I told her I thought she had a lot to offer to the deaf community. I suggested that she might help with editing the Glasgow Centre's newsletter.



Thus began an active link between Mary and the deaf community in Glasgow. This involvement brought her into contact with an ever widening circle of friends beginning in Glasgow and spreading throughout Britain and Ireland. She also kept contact with a large number of hearing friends through her work and family. It would be tempting to say that she enjoyed the best of both the deaf and the hearing worlds. I suspect it would be more accurate to say that she suffered the frustration of trying to belong to two worlds neither of which could fully accept her.

There was one world or community into which she was fully integrated and that was the world of the church. She was attracted by the new vision of the Church of Vatican 2. She found community support and stimulation to her prayer life by attending prayer meetings and days of renewal. Through her prayers her Christianity overflowed into a practical concern for the least advantaged of the deaf community. Through all her interests and activities her faith shone through with ever strengthening brightness. This faith was especially evident in the patient way she coped with her recurring spells of ill health. Mary combined a clear intelligent mind with a warm approachable simple character. People felt at ease in her presence. I count myself among her many friends who feel enriched by having known her and saddened by her loss. We miss her and pray for her and offer our sympathy to her family in their sense of loss.

Fr. Diarmuid O'Farrell, C.M.

I Remember, I Remember . . .

Reflections of a retired audiologist

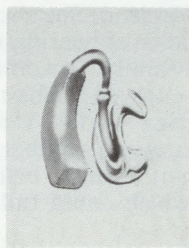


Audiology is a relatively new discipline in hospitals and the Audiologist is an even newer animal. The whole idea of audiology is concerned with assessing hearing

and balance problems in an Ear, Nose and Throat Department, and providing therapeutic measures through the issue of a hearing aid and counselling.

My involvement with the hearing impaired goes back some 28 years. Like many others I cannot help feeling that maybe things could have been done differently - if only This, with regard to myself, and also the limiting factors in the present system - not least of which today is the lack of recognition of the potential in N.H.S. resulting in constant cuts in staff and resources. There have been important advances in many aspects of Audiology, but little or no headway in others.

It is possible now to assess the hearing of a new born infant at two or three days old. Children are generally fitted with an aid or aids much earlier in life than they were some 20 or 25 years ago. The aids are much smaller and usually of 'behind the ear' type. With earlier diagnosis Advisory Teachers of the Deaf can commence regular visiting of children at a much younger age. This helps parents to overcome problems of speech and language in those early days. The combination of help and early finding has led to far greater flexibility in school placement later. In my working life, one of the outstanding changes which has taken place is in the range of work available to the hearing-impaired youngster on leaving school. No longer is it question of shoe-repairing or bakery only, but computer work, hairdressing, electronic assembly, bank statistical and even the legal profession.



One of the difficulties I used to have was in getting the children to wear their aids after they were fitted, even the small 'behind the ear' type. I well remember one young fellow who for some time had objected to wearing his aid in school, but had finally given in. His mother dragged him in one day to report that he had dived into the swimming pool with his aid still on! This wasn't to be encouraged so I had to pull a stern face. But I had a secret



smile, for it was obvious that the boy had actually forgotten he was wearing the aid - a sign of success in itself.

The advent of radio aids for children over the last 10 or 12 years has been particularly good. It is not unusual to see a youngster of 12-18 months wearing a radio aid. With the much improved quality of sound reproduction and consistency of sound level, children can get off to a better start. Very few are unable to benefit from radio aids. Sadly, as things are with our society today, the large majority of these aids have to be provided through charities or by local fund-raising activities.

One of the headline hitters over the years has been about the possibility of 'curing' deafness by the use of electronic 'implants'. The reality of this achievement is far removed from the hope that prevails. I remember my excitement on first hearing about these implants 11 or 12 years ago. Many parents of deaf children were anxious to know whether their child could have one fitted. One had to temper the excitement felt against the known problems and suggest that there was little immediate likelihood of this for children, until trials on adults who had once heard and so could report on them, had taken place. Research continues. The number of implant operations carried out in Britain to date could be counted on one hand, and the level of success is debatable. Perhaps the next decade will see a breakthrough.

To be handicapped in communication in any way is a formidable thing to overcome. Although the hearing-impaired are by far the largest group with this problem there are others, such as children who are late talkers, language disordered or autistic. In the formative years any of these disabilities can shape the lives of sufferers for years to come. Detection at the earliest stage is vital, and yet this can vary much from area to area. In the best of situations the child is diagnosed early, given any necessary aids and helped by the appropriate professionals. Allowing that the parents also do all that is asked of them things usually go well. At the other end of the spectrum it is an unfortunate fact that some children are either diagnosed late or a poor diagnosis is made. The child may even be treated for the wrong problem!

I Remember . . . continued

Sometimes it seems a child is born in the wrong place for his/her disability. It is in this context that I would like to have seen the growth of Regional Communication Clinics, where the throughput of patients was sufficient to justify the gathering together of all the experts necessary to cope with the varied problems which come under the heading 'Communication'.

The incidence of deafness hasn't changed a lot over the last 50 years. There has been a drop in numbers where deafness from meningitis and rubella is concerned. Prevention may well be a better way forward than cure, but our system is geared to the latter and that is where the main costs of the Health Service are directed.

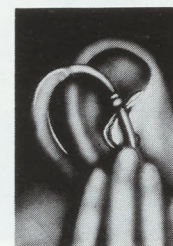
A small number of people become hearing-impaired in mid life through accident or illness. These numbers are very small indeed compared to those whose hearing loss occurs later on. However when deafness does strike at this time of life it can be as traumatic as any serious injury to those who are in their mid career and/or bringing up a young family. I've seen such people reach rock bottom, before gradually beginning to pull out of their despairing state. They need considerable help and counselling as soon as possible. The Hearing Therapist, an even newer member of the professionals concerned, can help here. That is - if one is available at the local hospital or clinic! Assistance is geared towards rehabilitation, through better understanding of hearing aid(s), lipreading and the social and emotional aspects of hearing loss.

The largest group of hearing-impaired people is found among the elderly. By the time we are 60+ few of us have perfect hearing, and indeed we don't really need it so. At that stage we have had so much experience in listening that we can get by relatively easily with minor losses. However people are living to much greater ages now and many are becoming quite severely deaf by the time they are 70 or more. Those who develop a hearing handicap know only too well the feelings of isolation which result. The desire is to withdraw from many social occasions on account of the difficulties and the fear of being thought stupid because of getting the 'wrong end of the stick' or having to ask others to repeat themselves.

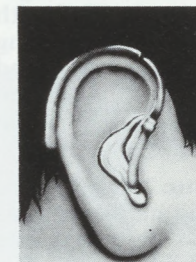
The problems of elderly deaf people are quite different from those experienced by children. Firstly, many will not admit to having difficulty and blame the sloppy speech of the younger generation. Secondly, acquiring 'spare parts' such as teeth, glasses and hearing aid is seen as an admission of age. Thirdly, a hearing aid requires patience and practice to get use to,

and in too many cases the elderly aren't willing to accept this. Perhaps we are too conditioned to instant remedy.

Many people go on for years before they seek help and by then it is, sadly, often too late. The maxim should be 'the earlier help is sought the earlier the problem may be solved'.

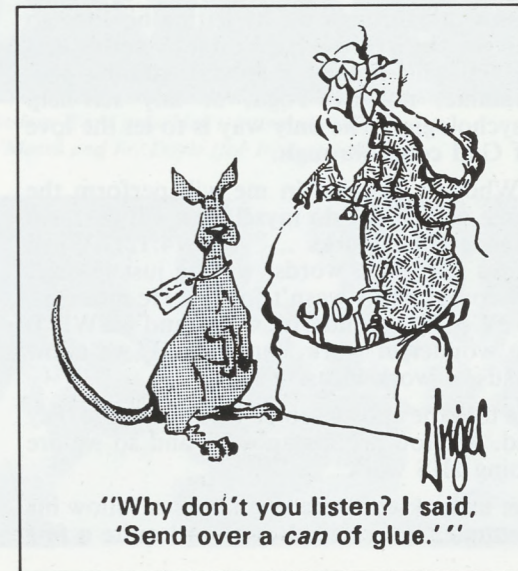


I recall an old gentleman coming alone from a home for the elderly. He had little idea of what was happening although the staff pulled out all the stops in order to do their best for him. At the end of the day he was left in the main waiting area for his transport back home. When I arrived at the clinic next morning, one of the security staff came in with a hat, walking stick, hearing aid and batteries. The poor old chap had left them all behind! The moral of this story is that old people should always be accompanied. Deafness causes communication problems and unless there is help available through a third person, there is always the possibility of a breakdown. A friend or younger relation can be of great help.

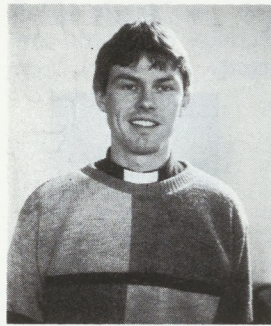


On another occasion I remember fitting a patient with a hearing aid which we received back by post two or three days later. With it was a note to the effect that we had left a 'piece of equipment' behind his ear!

G.F. Hart



"Why don't you listen? I said, 'Send over a can of glue.'"



CHAPLAIN'S COLUMN *Jesus is the Answer*

One day a small child asked me "Can you catch the sun when you see it on top of a hill"? I said, "No you can't". "Why?" said the child. I tried to explain, "Because when you get to the top of the hill, you will find that the sun is not on the hill, but still a long way away". The child couldn't understand, and I'm sure that like me, you would find it difficult to explain to a small child why we can't catch the sun.

When I see someone who is struggling with life, or who has little hope, or who is ready to give up living, and I try to help by saying, "Don't worry God is with you", will that help? I think not. In fact, like the child

who finds it difficult to understand why he can't catch the sun, this person will find it difficult to believe that God is real, and that He is good. This person probably feels that God is far away, farther than the sun, and that He doesn't care; he is alone with his troubles and problems.

Explaining that God is real and that He loves everybody will be as difficult as explaining about the sun to a small child. Of course a child will understand the sun better if he catches it and can see it in his hands, and a person will believe in God if he can see Him. But we can't see God, we can't hear Him, we can't touch Him.

So what can we do? Words are not enough. Action is needed. Charity that is filled with love will help a lot more. Rather than talking to a person about God, it is better to spend time with him, share with him, and let him know that we care about him. Love in action can be more convincing than just words.

This is what Jesus calls us to. "I give you a new commandment: love one another; just as I have loved you, you also must love one another" (Jn 13:34). But how can we give ourselves to others? It is by following Jesus Christ and believing in Him. It is by letting him work through us; by letting his love go out to others through us... not by heroic acts of self-will; not by a special training programme; not by Yoga, or any self-help psychologies. The only way is to let the love of God come through.

"Whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform **even greater works ...**" (Jn 14:12). When Jesus said these words, was he just joking? Of course Jesus wasn't joking. He meant it. We CAN do wonderful work, and we WILL do wonderful work, but only IF we allow Jesus to work in us.

He told the apostles to do his work. And they did. We too are his apostles and so we are doing HIS work.

Let us look at St. Peter and let us follow his example. Peter failed our Lord quite a few

times. But he never gave up. He came back to Our Lord again and again. He was just as bad as Judas. But there is one important difference.

On the night before Jesus was condemned to death on a cross, Peter told lies three times. Then the cock crew. Peter realised he had denied Jesus Christ three times. He was so ashamed of himself, that he went outside and wept bitterly.

Judas too did something bad. He betrayed Jesus Christ and sold him for thirty silver pieces. When he realised what he had done, he was ashamed of himself, he was filled with remorse. He **could** have turned to Jesus as Peter had done and all would have been forgiven and forgotten. But no! Judas chose to kill himself.

Are we going to be like Judas, give up when life gets tough? Or like Peter, and have hope in the love and forgiveness of our Lord?

Now you may say, "Yes, it would be nice if we could be Jesus' apostles, and let Jesus work through us. But we have problems, so we need help first".

Well, let me say this, you are no different from anyone else. If you were to wait for help first, there would be no people on earth helping each other.

If you start to help others, by listening to them, sharing your time with them, you will receive help too. Just trust in the Lord.

There is a beautiful story from Cardinal Suenens. One day a man received a postcard. On one side, the words read:

Dear Jesus, I have a problem. It's me.

Quite true. I have a problem. You have a problem. We all have problems. We need help! So what do we do? This man turned the card over, and he saw the words:

Dear Child, I have the answer. It's me!

Of course Jesus Christ is the answer. He can help us. He is the Son of God and he loves us more than we love ourselves. Trust Him!

Fr. Peter McDonough

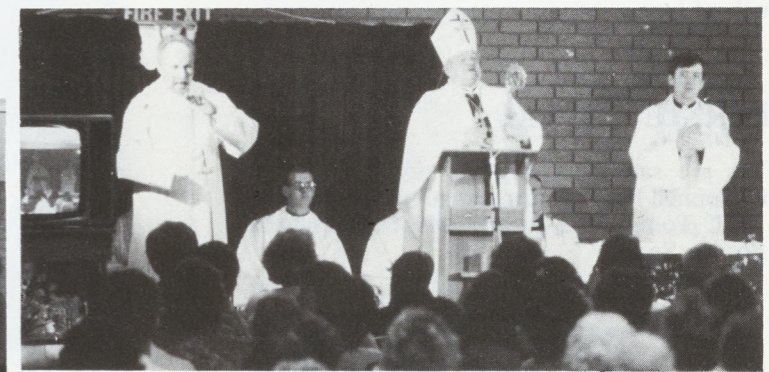
CONFERENCE '87 RECALLED

On April 24th, I set off with some trepidation to Cardiff for the Catholic Deaf Association Conference. Never having been to a conference like this before, I wondered what was in store. I needn't have worried. Everyone was very warm and friendly. I already recognised a few familiar faces from the Pilgrimages to Walsingham, but by the end of the weekend I had exchanged addresses with many more people.

I very much enjoyed the talks - the most memorable one being "Called to Serve in the World" presented by Mary Braidwood and the Glasgow group. I think that the mime got the message through with more impact.



*Glasgow presentation:
"Called to Serve in the World"*



*Archbishop Ward preaching - interpreted by
Fr. O'Meara and Fr. Doyle (for Irish group)*



*RIGHT →
Getting to grips with difficult
points, in discussion groups*

It was the first time I had ever been able to take part in discussion groups. In hearing groups I have always been completely lost as to what was going on. I eagerly await the report on the Conference.

I also enjoyed Mass both on Saturday and Sunday. While we need more priests to work for the deaf, and there's room for vast improvement, it is very encouraging to see that more and more progress is being made.

On Saturday evening, we were treated to a display of Welsh Morris Dancing. When I joined in at the end I found out that it was certainly a lot harder than it looked.



Most memorable for me, however, is the fact that I made many more friends, and also, as I am not very good at signing (I rely on lipreading), my signing had improved no end by Sunday.

Maria Rebicsek

Regional News Round

COVENTRY

For many weeks we met to discuss "Called to Serve" and to prepare for Easter. Apart from learning a lot and changing our name from the Coventry Deaf Group (everyone knows we are deaf anyway) we decided on ways we could serve both in the world and in the Church.



Reading of The Passion

We combined "Called to Serve" with Easter preparation by exercising our initiatives in our monthly Mass which fell on Passion Sunday. Ministries usually performed by our hearing friends we decided to do ourselves. We chose and signed the hymns. We practiced for weeks and prepared a special three part Passion Reading which we signed as in a hearing Mass on Passion Sunday. It was a great success. We feel now we can go on and become more involved in our Mass.

John Barlow

BIRMINGHAM

We are sad to report the death of Tom O'Connell R.I.P., Birmingham on 4th March 1987. Tom was a past pupil of St. Johns, Boston Spa.



During Lent we had a Retreat conducted by Fr. Ignatius.

Congratulations to Mrs. Pat McCarthy, Stafford who was received into the Church in St. Anne's Parish, Stafford at the Easter Vigil.



Pat, with her family and Joan Badkin, Pastoral Worker, St. Anne's. Cyril her husband is a past pupil of St. John's, Boston Spa.



Pat with Fr. Larkin



Some of the children who took part in our Children's Mass in April. They are signing the hymns and supported by their hearing friends who helped with the singing.



Beavers from the Parish presenting a cheque to Fr. Larkin, the results of a sponsored swim in aid of Ozanam House.

Regional News Round *continued*

BOLTON

In April Canon Hollywood invited the Bolton Deaf Group to St. Joseph's, Blackley, to teach and preach all about God. We were very interested and thank Canon Hollywood for his time. We would also like to thank Sister Angela and Sister Bridget for making a wonderful meal for us. After dinner we went to listen to Canon Hollywood who told us more about the work of God. After this Canon said Mass for us. All of us at the Bolton Group enjoyed the trip and would love to go again. We would also like to thank Julie and Mary for taking good care of the children during the meetings.

C.W. Crompton

NORTHAMPTON DIOCESE

Bedford

The newly formed Tuesday Club for the Hard of Hearing, meets twice a month. We enjoy a cup of tea and a chat, and invite Speakers to come and talk on interesting topics. The room is fitted with a portable loop system.



Some of the helpers and members of the Tuesday Club

Corby/Oundle

On the Walsingham coach, the chairman of the Corby/Oundle volunteer Deaf Care Group, presented Sister Joan Kelly with a farewell gift from the Group. Sister is going to Dublin.



Chairman David Varallo with Sister Joan Kelly

Northampton

Three members of the Northampton Volunteer Deaf Care Group, Mary Lack, Jean Lillis and Margaret Wright, have passed Stage 1, Examination in Communication Skills.

SOUTH-WEST REGION

All our careful preparations for Conference '87 paid off. Wales has become a "hit"! It was a wonderful weekend - overflowing with the spirit of the Association. How can we describe it briefly? It was happy, relaxed, refreshing, inspiring and for some of us - exhausting! I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. Thank you to all who helped us - before, during and after, and congratulations to all delegates for your co-operation and enthusiasm.



Sunday Eucharist celebrated along with 4 Bishops

May has been a month of Baptisms in our region.

Congratulations to Debra and Peter Powe on the birth of their second child - Talina Elizabeth who was baptised at St. Joseph's, Port Talbot on 10th May.

Welcome to Mrs. Peggy Mahoney (Cardiff) who was received into the Church on 29th May.

And hurray! for Gareth and Bridget Reynolds, who were baptised in Newport on 31st May.

A small "contingent" representing Wales and Bristol went to Walsingham for the Annual Deaf Pilgrimage. We remembered all our deaf children of Plymouth, Clifton and Cardiff, praying for each one by name. A beautiful weekend!

Sr. Denise

LANCASTER DIOCESE



Carlisle Deaf Group with families and friends

DEO GRATIAS

For Mary Braidwood R.I.P.

Extracts from the sermon at her Requiem Mass.

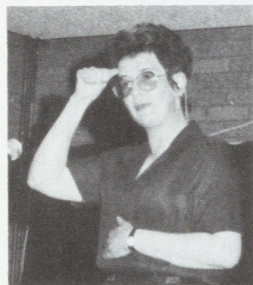
On 3rd May 1987 God called Mary Braidwood to heaven. She received the Sacrament of the Sick from Fr. Travers one hour before she died. She was ready, as always, to meet her Lord. Mary's death was sudden, most of us did not even know that she had been admitted to hospital on the previous day. When I was informed about her death I reacted first with disbelief, then with shock, sadness and tears.

Mary, whom we have known and loved, will never be seen again in this world. We feel a sense of loss. A sincere friend has gone away. Naturally we are sad and lonely and it is healthy that we should grieve. We share our sorrow, and we share our faith - the faith which Mary strongly believed and lived. Often Mary described herself as a follower of Jesus and the words "praise the Lord" were often on her lips. She was present at our Holy Week and Easter Ceremonies in which we remembered the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord.. Little did I think that within two weeks Mary would fully share in the Lord's Resurrection and glory. For her this life of pain, suffering, tears, sorrow and limitation has ended and now she enjoys perfect love, peace and happiness in the presence of God our Father. Now she is receiving the reward of her deep faith, and of a good Catholic life well lived. That life was nourished by the Mass, the Sacraments and private prayer.

Mary loved the Mass. My last memory of Mary was at Mass on Monday, April 27th. She had a day off work and as always when she was free, she attended the midday Mass at St. Vincent's Centre. She was prayerful and happy. I thanked her for signing the reading and she thanked me for the Mass and said that she always found it helpful.

Mary was just seven years old when the heavy cross of hearing loss was laid on her shoulders. However, she had the great advantage of knowing language. She was a pupil of St. Vincent's School, Tollcross in Glasgow and Mary Hare Grammar School in England. She was conferred with the Bachelor of Science degree at Paisley Institute and was a member of the Institute of Biologists. She won the Duke of Edinburgh gold award for service to the community. She was keen on swimming and was an expert life saver. She was an efficient typist which was very useful in her role of Editor of Newslink and Assistant Editor of Outreach. At one time she was a Council member of the Association for

Catholic Deaf of Great Britain and Ireland, and she attended many International Conferences. She was involved in organising retreats for deaf people where her deep spirituality was obvious. As a member of St. Vincent's Centre Pastoral Group she represented Scotland at the Annual Conference for Deaf People which was held in Cardiff this year. Her cheerful, colourful and humorous presentation made a great impression on the 200 members who were present.



Pain and ill health was part of her life, yet she always accepted her suffering and discomfort with courage and cheerfulness. Perhaps it is only now that the full extent of her illness is beginning to dawn on us. Mary's experience of pain gave

her a great understanding and love for sick and poor people. She was thoughtful and considerate to everyone she met.

Mary's family have kindly shared with me the Diary which she left. It is a gem of prayers and reflections, and a record of work, duties and meetings with friends. I would like to share a few extracts with you:

The first is a letter to God. We all pray and speak to God, but how many of us would think of writing to God? The letter was written on February 26th 1986 and is as follows:-

Dear God, I thank you that I was at work this morning. I thank you that I still have a job. I am thankful for the sun streaming in through the windows. I thank you that I have friends who care about me. Love, Mary.

Tuesday, 7th April, 1987

Lord, I want so much to be with you. I want to praise and thank you for your love. I want to tell you how sorry I am that I offended you. Let me clearly understand the Easter antiphon - 'Put your hope in the Lord, take courage and be strong'. I pray to you about all the sadness that is the result of the Zeebrugge sea disaster.

Monday, 27th April, 1987

I was at Mass today with Fr. Ray and Liz. I feel a bit lonely Lord, a bit emotional. Bless Mum and Dad and keep them safe. Today I started to write Newslink. D.G.

This was the last entry and it ends with the Latin words Deo Gratias - thanks be to God. Let us use these words now and say thanks be to God for Mary Braidwood.

And so we say farewell to Mary - a remarkable person and great gift. Mary, I thank you for your life and love, your work and writing and everything you have given to your family, to St. Vincent's Centre and to the wider community in Great Britain. Farewell, and until we all meet again in the presence of God, goodbye and thanks. The Lord is with you.

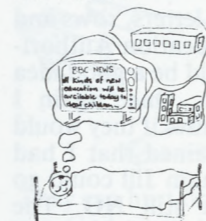
Fr. Raymond Armstrong, C.M.

Association for Catholic Deaf On the Education Front

On Monday, 2nd August 1976 I travelled to London for a meeting at the Department of Education and Science. I remember it well. The heading of the London Standard newspaper that day read: "Tameside Wins Appeal In House of Lords". This referred to a long-standing disagreement between the Local Education Authority and the Department of Education and Science. The Department had tried to force the Authority, against its will, into comprehensive education, had taken them to court and won the case; but the newspaper headline told of what happened when the Authority appealed to the House of Lords, the highest court in the land: the DES were shown to be only in the role of advisors, the Local Authority had the last say.

With me in the train that day were six members of the Association for Catholic Deaf, along with Bishop Emery, then of Birmingham, now Bishop of Portsmouth. We were on our way to see a Minister of State for Education about the cases of parents of three deaf children who had asked their Local Education Authorities to allow their children to attend St. John's School for the Deaf at Boston Spa. The parents had in each case been refused by their LEAs, and we felt that as an Association we should try to help. We sought the support of the hierarchy, and they asked their education representative at that time, Bishop Emery, to come with us to see the Minister.

The meeting was long and drawn-out. Every point that could be made was expressed with some feeling by our side, and was answered at some length by the other. Our main impression at the end of the day was that the newspaper headline had overshadowed everything that was said. If the House of Lords agreed with the LEA over comprehensive education, then they would also agree with them over deaf education. So any decision by an LEA was final. I remember us coming away from that meeting with a rather empty feeling: things looked rather bleak for the future.



However at our meeting reference had been made to the "Warnock Committee" which had been set up in 1974 to look at the special educational needs of handicapped people in general. No one knew what recommendations such a Committee would make, nor how they would influence deaf education, especially the religious education in which we were primarily, though

not solely, interested. Even when the Committee made its now famous Report, it was impossible to guess just how this would affect deaf children in their future religious education. It broadly supported the integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools, but the Report also said that some special schools for deaf children would still be needed because of the nature of the handicap. It said nothing about religious education, even though we had submitted written evidence and recommendations.

The effect of this Report at the time was hard to judge. Most people looked to see how it affected them, and if they felt that it didn't actually abolish them, then they were content to wait and see. And that's what we did. We waited.

The first sign of anything happening was in August 1980 when the Government issued a White Paper on "Special Needs in Education". In it they outlined certain recommendations of the Report which would form part of a new Education Act to come out later in that year. Integration of handicapped children into ordinary schools was to continue. The concept of special educational need however was to be redefined and a system of recording children who have special educational needs was to be initiated - it was felt that for some such children integration into ordinary schools may not be possible. Each child would have a statement of his or her special needs made by those closest to the child, at home, at school, etc. Reports would be required by the LEA from all those involved with the child, including doctors, educational psychologists, health visitors, teachers and the parents themselves.



Such a statement would be read by the parents fully before any further educational moves were made on behalf of the child. This meant that the LEA would have to listen to

parents' opinions about any educational provision which might be suggested for their child, or before any change was made to existing provision.

The important outcome of all this for parents is that more account must be taken of their feelings and wishes before educational decisions are made for their deaf child. We see this reflected in the fact that many more parents are now being encouraged to visit different types of schools, with different methods of teaching and different outlooks and philosophies.

On the Education Front *continued*

In this way, parents can genuinely experience a school's atmosphere, instead of simply relying on what a brochure says. They can see a school in action, can tell whether the children are happy, welcoming and at ease in the school setting. They can also see whether their own child feels this atmosphere and is happy with it. I'm not saying that parents always get the school they want, but our experience is that more and more parents are listened to by more and more LEAs.

How can the Association help parents today in their quest for a suitable school for their deaf child? Over the years we have got to know of many parents who have been helped by various members of Catholic Deaf Services throughout the country.

Local workers have advised parents on how to plan their approach in their own case. They have been able to take advice from others on their behalf. They have enlisted professional and other advisors. They have helped the parents to gain support of local councillors and local M.P.s. They have enabled parents to get reports on certain schools, especially their examination results. They have enlisted



the aid of the local branch of the National Deaf Children's Society. Also, its national headquarters in London where there is an education officer who has vast experience of such cases. They are in a position to help parents to compare notes with other parents of deaf children. They have information on Catholic schools and on what religious instruction may be available in other schools. All this information can be built up because the Association for Catholic Deaf brings together all the people with such information and with similar problems. They can compare approaches made and success achieved. They have gathered together a fund of information, advice, help and support which they can make available to any parents who feel they don't know where to turn. Help is easiest found in individual cases by taking the problem to one of the workers, e.g. Chaplains, Pastoral Workers or Promoters of Religious Education in the particular area. Anyone with difficulty contacting such a person may write to the Secretary of the Association for Catholic Deaf who will be only too pleased to help.



N. Gallanagh

The RIGHT to attend a Catholic School one mother's struggle for her deaf child

My daughter Jill had meningitis at 10 months. This left her deaf. She attended Hartley House, the local school for the deaf. The teachers were very good, and Jill was a quick learner. When she was 12 years old, she passed the Scholarship for Mary Hare Grammar School. We felt at the interview that the school didn't want profoundly deaf pupils.

We knew about Boston Spa through the Catholic Deaf Association Jill had been to many Summer Catechetics Camps, and enjoyed them. Sister Barbara offered Jill a place at Boston Spa, but this would mean a lot of travelling for her. I went to the Local Council for help and so our battle started. The Council would pay full expenses to Mary Hare, but nothing anywhere else. I asked why, and enquired where the allocated money had gone. They didn't like this. I kept on saying Jill needed a better education and that any child who passed the scholarship was entitled to Grammar School education. The Council decided that Jill should see the school

psychologist. Next day a report went to the Education Committee, but the psychologist **had never seen Jill**. I went into action fast! I contacted Jill's ENT consultant and paediatrician, and explained my problems with the Education people. They felt I should fight for my rights and for Jill's right to better education. I wrote to all the members of the School Board. None were interested. I had rows with all these people. They had no understanding of deaf children's needs, and seemed so out of touch. This caused many problems, but I was determined to fight on.

There followed 8 months of letters, rows and meetings with the Local Education Authority. They didn't think it would be a good idea for Jill to travel so much. Once again I offered to pay all travel expenses if they would pay the school fees. I explained that I had relatives in Newcastle to whom Jill could go every other weekend. But still **NO**. The Warnock Report came out, about rights of

The RIGHT to attend a Catholic School *continued*

children and parents. This report was for teachers only at the time, but Mr. Langley, the Headmaster at Hartley House, underlined a few points and encouraged me to keep fighting. Sister Barbara also wrote to Plymouth Councils.

After 8 months, I wrote to Local M.P.s, but they said it was only a small matter. In the end I contacted the Ombudsman, who read all my papers and letters. He told me I had a good case and to fight on. He advised me to write to the Director of Education for Devon. I did this and he was amazed at my files of letters. The Education Committee was about to sit to discuss other matters. He brought this up once again and they felt there was no need for Jill to move. She could stay at Hartley House. From this time I fought on my rights as a catholic. The answer was **YES**. Jill could go to Boston Spa, and the Committee would pay all fees and travel expenses. Jill attended Boston Spa for 5 years and did

very well. I travelled every 3 weeks to visit her, by driving there on Fridays and returning on Monday evenings. After 3 years I found that an Air service could bring Jill from Leeds to Bristol Airport in 1¼ hours. I met her at Bristol, and she could be home from Leeds in less than 3 Hours. She travelled like this for 2 more years.

Jill now works on computers for the Civil Service at "Land Registry". She passed her driving test, the first time, and is a very happy girl. She is courting a partially deaf young man and plans to be engaged on her 21st birthday in July this year.

For myself ... I am still awaiting confirmation from the Education Authority that Jill may attend Boston Spa!. I fought and won. The system didn't like it But deaf children need help to gain their rights.

Kathleen Jasper, Plymouth

(Note: Mrs. Jasper finally succeeded by arguing her case on religious grounds. This is not easily done now however, since there have been changes in the Law.)

A Late Starter

Learning Sign Language has made me realise how stupid I have been all these years denying my deafness. I could have saved myself a lot of embarrassment and many awkward situations.

It is said that our hands are the tools of our mind, and can act swifter than words. This is very true. Often after my lessons, I am able to join those more proficient in Sign Language, and I get so frustrated when I watch their animated facial expressions and gestures, wishing desperately that I could join in any laughter that follows. I guess a completely deaf person must feel just as frustrated when they are in a room full of chattering people. However, with time and patience, plus plenty of practice, I hope to be as adapt as they are. Meanwhile I feel an utter dunce. I find it easy to convey to others what I want to get across, but my brain doesn't seem to co-operate when they reply to me.

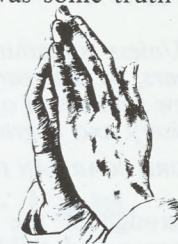


Sign lessons have taught me to have much more respect for my hands. We do tend to take them for granted!

They can hurt or heal, create or destroy. They are God-given tools which out-rival any of

those made by man. How often we find ourselves pushing aside some intricate man-made device, to finish off a task with the sure touch of our fingers.

Sign Language has been in existence a very long time. Relics from the Ancient Hindus were discovered with the hands held out in reverence, for they believed that the gods dwelt in the fingers; that there was some sort of magic in the fingertips. Strange as it may seem, scientists of today have found that coloured signals, which they call electro-magnetism, come from the tips of our fingers. So it appears that there was some truth in that belief of so long ago. Throughout the world drawings of the hands, shown in various positions, show how different cults used the hands symbolically in worshipping their pagan gods or images. Symbolic gestures with the hands and fingers in blessings, and in healing services are familiar to us today.



I've left it a little late to begin learning Sign Language, but better late than never. I regret that I haven't taken advantage of this method of communication a long time ago, for it could certainly have made my life a lot easier.

Dory Fisher

Do you know about homelessness . . . ?

The United Nations has declared that 1987 shall be INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS.

The objectives of the Year are to:

1. Focus attention on the plight of homeless and poorly housed people in the United Kingdom and in developing countries.
2. Create a new determination to find solutions to the problems.

"Housing is a moral issue. Decent physical accommodation is a basic need, not a luxury; a right, not a concession".

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Millions throughout the world are either literally homeless or living in unhealthy and inadequate conditions. These people are denied the most basic of choices about their lives. Homelessness and poor housing lead to stress, illness and insecurity.

In Britain homelessness has doubled in 10 years. There are now over 100,000 homeless families. This figure does not include most homeless single people and couples.

Many homeless families are placed in extremely unsatisfactory and depressing bed and breakfast accommodation. There is often nowhere for children to play, nowhere to cook an evening meal or to wash and dry clothes. Families may remain there as long as two years.

The UK invests less public money in housing than any other comparable country.

Half as many new houses were built in 1985 as in 1975.

"Unless something is done in the next few years, by the year 2000 we could be facing a new generation of slums with all the human misery and degradation that implies".

LORD SCARMAN President: IYSH Council

Throughout the world, 100 million men, women and children have **no shelter whatsoever**. They sleep in the streets, under bridges, on waste land and in doorways.

Millions more live in appalling conditions, where there is little privacy, no security of tenure, no adequate sanitation, and little access to employment or health and education services.

Every day 50,000 people, mainly children die from disease which spreads when people live in unhygienic conditions with polluted water.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS in this country is focusing on three themes:

- Increasing awareness of the housing situation - problems and solutions.
- Educational work in schools, conferences and through the media.
- Supporting IYSH housing projects throughout the world.

IYSH housing projects all seek to help people who live below the poverty line to improve their shelter and neighbourhoods.

Local materials, local labour and local skills are used. The emphasis is on housing which people can afford and schemes where they can be fully involved.

New kinds of low-cost housing are being developed which can then be adopted in other poor countries.

IYSH supports many Projects in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

In South India, where the mud-housing falls apart every rainy season, a permanent brick and stone home using local materials and local labour can be built for £290.

In Peru scarcity of available land, the high cost of credit and expensive building materials have made it impossible for the poorest people to build their own houses. The Projects finance tools and materials for co-operative building schemes.

Above all, IYSH Projects reach the poorest people and help them to work together for the benefit of their local community.

If you would like to help, or learn more about Housing, the following organisations may be helpful to you:

IYSH Trust, 19/29 Woburn Place,
London WC1H 0LY.

Shelter, National Campaign for the Homeless
88 Old Street, London EC1V 9HV.

Catholic Housing Aid Society
189a Old Brompton Road,
London SW5 0AR.

RNID ENQUIRY

EARLY THIS YEAR RNID LAUNCHED AN ENQUIRY INTO THE EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS OF DEAF PEOPLE

Do deaf people face discrimination when they apply for jobs? Are employers reluctant to promote deaf people who show ability? Do deaf people benefit from the new training initiatives? When employees become deaf, do they receive fair treatment? How can RNID and others help employers, trainers and deaf people overcome these problems? What can be done to ensure that deaf people have equal opportunities in training and employment????

RNID receives many letters from deaf people asking for advice about jobs and describing problems at work. RNID plans to do more to tackle the employment problems of deaf people.

As an initial step RNID has brought together a group of experts in employment and training and representatives from organisations of deaf people. This group will draw together information from case studies, research, and the views of deaf people, organisations and professional workers. In autumn of this year the recommendations of this group will be used to influence Government, local authorities, employers, trade unions and other target groups.

The group will be chaired by Sir Peter Baldwin, KCB. Sir Peter has been closely involved with a number of disability groups

in addition to a distinguished career in the Civil Service. Sir Peter is also a Vice-President of RNID.

Jack Ashley MP, Chairman of the All Party Disablement Group, on hearing of this initiative said, "Deaf people are denied jobs because they face widespread discrimination. The barriers are unfair and unnecessary. The RNID's sponsored inquiry will be very valuable and it should help to resolve some of the difficulties".

'Deaf people should contact RNID'

An essential part of the exercise is to use the direct experience of deaf people. Deaf people may write to RNID describing the problems they have encountered at work. How do you think they can be overcome? What changes are necessary to improve training or work opportunities? Can you tell us of examples of where things work well? Why do things work well in those places?

Please write to:

Gordon Mitchell,
Head of Education and Employment
Services,
RNID,
105 Gower Street,
London WC1E 6AH

Dinner-Dance Re-union

of

Past pupils of St. John's School, Boston Spa

at

Ladbroke Dragonara Hotel, Leeds

Saturday, 3rd October, 1987

Tickets £13

7 p.m. - 1 a.m.

available from:

SHIRLEY CALDWELL

Three Gables, Spibey Lane, Rothwell, Leeds LS26 0NN

Association for the Catholic Deaf of Great Britain and Ireland

COUNCIL MEMBERS

REV. T. O'MEARA (Treasurer)	MANCHESTER
SR. DENISE D.C.	CARDIFF
MR. J. SUMMERHILL	LONDON
SR. ELIZABETH ANNE D.C.	NEWCASTLE
REV. J. CUNNINGHAM C.M.	LONDON
VERY REV. CANON C. HOLLYWOOD	MANCHESTER
MR. G. O'TOOLE	MANCHESTER
MR. W.J. SNELL	BIRMINGHAM
SR. MARIA	MANCHESTER
REV. E. GANNON (Chairman)	PRESTON
REV. I. McELLIGOTT C.P.	WORCESTER
SR. SIOBHAN D.C.	BIRMINGHAM
SR. MARY D.C.	GLASGOW
MR. DAVID MARSHALL (Vice-Chairman)	NEWCASTLE
MR. JERRY HANIFIN	MANCHESTER
SR. GWYNN	BRENTWOOD

SECRETARY:

D.A. HEBBERT

12 GAYWOOD COURT, NICHOLAS ROAD,
BLUNDELLSAND, LIVERPOOL L23 6XN

The Council meets six times a year to discuss and carry out business
of the Association.

Meetings take place in Henesy House, Manchester.