

# HEARING EYE

*The voice of Open Ears*

Hard of Hearing Christian Fellowship

No: 158

Autumn 2018



## Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Hearing Eye. I hope the mix of stories, reflective pieces, notices, news, puzzle page, prayer fortnight and articles will be stimulating and inspiring. We are all

different and our day to day experiences can be such a channel for God to touch our lives and in turn for us to touch others with His love. We are in the pre-Christmas season now and maybe your thoughts are already turning towards Christmas cards, turkeys and tinsel? But, as important as these things are, it is primarily a wonderful time to think afresh how God, in His amazing love for us, chose to come into this world as a helpless baby, experiencing life in all its ups and downs yet never being overcome. He forged a path for us to discover God's love for ourselves and be eternally joined to Him. What greater gift could there ever be? To my shame I've been known at times to decide to take a Christmas gift back to the shop as soon as I've unwrapped it! And sometimes we can almost do the same

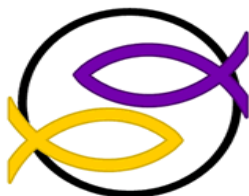
with God's gift of Jesus. We can dismiss His love saying 'others are worth it but not me.' But that is like instantly choosing to return a gift that someone has lovingly given us. People can make mistakes in what they think we'll like but the amazing thing is that God's gift of love in Jesus fits each one of us



perfectly. And the best we can ever give Him in response is to simply accept His love gift for ourselves. So have a wonderful Christmas and I hope that whatever your circumstances, you'll be able to receive afresh the wonderful gift of God's love and presence with you.

Tracy Williamson

**Open Ears is a member of IVSS Churchear, a pan-European Christian organisation for hard of hearing people.**



**IVSS Churchear**

**An introduction to  
IVSS CHURCHEAR**

President: Ingrid Stillström  
Secretary: Eyolf Berg

The acronym **IVSS** stands for **I**nternationaler **V**erband für **S**eelsorge für **S**chwerhörige. Translation: International Federation for Pastoral Care to Hearing Impaired Persons. (Thanks to Susanne Willdig for translating the acronym!)

IVSS Churchear exists to provide pastoral care for members of Protestant churches in Europe who are deaf or hard of hearing and who struggle to follow church services. A newsletter is published several times a year, and a conference is held every two years in various European locations, such as Friesing in Germany in 2012,

Kraków in Poland in 2014, Løgumkloster in Denmark in 2016. The 2018 conference was held in September, at the Centre Culturel St Thomas in Strasbourg, on the theme of “*Where am I – where do you stand?*”



*Centre Culturel St. Thomas in Strasbourg (on the right)*

There were three conference speakers as follows:-

**Professor Jenö Kiss** from Romania, on “contextual pastoral care”, about the importance of the surroundings for hard of hearing or deaf persons, such as family, the local and the greater society.

**Hans-Gunther Seifert**, social worker and president of the Evangelical Pastoral Care among Hard of Hearing in Germany (ESiD), on the work of a German group called “Grenzgänger” (Border crossers), people being insecure about which category they belong to, either hard of hearing or deaf.

**Professor Régine Hunziker-Rodewald**, from the Protestant Theological Faculty of Strasbourg, on the topic “Hearing and being heard – an Old Testament point of view”.

Like Open Ears conferences, every means is provided for people to follow what is being said. All conference speakers use microphones and in the conference hall there is an induction loop, loudspeakers and captioning in both English and German. Outside the conference hall, conference attendees can borrow an FM receiver in order to receive the sound from the microphones through telecoil or head phones. There is also mobile captioning in English. A typist listens to

the guide through head phones, and captions what is said onto a computer which transmits the text to mobile screens available for borrowing (iPad).

During the Strasbourg conference there was a range of workshops giving everyone the opportunity to exchange experiences, learn from each other and gain a renewed inspiration for their daily work.

A sightseeing bus was laid on for people who wished to explore Strasbourg in their free time on Friday afternoon.

Many deaf and hard of hearing people attended from all over the world, from Mongolia, India, Pakistan, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, USA and, of course, a great variety of European countries.

During the conference, there was a celebration of IVSS Churchear's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which falls next year in 2019. For more information about IVSS Churchear and details of their next conference, visit their website: [www.churchear.org](http://www.churchear.org)

**Mary Bucknall**

**The next Churchear conference will be in Eisenach in Germany on September 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> 2020. Marylin Kilsby is hoping to attend. Will any of us be adventurous and consider going too?**

**Earlier we mentioned Christmas but of course at present it is still Autumn with all its vagaries in the weather systems! So this poem from Gill Brodie seems very apt!**

### **The Weather**

Dear Father God, thank you for weather,  
For breezes as light as a feather.

It's good to wake up in the morning  
And, after we've finished our yawning,  
To see the blue sky and bright sunshine-  
To believe that today will be fine.

So we dress in our sandals and t shirt.  
We're so happy it makes our heart burst.

We no sooner get out or the door  
Than the rain starts to pour and to pour!  
Lord, is this your idea of a joke?  
Do you think that we need a good soak?



So we find our umbrellas and macs  
But we soon feel the sun on our backs!  
Our weather is just so contrary  
You'd think we would learn to be wary.  
But just think, if it were not so  
Would we know what to talk about? No!  
So Father God, thank you for weather  
And that is the end of my blather.

**Gill Brodie**

**For our prayers**

**Gill Brodie has recently contacted us asking for prayer as she has ongoing health problems, so we lift Gill up to the Lord and pray for His strength to fill you Gill and for healing and peace. Amen.**

**Out of the lips of babes!**

**You may remember I've been asking for contributions to Hearing Eye as it gets boring if it's the same people writing all the time. Our two youngest members Nadine and Dominic Willdig have risen to the challenge offering their cute sayings and doings! Here's one to start...**

**At Liverpool Maritime Museum public toilets. I'm helping Nadine on the toilet, in a stall.**

**N: You are my favourite mama!  
[Stranger in neighbouring stall]:  
Ahh!**

**N: What was that?  
[Stranger]: Sorry but that was just  
too sweet!**

**N: [looks chuffed with herself]  
Susanne & Nadine Willdig**



**IMPORTANT NOTICE!**  
**It's not too late to join us for the**  
**Open Ears Holiday 2019**  
**At Spring Harvest, Harrogate.**

**Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to be  
blessed and challenged in your faith**

In the July edition of Hearing Eye we shared the news that Open Ears is attending Spring Harvest 2019 at the new Harrogate venue at Harrogate Convention Centre, not the traditional Butlins camp. I went there with Marilyn Baker this year and found it a wonderful experience and I am sure that



others will find that too. Open Ears have reserved rooms at the adjacent Crowne Plaza Hotel which is lovely and we will have B&B and evening meal there. Its closeness to the venue means we can just pop back to our rooms anytime we want to chill out. For those who like to follow sign language, there is professional signing at all the main meetings and the signers can be booked to come to a specific seminar if required. There will also be STT provided by our very own Susanne! Open Ears are very kindly subsidising the cost of the accommodation to make it accessible to all. Do consider coming and you won't be disappointed! I found it wonderful to be part of such a passionate worshipping community. The teaching was challenging and it was a joy to make new friends and meet old ones.

Harrogate itself is a beautiful spa town full of culture, history and lovely cafés such as Betty's tea rooms!!

## To join us:

**Do come and join us at Spring Harvest 2019. We have enclosed a booking form with details of how to book the conference itself which you need to do personally and which is booked separately to the accommodation. (If you have difficulties with this or are unsure how to go about it, just let us know and we are only too happy to help you)**

## To book the accommodation:

**Fill in the enclosed form to book your accommodation at the Crowne Plaza Hotel which Open Ears is subsidising and return the form to Christine Pitts. In July's edition we said that the deadline for responding and sending your deposit for the accommodation was end Sept 18. We are now extending that deadline to 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 18.**

**The cost is £350 per room so if you can share it will be much cheaper. We really hope to see you there!**

**You will remember that in the last edition we prayed for our Administrator, Christine Pitts who was undergoing the process of adjusting to a cochlear implant operation. Chris has done amazingly and I thought it would be lovely if we could hear some of her story.**

## My cochlear journey



A very big thank you to everyone who prayed for my cochlear implant operation which took place at the end of June. My hearing started going in my late 20's/early 30's, worsening slowly over the next 45 years until even the very

strongest hearing aids were not helping me very much. Getting this far in my cochlear journey is still a surprise because until about a year ago I had always vowed that I would never go down this road. The thought of having a hole drilled in my head was scary, also the risk that if the operation wasn't successful I would lose the little hearing I had in that ear. I had been avoiding socialising whenever I could and was feeling very frustrated and isolated. Then a young lady in our church quite unexpectedly had a cochlear and was very thrilled with it, also I met a lady on holiday who kept enthusing over the two she had. I still didn't feel this was something I wanted to do but after praying about it I decided there was no harm in making enquiries and seeing where that led.

Over the next few months there were numerous appointments at the cochlear unit at Southampton University after which I was offered the opportunity to have a cochlear implant. It was a difficult decision to make but finally I decided to go ahead.

Waking up after the operation there was a very tight bandage all round my head which the surgeon took off the next morning; he was extremely pleased with the way things had gone and I was able to go home. I then had a long month nervously waiting for switch-on day at the end of July. I had no idea what to expect but certainly didn't expect to hear all sorts of strange clicks and squeaks, none of which sounded remotely like speech. The audiology consultant assured me that my brain would learn to adjust and understand although I could take a long time. She explained that people who had lost their hearing quickly found it easier to adjust, whereas people like me who have been losing their hearing over a long period of time usually took much longer.

Over the next couple of weeks I had several appointments for reassessments and adjustments. I also saw the speech and



language therapist who gave me lots of different exercises to practise at home. This was when I felt I had returned to my childhood as some of the exercises involved listening to someone reading from children's books! These books use often repeated words that are in everyday use and therefore easier to follow.

The first time I realised that my hearing was changing was when I was sitting on the bed first thing one morning and heard



a new sound which I suddenly realised was the clock ticking, I had never known that it ticked before! The next thing I heard was the noise of pigeons cooing except it sounded more as if they were grunting! At the end of the first month the audiologist and the speech and language therapist were very pleased with my progress, they said that in a month I had got to where

most people get to in four months!

Since then my hearing is continuing to improve and I am starting to enjoy having some conversations with different people and can more easily understand what my five young granddaughters. I am also feeling so much more relaxed and confident.

At the end of October I will be going back for my three month assessment and am really looking forward to discovering how much more improvement there will be then. Each day I marvel at the miracle of my cochlear and thank the Lord for it. It is exciting discovering new things and really enjoying my new life! Now as I look back and wish I had done this many years ago!

**Christine Pitts**

## Celebrating Achievement

Some of you will remember meeting and being inspired by Open Ears member, Emily Owen when she came to speak at our Autumn Conference weekend at The Greenhouse Christian Centre last year. Emily has amazing gifts in speaking and writing and her books bring such a sense of God's love and presence in our everyday lives. I recently had the privilege of being at the Christian Resources Together Exhibition with Emily and witnessing her receive a wonderful award from the Association of Christian Writers for her

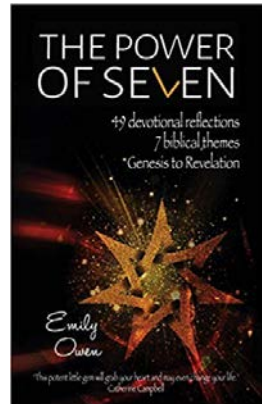


Outstanding Contribution to Christian Publishing. An award that's so well deserved! Here is a photo of Emily receiving the award from Angela Hobday, Chair of ACW.

Since Emily came to The Greenhouse she has completed a new book called 'The Power of Seven' which was published at the beginning of October. This is an amazing devotional book unlike any I have ever read before, as it contains beautiful expressions of God's heart and understanding which are expressed as prophetic conversations which I find

incredibly moving and challenging. Do consider getting this lovely book for yourselves or to give away as a Christmas gift. It's the kind of book you can dip into, read very slowly or read all at once! You can order it online from Amazon or Eden.co.uk. Just search for Emily Owen, or the book title 'The Power of Seven'.

**Emily, on behalf of us all in Open Ears, congratulations, we are proud of you, and thank you for all you are doing.**



**Tracy Williamson**

Time to relax, make a cuppa, maybe have a mince pie and get in the festive mood with this Christmas Word Search.

# Christmas Word Search

Level 4



G L E T W C R S T O C K I N G  
Y I P I D A E R B R E G N I G  
A C O V T R P Y A E C E F F U  
R E A S L E Q I X O C T A P Z  
E M I R Y H A U D P S A J O N  
S E A P O B E T H L E H E M I  
N R U L O L D O N T F O S P U  
A R L S L E I G H A A S U D O  
M Y N O K L T T O Y S I S H R  
W C E N E M E S I W F E T A N  
O B M K A J L O Z Y E G V M A  
N E R N O L U H M G O T E L M  
S O G I E O Y D N A C X O N E  
V E R B I J O T H U W B K A N  
R E E D N I E R Q C A E E R T



- |                |              |              |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Bells       | 9. Holly     | 17. Sleigh   |
| 2. Bethlehem   | 10. Jesus    | 18. Snowman  |
| 3. Candy       | 11. Manger   | 19. Star     |
| 4. Carol       | 12. Merry    | 20. Stocking |
| 5. Christmas   | 13. Ornament | 21. Toys     |
| 6. Elves       | 14. Peace    | 22. Tree     |
| 7. Gifts       | 15. Reindeer | 23. Wisemen  |
| 8. Gingerbread | 16. Santa    | 24. Yuletide |



### **In the Spotlight**

I thought it would be lovely if in this edition we could hear about Cynthia Leeman from South London, as she has been part of Open Ears almost from the beginning.

**T. Cynthia, where do you come from and where do you live now?**

**C.** I was born in Cape Town, South Africa in 1943. I went to school there and after attaining my matric certificate, I got a clerical job and worked for 8+ years before sailing to

Britain in June 1969 and settling in S.E. London. My first home was a flat share with a friend I met at the Baptist Church in Cape Town. Her flat was upstairs in her parents' 3 storey house. I now live in a one bedroom flat on my own. It was nice starting off in London with a family around me as they helped me adapt to London life and taught me some Cockney slang!

**T. What do you most love to do to relax?**

**C.** I have always loved travelling and exploring places, seeing the countryside and quaint cottages and gardens. In the past I have enjoyed walking and touring holidays in Europe and Britain. I find it relaxing seeing God's wonderfully made creation in open spaces.

**T. How long have you had a hearing loss? How does it affect you?**

**C.** I was born with a hearing loss which was not suspected until I was at school, where the school doctor tested my hearing by saying 10 words with her mouth covered and I only heard 1 word. This proved that I got by through lip reading, which came naturally to me. The Doctor referred me to a Hard of Hearing Centre, attached to a primary school a few miles away. Later the centre moved into a house nearby and was called the Mary Kihn School for the Hard of hearing. This little school was a good start for me as teachers always faced the class and used microphones and children wore headphones. I was able to lipread more easily here, unlike when I progressed to a normal hearing High School, where I strained to hear. Fortunately I was blessed with a good friend who helped fill me in from her note taking book! I can remember praying for help, to hear what was important to hear. I never let my deafness get the better of me and would say that lip reading is my best help 'to hear',

although I wouldn't do without hearing aids, as my hearing has deteriorated a lot. Now unfortunately my eyes are also deteriorating with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) which frightens me! I rely on my Heavenly Father to enable me to cope until He calls me.

**T. When did you join Open Ears and what drew you to it?**

**C.** I first heard of Open Ears in 1975 when it was called the Hard of Hearing Christian Fellowship, through the wife of my cousin in Johannesburg, whose eldest son was born deaf. She invited me to join her at a HHCF day conference at Rotherhithe, and meet Bert Barritt. Thereafter I continued to go to HHCF meetings and started going to home group meetings, led by Richard Livermore. It was good to attend the conferences as the facilities were there, to make it possible for all to 'hear' the speakers. The clarity of speech through the loop system, is very helpful for those of us with some hearing. One can relax in the company as they all understand the problems of hearing loss!

**T. What do you think is especially valuable in the Open Ears' ministry?**

**C.** Open Ears ministry is valuable for its teaching about Christ; for the 'hearing' facilities, and for being approachable to those who are hearing impaired, that they can seek help knowing they will be understood. This is a big plus, and not always sufficiently available in other Christian meeting and teaching places.

**T. Do you still work? Or if retired what kind of work did you do?**

**C.** I retired from work in the Civil Service, as an administrative officer in October 2003, after working for the Public Trust Office for 10 years (moving to the Treasury Solicitors Department for the last 2 years). Prior to this I was unemployed for a year in 1992, due to being made redundant. I was a payroll clerk, inputting payroll data firstly on the accounting machine, and in later years on the computer. During my unemployment year, I took on further study offered by the Government and later applied to the Civil Service. I sat a test and started in the Court Funds Office and then moved to the Personnel Department.

**T. How long have you been a Christian?**

**C.** I cannot put a date to that as I was brought up in a Christian home among the Brethren family of believers, believing what I was taught about God and Jesus in a simplistic way. (Both my parents and both grandparents were members of the 'exclusive' Brethren.)

My parents met and married in the Brethren meeting hall. Due to my hearing loss, I did not 'hear' much in way of teaching in the Brethren, and learnt more from my mother. I remember her teaching me the song, 'Jesus loves me this I know.' I remember, at the age of 11, making a decision to follow Jesus and speaking to my Scottish grandfather about it. He was delighted as were other Brethren who expressed their joy at my profession of faith. I had a lot more to learn about the grace and love of God towards all people. It took a long time to realise that I was a sinner! Reading the Word of God helped when I was older. I found using Scripture Union's Encounter with God a great help too.

**T. Is any particular way that God uses you?**

C. I feel God has called me to be a helper and encourager where needed, and to visit friends, but not to be a leader. He has given me an ability to care for little children, so for a number of years I have been helping in the Creche of my Church, for ages 0 – 2 1/2 yrs.

**T. What thrills you in your Christian life?**

C. To know that God cares for me even when I am not thinking about Him and forgives me when I have failed Him. He always forgives when I repent and seek to do His will. I am pleased when He prompts and nudges me to do something and then feel blessed afterwards.

**T. Thinking of those who have hearing loss, what do you long to see coming to pass in the future?**

C. I would like all deafened people to know that our God is not deaf. He hears and sees everything even when alone with our thoughts, which can be fearful. I would like to think that when deaf people are hurting, they will meet a Christian who will notice their struggle and point them to Christ, telling of His love and care for them and invite them to a deaf (or hearing Church with loop), where they can hear the Good News and be encouraged to follow Jesus and know inner peace.

**Open Ears still needs a new Minutes Master  
Could you take notes for us at Committee  
meetings to create the Minutes?**

**If not, do you know someone else who can?**

**For more info please contact Christine Pitts.**

## Special Assistance? Finding our way through Basel Airport



In this anecdote, Tracy and I are ourselves; the other travellers, who are not part of Open Ears, have been given *noms de plumes*.

Tracy and I were part of a larger group staying at Haus Barnabas, a small guesthouse run by four Christians in the Black Forest, Germany. Five of us were booked on the same EasyJet flight from

Basel (The Basel airport code, BSL, coincidentally is also short for British Sign Language). You know Tracy and I, we have dual sensory loss (mine isn't as bad as Tracy's) and balance problems. Then there was Miriam, who has physical needs and finally, Lesley, who needed special assistance at the last minute as she had hurt her leg. The fifth person, Charles, although he has a learning disability, hadn't booked for assistance.

The first hurdle was at the checkout desk. I was helping Tracy with communicating but fell apart a bit as a) I'm profoundly deaf myself and b) I couldn't understand the German accent. We did, eventually, get across that Tracy didn't have any dangerous weapons in her luggage. Miriam, who travels a lot was trying to advise me but the advice fell on my totally deaf right ear, which raised Miriam's stress levels as she kept trying to talk to me.

After what seemed an age, the four of us, plus Charles, had all checked in and went to the Special Assistance section to await help to get to the gate. Charles, sensible man, didn't join us. The computer in that section was also disabled and running very slowly. Miriam nearly had a meltdown while trying to make her needs clear but eventually we were rescued from the communication impasse regarding buggies by an airport employee who had reasonably good English. Miriam and Lesley were dispatched in wheelchairs, while Tracy and I walked, zigzagging around as befits those with balance problems.

Getting on and off EasyJet planes at Basel and Gatwick is via portable steps which are wheeled to the plane's door. I found

these really difficult to manage as they wobble a lot and feel very insecure. However, all four of us were able to get into a lift, again a wheeled one, which took us up to the main cabin door. Brilliant! Although we had to wait in the plane for ages at Gatwick, a lift eventually trundled along and took us back to ground level.



A significant advantage for people with special assistance is that we are fast tracked through passport and security which, for me, more than made up for having to be last off the plane. An airport employee remains with you right up to baggage reclaim and into arrivals if requested.

Is it worth booking Special Assistance? I would say it is, especially if you are with a group all with special needs. If I travel on my own, I don't usually bother as I can ask my way around.

And how did Charles get on? He negotiated everything brilliantly! I think he's a frequent traveller!

**Marylin Kilsby**

## **9 Essentials for successful travelling when deaf** **Tracy Williamson**

1. Do be open and tell people that you are deaf!
2. Don't apologise for not being able to hear.
3. Do consider asking for special assistance – as Marylin said, you do get fast tracked!
4. Don't turn your nose up at travelling in a buggy – they are great fun!
5. Do pack a good-sized dose of patience – remember staff may be struggling too if they are not English.
6. Don't frown at everyone or tut and sigh.
7. Do allow your gift of humour to overflow!!
8. Don't hide your deafness from cabin staff, it's important they know and then you get special attention which makes other folk wonder if you are a celebrity!
9. Do relax and let the assistance people take your luggage while you enjoy being spoilt!



## Cochlear Implants Again!

**A year ago we shared Hilary Rae's story – 'leap in the dark' about having a cochlear implant. Now a year later she has sent this lovely little article describing its ongoing impact in her life.**

### ONE YEAR ON

It's a year now since I had my cochlear implant. How am I doing, and how has it been? Amazing! I still marvel at the difference it has made to my life.



I feel more relaxed, and have more confidence speaking to people and initiating conversation. Occasionally I still say: *What's that sound?* - and add a new one to my list! I can hear the church clock chime, and birds twittering - but I can't tell what they are unless I see them. I feel a safer driver now that I can hear all the warning

beeps in my car except the indicators clicking!

Most of the day I forget I'm deaf, until I enter a noisy place like a café or the lunch club. I can hear myself speaking now, but I had to be reminded not to talk to myself in company! (A bad habit when you live alone!)

I'm able to make some phone calls, but I find messages left on my answerphone too fast to make out. I do find I get tired easily, and I'm often tempted to turn a deaf ear!



At church, it's a joy to hear most of the service through the loop. I can even make out the words of the songs, but not the tunes - except the ones that are in my head!

I have to take my processor off at night, but that means I'm not disturbed by gale force winds or noisy joy-riders!

Having an implant was the scariest thing I've ever done. With God's strength and the support of my friends, I sacrificed my natural hearing, but I have NO REGRETS!

**Hilary Rae**

## Book Review

### The Father's Kiss – by Tracy Williamson



Tracy chose this title, 'The Father's Kiss', because the Lord spoke to her from the parable of the Prodigal Son. The father in that story ran to his repentant son and kissed him, not an expected response when his son had spent all his inheritance on a life which was far from what his father would have chosen.

The subtitle to Tracy's book is 'Living in the Reality of God's Love', which sums up what it's all about because experiencing the Father's love is difficult for many, especially for those of us who didn't have a loving relationship with our biological father or stepfather.

Tracy's book consists of several different sections, which I found to be really helpful. Each chapter usually contains a short story about someone's life experiences, including extracts from Tracy's own story, some biblical teaching revealing the Father's love and a Pause and Reflect section. We are encouraged to keep a journal of what we have learned and how the Lord has, through His Holy Spirit, shown aspects of His loving fatherhood to us and how this has blessed us. I decided not to keep a journal and just made notes within the book, highlighting the relevant passages. The book is best read slowly and prayerfully with an open heart, which allows God to speak to us.

Tracy's book is truly Holy Spirit inspired. It's not to be approached as an academic exercise but as one led by God which is really life changing. It certainly blessed and helped me. I'm planning to read it again in the future when I'm sure that the Lord will speak to me afresh.

Be prepared to be challenged and changed and to receive a revelation of how much our heavenly Father loves us.

You can buy The Father's Kiss online from Amazon or Eden.co.uk, from your local Christian bookshop or from Tracy and Marilyn Baker's charity MBM Trust – [www.mbm-ministries.org](http://www.mbm-ministries.org)

**Marilyn Kilsby**

## In fond Remembrance

### Celebrating Janet Andrews' Life 1934 – 2018



Our beloved Janet went to be with the Lord this summer after an 8 month journey with cancer. Despite her illness Janet remained full of good spirits and faith in the Lord. Her thanksgiving service was a beautiful celebration of her zest for life and love of God

and people. She is sadly missed but we are all rejoicing that she is enjoying eternity now with her Lord. The following are some of the thoughts we wrote about her and which were shared at her thanksgiving.

\* I first met Janet when she walked into our (previously called) Hard of Hearing Christian Fellowship (HHCF) meeting in 1985. Although partially sighted as well as hard of hearing, Janet was an outgoing and gifted lady, easy to get on with and keen to join in the Christian ethos of HHCF, attending our house group and holidays. Over time Janet joined the Committee, undertaking various secretarial duties including valuable work as Prayer Secretary, without which Open Ears could not function as a Christian charity. Recently Janet was unwell for some time, but she never complained, sustained by her strong faith and generous spirit to others. It was perhaps a real mercy that the Lord took her quickly to her eternal home. With no more blindness, hearing problems or falls, dear Janet is In the glorious Kingdom of our Lord Jesus. Janet, it was a great joy to know you as a wonderful friend and fellow worker.



\* Janet was a valued member of the Open Ears committee for many years. She was a wise lady and you knew she would listen carefully to everyone's submissions and commit the issue to God in prayer, before coming up with a terse and valid decision. Her humility and sense of humour will be missed. I remember her funny stories at the beginning of Open Ears prayer meetings and her quips at the end of Hotline letters. She would sign herself, 'Over and out, Janet.' She was a fine person, a lynchpin holding Open Ears together. The Bible verse that comes to mind about Janet is 'Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt.' (Col 4:6 NRSV)

\* I was very fond of Janet. A welcome addition to God's heavenly kingdom.

\* Janet was one of those people that stayed with you and in your memories. A character and a 'what you see is what you get' kind of person - my kind of person. She was funny, thoughtful and had a unique and wonderfully interesting perspective of the world.



\* I have found Janet to be one of the most fun, real and inspirational people I've had the privilege of knowing. Her lack of self-pity and ability to see the funny side in all situations was very challenging. Janet liked to travel light and where I would pack a huge suitcase for an Open Ears break, Janet would arrive with a shopping bag's worth of personal effects! But what she didn't carry in heavy luggage, she carried in personality, laughter and a heartfelt conviction that through faith in God's goodness, the most difficult situations could be turned around. She has inspired me to live my life in a joy filled way. We will miss you Janet but know you are praying for us as part of that great cloud of heavenly witnesses.

\* Janet was such a special lady. She was involved with Open Ears almost since its inception as HHCF over forty years ago. Janet was born with Usher syndrome and as well as being hard of hearing, also experienced increasing sight loss and was almost blind for the last several years. Despite that, Janet was an extremely gifted

painter and sculptor and showed several of her paintings in a local exhibition by visually impaired shortly before she died.

Janet also had a marvellous sense of humour and was well known for leading the prayer sessions each morning at our Open Ears holidays. She always started with an amusing story, quickly followed by in-depth prayers, which showed the true mark of a prayer warrior. At her last Open Ears holiday, Janet shared a hilarious story about getting on the wrong buses and being totally lost while trying to deliver some items to a charity shop. Unknown to her, she was already ill by then. I was privileged to have visited Janet many times. We enjoyed meals together – and the occasional glass of Bailey's. Almost every time we met, we prayed for Open Ears.

\* How can we sum up Janet? A prayer warrior with a wonderful sense of humour and a memory for jokes and amusing anecdotes; plus not a jot of self-pity regarding her increasing sight loss and diagnosis of cancer. She was totally committed to Open Ears and to her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Dear Janet – thank God for you. I'll miss you so much.



\* Janet was such a special part of Open Ears. I only met Janet once while at the Greenhouse last year but immediately warmed to her. I enjoyed listening to her stories and her amazing testimony of how Jesus was her Saviour and Friend.

\* Janet touched so many in her walk with the Lord and was a great blessing to Open Ears with her wisdom, and of course her great and lovely sense of humour;

an encouragement to us all. She is now home and at rest with the Lord she so dearly loved.

***With thanks to Richard and Mary Livermore, Mary Bucknall, Edwin Astill, Tracy Williamson, Averil Dobson, Marilyn Kilsby, Christine Pitts, Roy Spiller, Ken and Jean Wiggett for their contributions and Janet's family for the photos.***

**Open Ears 15 day Prayer Diary**



**'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.'** Isaiah 9:2

**Sunday** Let's pray together as we enter this season of Advent, that we'll all recognise and respond to the wonderful coming of Jesus.

**Monday** Pray for our loved ones, friends and colleagues who have never their hearts to the love of God. May His light dawn upon them.

**Tuesday** Pray for those recently bereaved that they may know His great comfort and compassion.

**Wednesday** Pray for Theresa May and the Government that they may be empowered to bring about the right deal for Britain according to God's will and purpose.

**Thursday** Pray for those in Open Ears who are on their own over Christmas. May each know the peace and joy of your loving presence with them.

**Friday** Pray for Gill Brodie and the ongoing health issues she is coping with. Pour your healing and strength into her life. Pray for all in Open Ears who are struggling with their health at this time.

**Saturday** Pray for Marylin Kilsby and Mary Bucknall in their roles Chair and Vice Chair of Open Ears. Give them wisdom and strength.

**Sunday** Pray for our churches that they will be anointed and ever growing in their ability to include people with disabilities. For the services of Remembrance to be heartfelt and inspiring. For ourselves that we will be able to give and receive, to truly worship.

**Monday** Pray for Julia Chapman in her role as treasurer for

wisdom as she deals with all aspects of the finances and for Open Ears Committee as they continue to seek the Lord for the future of Open Ears and what aspects of this work to develop.

**Tuesday** Pray for world peace, for the Middle East, for Christians facing persecution, for restoration in Indonesia following the terrible earthquake and tsunami. Ask the Lord each week to bring a specific need in the world to your heart and pray for that need.

**Wednesday** Pray for Vic and Susanne Willdig with thanks for all they give into Open Ears. For protection over their family and that their lovely children Nadine and Dominic will grow up knowing the Lord and his amazing love.

**Thursday** Pray for all our families, those of us with aging parents, young children, siblings. Pray too for our loved ones and close friends. May all we love come to know the Lord and learn to hear His voice.

**Friday** Pray for Christine Pitts as she adjusts to her cochlear implant that she will know increasing joy in what she can hear, and for Hilary Rae that her ongoing journey will be blessed. If their stories have inspired any OE members to consider having an implant, please guide them and help them to take the right steps.

**Saturday** Pray for Emily Owen in her ministry of writing and speaking. May she be blessed in her creativity. For all of us in the varied creative gifts God has given us, that we will have confidence and joy in developing and using them.

**Sunday** That as we enter the Christmas season may we all make room in our hearts for you dear Lord. In the words of the carol:

‘What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; If I were a wise man I would do my part. But what I can I give Him, give my heart.’

© Extract from ‘In The Bleak Midwinter’

## **Open Ears and the Charity Commission**

The trustees of Open Ears (their names are on this page) have recently been in discussions with the Charity Commission regarding the charity's status. Since 2013, there has been a new legal framework available to charities, called "Charitable Incorporated Organisation" or "CIO" for short.

It seems a good idea to move Open Ears to this new CIO framework, from its original unincorporated association status dating from the 1970's when the charity was first set up. This will give the trustees more protection in the event of legal action taken against Open Ears, or bankruptcy.

Also, the names of the trustees have changed since then, and the objects of the charity have been widened slightly (from providing fellowship to deaf and hard of hearing Christians) to include charitable donations to the Ear Centre at the International Nepal Fellowship Green Pastures Hospital in Nepal.

We will of course update you when the process of converting Open Ears to a CIO is finally completed.

**Mary Bucknall.**

### **Hearing Eye is published by Open Ears (formerly the Hard of Hearing Christian Fellowship)**

'Open Ears' is a registered charity (No. 284487),  
and the following are Trustees:

Mary Bucknall, Julia Chapman, Marylin Kilsby, Christine Pitts and  
Tracy Williamson.

The Committee comprises The Trustees, plus Susanne and Victor  
Willdig.

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