

HEARING EYE

The voice of Open Ears

Hard of Hearing Christian Fellowship

No: 165

Summer 2020



Greetings!

Welcome to your new bumper edition of Hearing Eye, after what has been a momentous few months for us all. When we published the last edition, I would never have imagined that we would only just be emerging from lockdown when it came to doing the July edition! I am sure that you have all faced some really tough challenges through these months. Coping with being unwell and maybe needing to have a medical consultation by phone – a nightmare when we can't hear! Being in a confined space or struggling for endless days with isolation. Trying to social distance and lipread at the same time or recognise that people are even speaking through a face mask. All of this is so hard when you have a hearing loss, and also for those of us with sight loss, the need to social distance causes many complications. But God has been with us all in different ways to encourage, strengthen and give us joy, even in the midst of great difficulties. As I write, I really feel in my spirit a sense of God's great joy in us. He is proud of you and the way you have held on to Him through all the challenges. In Zephaniah 3:14-17, a lovely prophetic picture is drawn of God expressing His great love and joy in us:

'Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter (and Son). The Lord, the King of Israel is with you. Never again will you fear any harm. The Lord your God is with you. He is mighty to save.

He takes great delight in you. He quiets you with His love. He rejoices over you with singing' (precis). On the one hand, He is celebrating over you, singing and dancing in His joy. On the other, He is holding you close to quieten and still any fears you may have at this time. He is all powerful and so much bigger than the problems and unresolvable situations we may be struggling with. He wants to give you fresh reassurance and



hope that nothing is too difficult for Him. As we take steps to move on from Covid-19, He is with us. Our normal may have to change yet again but He will be there to give us peace and wise counsel. Rest in Him because He knows what He is doing and wants to bring beautiful works of grace about in our lives.

So, it's my prayer that this Hearing Eye will be a blessing to you and a resource to help you be uplifted and strengthened in your faith. You will find a real mix of features to interest you in this edition. Articles from various members who have shared their experiences of lockdown, a prayer diary, a puzzle page, fun and laughter moments, facemask tips, news about our events and Nepal. A whole variety of things to inspire, interest and help you relax. I would like to thank Anthea Owen for her wonderful help in putting the 'Experiences of Lockdown' article together and Mary Bucknall for helping with the detail of what needs to be covered and for proof reading it. Chris Pitts too for undertaking responsibility for getting it printed and sent out. A team is a most beautiful thing! Be blessed and enjoy,

Tracy

**Have you visited the Open Ears website recently?
www.openears.org.uk**

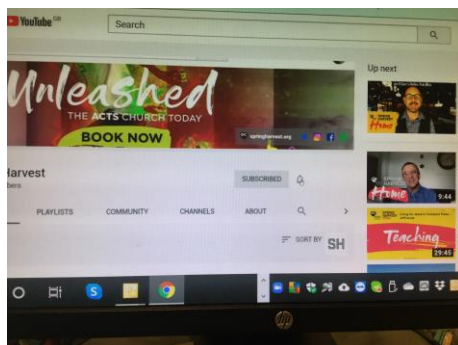
Important Notices about Open Ears Events 2020

We are really sad but the OE Autumn conference at The Woodlands Hothorpe Hall is cancelled due to Covid-19. We are hoping to rearrange it in 2021 at Hothorpe Hall or another venue, still with Emily Owen speaking, so watch this space!

The Churchear conference at Eisenach which was also scheduled for September has now been postponed to 13 – 17 September 2021 at the same venue. More details in later editions of Hearing Eye and on the Website.

Spring Harvest Home

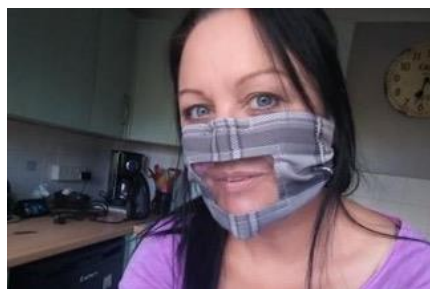
Another casualty of the Covid-19 pandemic was Spring Harvest. Several of us from Open Ears were booked to go to the Harrogate venue as we had been so blessed when we went there last year. Open Ears had organised subsidised rooms at the adjacent Crowne Plaza hotel and we were expecting a wonderful week of great teaching, worship and fellowship all signed and subtitled. But sadly it was not to be, at least in the way we'd expected, for like all public events it had to be cancelled just three weeks before it was due to take place. It was devastating news, not just for those of us who had booked, but for Spring Harvest themselves who faced losses of hundreds of £1000's. BUT an amazing thing happened. In just three weeks the Spring Harvest leadership, Essential Christian, organised for the whole event to take place online via YouTube. It was a colossal undertaking of 100's of individual videos being made at home to cover worship, meditations, Bible teaching, children's programmes, workshops, notices and announcements. The amazing thing was not just that they managed to time everything to flow seamlessly together so that



it seemed you were almost there; but also there was the miracle of virtually every session being subtitled. As Marilyn and I were still unwell from Covid ourselves it was such an uplifting thing to be able to listen to these great teachers while sitting in a comfy chair with a nice cuppa to hand. I personally loved Peter Grieg's early morning 'Thought for the Day' and Malcolm Duncan's impassioned Bible teaching. I so admire Spring Harvest's vision and outworking of their faith that they were prepared to think out of the box and come up with such a powerful solution. Of course 95% of our churches have done the same and I feel really deserve a clap like what we as a nation gave the NHS and frontline workers. Zoom, YouTube, Facebook Live and many other ways of connecting together has broken through the devil's strategies to close the church down and instead drawn more people into church than for generations. I was so thankful for Spring Harvest being so willing to follow their vision whatever it cost them and I will certainly want to return next year, whether in person or online!

Tracy Williamson

Face Mask Tips



If you've been worried about lip reading when people are wearing face masks this mask (picture taken from the Salisbury Journal) could be a great option to encourage your friends, family and local community to use. With its transparent panel across the mouth lip reading is made so much more possible. Even for me (Tracy) who

cannot lip read, I still need to see someone's mouth moving to know they are speaking, so I am certainly interested.

Chris Pitts who has a cochlear implant also shared how a neighbour made her a face mask with elastic going right round the head instead of just the ears which is difficult to manage if you have an implant and glasses. Also Action on Hearing Loss suggest putting the mask on first then, your cochlear or hearing aid and then your glasses.

Another tip for these days of nervousness in people about being too close together or touching things and of course, needing to wear face masks, is to use a mobile phone with an automatic speech to text app like Live Transcribe. This means that if you need to hear someone at a slight distance you can hold the phone out and it will (usually) pick up what they say. I find it such a help! **Tracy**

It's Sudoku time!

(Get your thinking cap on to ensure each row, column and cube is made up of digits 1 – 9 with no repeats.)

7	2	3					4	
		9	1					
1			9	4				
	3				4	7		
6	1			3			9	4
		7	8				2	
				7	9			5
					1	9		
	5					6	7	1

Life in the Mountains by Beryl Cooper



I had the privilege of two missionaries, John and Joyce (names changed) stay with me for three nights. They are based in Nepal and spend two to three weeks 14,000 feet above sea level taking the good news to people in the villages.

The first year they went in the warm weather and found the people working very hard in their fields looking after their crops of barley, potatoes and long radishes. In the evenings John would tell them the good news of Jesus – but they would often drop off to sleep which gave John and Joyce no alternative but to go in the winter months. They would land on the Himalayan mountains and walk to the villages.

The people wear thick winter coats lined with Yak hair. They never wash themselves and live in unheated stone houses with no hot or cold water or electricity. They carry water from streams with bands across their foreheads. The children are washed every day and they cry. Babies are washed every day and they scream. They never use nappies. They wrap the babies in cloths initially, then train them early to go to the toilet when they hold them out in the road. I'm sure the babies soon learn to respond so they can go back into the house out of the cold.

They have clog type boots made of felt; every day boots and festival boots.

People eat fresh Yak meat as well as dried cheeses of various kinds made of the Yak milk, some smoked and some in hard cubes that take an hour to chew! Dumplings and soup are common, their favourite is dumplings filled with meat. They make porridge of roasted barley and flat breads. They also make some decorative breads for special occasions, which is deep fried. For breakfast they have roasted barley porridge, butter tea, hot water or flat bread.

Two people from every family must go out each day to look for firewood. They cook in a fire in the middle of the room or sometimes in a cast iron stove.

They don't have a village shop. They cut each other's hair, it's matted or plaited. Shops are in distant towns. They drink water, butter tea or barley

wine. Wood comes from trees in the valleys. They sleep in different rooms on carpets with a quilt on top. Some families all sleep together to keep warm. They have simple wooden cutlery and whisks. Their houses are made of dry stone walls plastered on the inside with mud. The wealthy keep their animals under their house with steps up to their family accommodation above. The inside of their houses are lovely with tapestries on the walls and carpets on the floors. Their toilet is on the top floor – a hole that goes down to where the animals are and there is a pipe up from there to take all the gases out to stop an explosion.

The poor people's doorways are very low and you have crouch down to get in. It is dark inside and not high enough to stand up. For toileting they use the fields. The women make tapestries and carpets in the winter, they have looms in their homes. Yak wool is very itchy, they make threads by twiddling it when they walk to the fields. Poor people are taken in by the better off as servants, the same applies to people who are a bit simple.

They have butter lamps for lights and the flame is naked, there is no glass surround. They have hardly any rain but two monsoons a year. Snow stands all winter. Children are sent to the cities for schooling, they have three months holiday a year, December, January and February. When a young man wants to settle down he goes to the village, snatches a girl and marries her.

Having been born into such a harsh environment I'm sure they live as sensibly as they can. When they take their winter coats off in the warm weather, they leave water in the sun to warm it. They have no soap so beat their clothes. The very hot sun soon dries them. To wash their bodies they use cold water and scrub themselves with grass, pumpkins or crunched up packets of noodles.

They trade in amber, turquoise, coral or lapis, lapis lazuli, wood or carpets.

Lockdown

The following pages contain a combined article from several members of Open Ears all expressing their varied experiences of lockdown and how those experiences, both good and bad have shaped and affected them. Although things are easing, life won't return to 'normal' for quite some while and may need a new normal altogether. So these accounts may give us cause to reflect as well as enjoy. . .

Christine Pitts

My experiences of lockdown as a cochlear implant user.



Isolation and not seeing all my family have been the most difficult things to cope with during lockdown. All our lives have changed in unexpected ways, yet some surprisingly good things seem to have come out of it which gives us hope for a better future.

At the beginning we dropped a note to everyone in our road asking if they would be willing to offer help to anyone who might need it and about 20 people answered, that was $\frac{3}{4}$ of the road. We drew up a list of phone numbers so that if anyone needed help there was always someone to ask. Quite a few new people have moved in recently, so it was great to find out their names. On Thursday evenings, when we all went out to clap the NHS, everyone chatted across the road and got to know each other, although for me with my deafness, that wasn't possible. Thursday evenings felt really special, it was so good to go to the end of our drive and see everyone happy, smiling and clapping.

Lockdown for our family has also brought a surprising number of good things. Son-in-law Rob found the first weeks at home difficult but then he and a small group returned to work. Shift work began and now Rob works from 6am returning home, very happy, in the early afternoon. Daughter Caroline started free maths tuition every morning via Zoom; this has helped the other part of her business, 'Maths club by Post', to grow enormously. Their two girls miss their friends and have found home schooling difficult; Grace (13) feels overwhelmed with all the work she has been given, but Susie (10) hasn't been given enough and gets bored!

Ken, our son, is a University lecturer and has had to completely rethink how to teach and connect with his students via Zoom. Not needing to travel has meant more time to work on his PhD which is going well, so that's good. Their 3 girls are all missing their friends;

the two older ones are very diligent in their schoolwork, but the youngest cannot understand why they won't always play with her when they are at home. Daughter-in-law, Lizzy, is a very social lady, always with her many friends. She broke her toe two weeks into lockdown so is hobbling around everywhere but having to stay at home is helping her to relax which is good for her.

Marilyn Baker

My experiences of lockdown as a blind person.

I was so thankful to have Tracy with me during lockdown and also that we have a garden which we enjoyed during the hot weather. Some dear friends also bought us a 'lockdown present' as they called it - a barbecue - so we had fun trying that out! But I missed having people around, and for some time we were recovering from having the virus ourselves, so I found I got more irritable generally.



3 major things happened for me during this time.

Firstly, I got closer to my church family. How strange when I was not meeting them in the flesh, yet over 'Zoom' we shared our hearts together, not just superficially over a coffee. We prayed for each other meaningfully, giving each other words of encouragement and discussing passages of Scripture together. That has been precious.

Secondly, I felt God dealing with my heart attitudes more: bringing to the surface things that I'd buried. Not being on the road meant I had more time to think, (though I did keep busy recording podcasts and latterly we've started running online workshops via 'Zoom' on "Listening TO God"). He is always working on our lives, because his aim is to change us to becoming more and more like Jesus, and that may require us laying some things down and embracing new ways of thinking and doing.

Thirdly, social distancing makes it difficult for blind people to be

guided when travelling or walking, because people are nervous of touch and coming too close. This is an ongoing problem for many of us, with shops marking out areas where you have to queue and notices telling you of procedures they are adopting. Also, guide dog training has been stopped and so the waiting lists are rising again. So for the time being, getting out and about on my own seems pretty impossible. This is the most restricting outcome of Covid for me, so do pray that new ways will be found to help the blind and partially sighted community.

Roy Spiller

My experiences of lockdown as a 'technical advisor' to Marilyn!

We arrived back from our Ministry time at The Greenhouse Conference centre in March to be met with lockdown. While at The Greenhouse, Marilyn had viewed, then purchased, a new keyboard; it arrived and that's when the fun started! The keyboard has a screen which makes it very difficult for people with visual impairment to set it up. So, our remote 'Zoom' meetings started, with Tracy holding her iPad, Marilyn using her iPhone and me trying to direct Marilyn's fingers. I think we got there in the end, but I am looking forward to helping in person once I can travel to Tonbridge. The next challenge was to help Marilyn and Trace set up a webcam and microphone for Marilyn to be able to run her Intimacy with God days and other sessions.

Susanne Willdig: My experiences of lockdown and Family

As home educators, when the lockdown began, several people said to me: "Oh it's not so different for you is it, you just carry on as normal don't you?" Nothing could be further from the truth! Prior to lockdown, we were out and about every day. Not a single day would go past without us doing things outside the house, seeing friends, attending groups; it was a huge adjustment for us to spend full days at home!

The children often asked for their friends, but over time, not seeing them became more normal and they asked less and less. For their beloved grandparents however, whom they would see at least weekly, they never stopped asking. We've had to celebrate Mother's Day, Father's Day and grandma's birthday apart from the grandparents and, as they were facing health challenges as well, this was really difficult for us all.



One positive thing we do take away from lockdown, though: the ability to stay home, potter about, live life at a less structured pace. Perhaps we'll keep some of that slower pace.

Mary Bucknall

My experiences of lockdown as a profoundly deaf person.



Lockdown in this quiet corner of Dorset was unusually quiet. Motoring at 20-30mph on main roads all the way to the next town (without being overtaken at high speed) was a novelty and enabled me to look around far more than usual. It was extraordinarily peaceful, just like the old days two generations or more ago.

The time was tinged with sadness and anxiety however, with the painful loss of two people I knew. It was sad for me not to be able to attend their funerals due to the coronavirus restrictions in place and it must have been very hard indeed for their families.

I could never really relax. I would wake up and think "Coronavirus" and wonder what would happen if any of us caught the infection, especially when I saw alarming newspaper reports and TV pictures showing patients on ventilators. These left me wondering how deaf, blind and disabled people would cope if they were admitted to hospital. This has been a very difficult time for so many deaf, blind and disabled people and they will all need love and support in their isolation more than ever in the future.

When out shopping once a week I had to take precautions, keeping a safe distance from everyone at all times. I have faced some

practical problems of my own with lip-reading, as face masks are routinely worn in shops. Inside Boots the Chemist in the next town, one member of staff kindly took hers off on request, and spoke clearly at a distance of two metres, while the pharmacist behind the glass screen wrote down what she wanted to say to me. Fortunately, I have the use of a car, so I have not had to travel on public transport yet – but it will be a great challenge to communicate effectively with anyone wearing face masks on board buses and trains.

I have missed attending signed church services during lockdown, but the subtitled Morning Worship services on BBC1 on Sunday mornings have been a blessing indeed, plus several live-streamed services online in British Sign Language.

Marylin Kilsby

My experiences of lockdown as a lip reading deaf person.



Just before lockdown started, I was with a group of people, one of whom has since tested positive for Covid-19. Along with others of the group, during the following weeks I experienced many of the symptoms of the virus. We almost certainly had Covid-19 although we haven't been tested for it. We have all recovered now.

Before the lockdown, I was feeling very low whenever I thought about the word "isolation". However, a couple of friends prayed for me in some depth and the blackness inside lifted and hasn't returned. While feeling ill with the virus and other health issues, the Lord's peace and presence have been almost constant. Friends and family whom I can hear over the phone have phoned me, many people have emailed me, and I have now learned to enjoy 'Zoom' meetings. They are much easier to follow than phone calls as you can see and lipread the person at the other end and read their facial expressions and body language.

I have also been in regular contact by 'Zoom' with members of my family, including nephews who live in Dubai and Australia and whom I rarely see.

Although lockdown has had its difficult moments, I can truly say that knowing Jesus and having the support of people, including the Open Ears family, praying for me and for each other makes all the difference.

Julia Chapman

My experiences of lockdown as a sight impaired person.

The last few months have been different from anything we have experienced before. More often than not it has brought out the best in people. I have been encouraged by seeing people checking in on their neighbours or contacting family or friends more regularly. I am trusting God that good will come out of the situation worldwide.



I live alone so have been in lockdown by myself. It helps me to remember that I am not the only one impacted by this as everyone is being asked to stay at home; something about 'being in it together' makes things easier. I try to concentrate on a day at a time, working through a long list of 'jobs' to complete around the house, to ensure I achieve something each day. Pre-lockdown I used online food deliveries; I was anxious about the availability of these, but so far have had no issues.

I am fortunate in that I can use the telephone and have spent much time each day chatting to friends and family. I have been in more 'remote' contact with people during lockdown than I am usually in person. Phoning others to check they are ok also has a benefit on ourselves as we feel we are helping.

I understand this is difficult if you have a hearing loss and cannot utilise the telephone. However, technology can play a very positive role in bringing people together and is also making Church more accessible to everyone, with many Churches now reaching out to

stream services online. It is great to see many people attending who may not be comfortable doing so in a physical building. I was privileged to help an elderly friend of the family use her tablet machine for the first time to attend Church services. From not being familiar with technology, she is now much more confident and even advises friends as to how easy it is for them to join online services. The Open Ears Committee had our first 'Zoom' meeting the other week. Using webcams we were able to use sign language and Susanne's brilliant typing expertise enabled the captioning facility. Once we had got used to not speaking at the same time I think it worked well.

If you have any positive experiences of using technology to interact with people (and overcome the challenge of using a standard telephone) do please let us know. It would be great to share more amongst our members via our website.

The Bible has provided me with many words of comfort during this time. One passage that has regularly come up in conversations and has helped me when I have been feeling anxious is Psalm 46. It starts by talking about troubles we face, and that God is our help and refuge in those times. Verse 10 says to 'be still and know that I am God'. This is such a great comfort to us – that despite everything going on in the world we can be assured that God is in control, so focus on him. When we change our focus away from our 'troubles' and onto him, our 'troubles' diminish in comparison.



Cynthia Leeman: My experiences of lockdown as 'an elderly lady'!

As an 'elderly lady' at 77 years of age, I am regarded as high risk were I to get the coronavirus. As a result, I am to isolate myself from others and stay indoors and only go out if necessary, for shopping and exercise!

Before lockdown, I had the symptoms of a cold, with a tickly throat, blocked sinuses etc. This stayed until sometime in March, then thankfully cleared up.

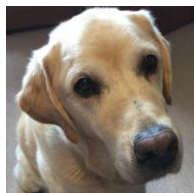
During the last 3 months I have tried to obey the rules of lockdown. I bought a new shopping trolley so that I could walk to the shops and avoid using the buses. This was good exercise, but I found walking both ways a bit too much. A member of my Church fellowship and a cousin offered to shop for me. Now that the restrictions have lifted a bit, I have been using the buses at off peak times.

My 'Quiet Times' have become longer in lockdown; being indoors more has given greater opportunity to read the Word of God, pray and also read more of the Charity News I receive. I have missed attending my Church services and looking after the children in the Church creche. However, now I enjoy watching the services online. The subtitles are a great help too! The lockdown has opened up a new way of communicating the Word of God and Gospel on You Tube, reaching many more people than the church building can accommodate! In fact, it reaches the whole world. I was encouraged when a cousin in S. Africa said that she enjoyed the link I sent on Prom Praise from my Church, so much so that she forwarded it on to two others, who also were blessed.

During the Lockdown, I have searched the scriptures more deeply, seeking to understand why I sometimes doubt and lack assurance about my eternal destiny in Christ! From reading and listening to Biblical teachers, I came to the conclusion that, despite having believed from a young age in Jesus Christ and knowing that His death for me has cancelled my sin, past experiences from my early twenties - of encountering with the occult and healing via a man communicating with a departed doctor - kept coming back, to accuse me of betraying Christ, even though I have confessed these things and repented about them in prayer to Christ many years ago! The thought came to me, have I fully surrendered myself, as I have to die to SELF fully, in order to LIVE in CHRIST?

I realise it is the work of Satan that puts these doubts and thoughts in my mind, to trouble me! God's Word teaches that Christ forgives us when we repent of our sins and remembers those past sins no more. I had to learn afresh, to give up the past and these thoughts, and fix my eyes on Jesus daily, seeking His will to do, *daily!* A verse that I have been hearing a lot lately is Galatians 5 v1 "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free, stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened by the yoke of slavery."

Goldie - My experiences of lockdown – as Tracy's Hearing Dog



I've been helping my mum Tracy to hear different sounds around her house nearly all my life, so I've got very used to her and my auntie Marilyn's little ways. Although they have a lovely house, they seem to like travelling around the country for hours at a time in a bumpy, rattly old van. I don't mind though because we end up in all sorts of

interesting places, where I get to have lots of cuddles, and vast opportunities to eat the kind of things my mum never thinks of giving me. In March, we went to one of my favourite places that we go to every year. Apart from those boring times when Mummy and Auntie spend ages making strange noises in front of everyone, this place is full of treats, including walks to the sea every morning and afternoon. I love it and this time I nearly achieved my ambition to dig to Australia.

When we arrived home on Friday afternoon, I was tired after all the giving out providing so many people with cuddle opportunities, but I was looking forward to more adventures to come. Imagine my surprise when the next morning my mum didn't even get out of bed, apart from rushing at speed into the little room and slamming the door on me when I tried to follow her. She seemed to love that room that day, and on two occasions fell down just outside in her hurry to get in. I was worried as she was acting most strangely, but even more worried that she seemed to have forgotten that I needed breakfast and a walk. In between rushing to the little room and falling down, she lay like a corpse in her bed not even moving when I shoved my wet nose into her face to try to make her remember my needs. Well amazingly, even though Mummy forgot, Auntie gave me breakfast. I was so happy as Auntie isn't so strict as Mum about my portion sizes. By now I was giving up hope that I'd ever get a walk, but suddenly the doorbell rang, and I did my usual barking-dance-and-offering-of-a-toy

routine. A great friend of mine stood there and I was so happy to see her. I couldn't help jumping up and shouting in her face about how naughty Mummy was being by lying in bed all day. I think Pauline understood because she put me on the lead straight away and off we went for a lovely walk.

That day marked the beginning of a very strange period of my life. Mummy seemed to spend days just lying around. Although she stopped rushing to the little room and falling down after 3 days, she still wasn't doing anything! And now Auntie was acting just the same. Both of them were just lying around. They weren't even cooking anything interesting for me to come and beg for a treat! It was boring!

Days went by and Mummy still wasn't taking me for walks. My beloved friend Pauline took me every other morning, but then a really strange thing happened. On the in-between days, Mummy would put my special bag full of treats in the porch instead of over her shoulder. When the doorbell rang and I started my barking-dance-and-offering-of-a-toy routine, she did something really odd. She put me in the porch and then shut the front door, leaving me alone! I was so upset! Then the porch door opened, and a girl stood there who I'd never seen before. She expected me to go happily off with her for a walk! Well if you say so it didn't take much persuasion, and she did give me a lovely walk. But that doesn't alter the fact that I was most put out and felt my mum had abandoned me to someone I didn't know. What's even worse, is when we got back home, this girl just put me in the porch together with my bag, then closed the porch door behind her and left me there! Oh yes, she did ring the bell before she left, but how would Mum know that when I wasn't inside to tell her?

And so, the days went by! Eventually Mummy did start taking me out again, but walking so slowly, and I can't understand why Mummy and Auntie have stopped going everywhere in their bumpy rattly van and standing in front of people making noises. They've been sitting around at home for ages! And seem to spend all their time staring at the noisy box. They're even talking to it now too! I'm beginning to wonder if I need to apply for carer's allowance soon.

I must admit, I do enjoy having them around more, as they used to go off to something called church and leave me for hours! So, there are lots of perks to this new way of being, but a little excitement and variety wouldn't go amiss at times.

Well, it's a dog's life for sure...

A pause to mourn

We were so sad to hear recently that faithful Open Ears member Mary Watts has gone home to be with the Lord. We will share more about Mary in the next edition but I am sure you will agree that Mary will be greatly missed, especially for her wonderful sense of fun and infectious laughter. We pray for her family and loved ones that they will know ongoing peace and God's comfort.

Puzzle Solution (Don't cheat!!)

7	2	3	5	6	8	1	4	9
5	4	9	1	2	7	3	6	8
1	6	8	9	4	3	2	5	7
8	3	5	2	9	4	7	1	6
6	1	2	7	3	5	8	9	4
4	9	7	8	1	6	5	2	3
2	8	1	6	7	9	4	3	5
3	7	6	4	5	1	9	8	2
9	5	4	3	8	2	6	7	1

A suggested guide for 30 times of prayer.

*'In the day of trouble [The Lord] will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock...*

I remain confident of this:

*I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord'.*

Psalm 27

<u>1</u>	Praise the Lord. (Read Psalm 111)
<u>2</u>	Pray for church leaders as they seek the way back to communal worship as Covid-19 restrictions are eased.
<u>3</u>	Pray for the Open Ears Committee as they look to God for guidance for future planning. (1 Thessalonians 5:2)
<u>4</u>	Pray for hospital and hospice chaplains as they give succour to those facing illness and end of life.
<u>5</u>	Pray for those trapped by fear that they may come to know freedom in Christ. (Galatians 5:1)
<u>6</u>	Pray for school teachers who have worked hard to maintain schooling for children throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Pray for a relaxing and refreshing break over the summer.
<u>7</u>	Pray for those who have lost jobs and for all unemployed people.
<u>8</u>	Pray for the UK and global economy, that all nations will work for justice and equality and that the rich will care for the poor.
<u>9</u>	Pray for those countries in the world where there is war, hatred and unrest and especially where this is exacerbated by Covid-19
<u>10</u>	Pray for missionaries and evangelists sharing the Gospel.
<u>11</u>	Pray for members of your family, those who love the Lord and those who do not yet know Jesus as their Saviour and Friend.
<u>12</u>	Pray for the NHS and thank God for our healthcare.
<u>13</u>	Pray for all who keep our public places clean; road sweepers; dustbin collectors; hospital cleaners; council workers etc
<u>14</u>	Take time to meditate on Jesus' death. Thank Him for what He means to you today.
<u>15</u>	Pray for your local shops and businesses. Pray for opportunities to speak God's love into the lives of your community.
<u>16</u>	Pray for those working in Food Banks, and those who receive the food parcels.
<u>17</u>	Give God thanks and pray for those who will be providing meals for children over the school holidays.
<u>18</u>	Pray for Scripture Union and other organisations running virtual Bible holiday clubs.
<u>19</u>	Pray those who are homeless and for charities seeking to help them. Pray that accommodation will be made available, especially for those recently made homeless through loss of work.

<u>20</u>	Pray for disabled Christians who are afraid that they will be forgotten by the churches as 'normal' life resumes.
<u>21</u>	Pray for yourself, for those things that are particularly troubling you, and know that the Lord hears and cares. (Psalm 17:6)
<u>22</u>	Pray for those countries where Covid-19 is increasing, that their health systems and personnel will not be overwhelmed.
<u>23</u>	Pray that, as summer is here, Britons will be aware of the threat of the virus and will adhere to the guidelines to minimise its spread.
<u>24</u>	Pray for those you know who are alone. Ask God to help you share his love - through a 'phone call, letter, video chat or visit.
<u>25</u>	Thank God for those who maintain and care for our green spaces.
<u>26</u>	Thank God for his faithfulness and sustaining grace. (Isaiah 46:3-13)
<u>27</u>	Pray for those young people who were unable to take exams and are now anxious about their next place of study.
<u>28</u>	Praise God that so many people have been responding to online church services, and thank him for those dedicated people who enable the services to run.
<u>29</u>	Pray for the work of Open Ears, that it may grow to meet the needs of many more people.
<u>30</u>	Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6



Giggle Days and Shoes That Fit by Emily Owen



Most days since lockdown, my mum (Anthea, who many of you know), my nephew, my niece and I have been meeting on Zoom for an hour or two, to learn sign language.

Ostensibly, Mum and I are the 'teachers' but, as is often the case, the children have a lot to teach us.

We started, back in March, by learning the alphabet, numbers and colours. Caleb (6) picked these up particularly well, even recording a video to send to his teacher. Elianne (4) struggled more. She picked up the colours quickly but found letters tricky (she is only 4!). She was frustrated and worried that she could not do it. In fact, before long, she had decided to give sign language a miss. For a few weeks, the four at sign language sessions became three. Elianne was there in the background. Not incredibly involved, but she was there.

Elianne found things difficult. Maybe some of us are finding things difficult. Lockdown can be tough and, even as it eases – in most places but not, at the time of writing, in Leicester, where I live – those difficulties do not magically disappear. We still must maintain distance and, I don't know about you, but I find that two metres is a bit further than optimum lipreading distance. I am also pretty sure that I'm not the only one who finds it difficult (impossible!) to lipread someone wearing a face mask. Things are difficult, things are changing, but God is the same. He never changes. Just as Elianne stayed close by, let's make sure we stay close to God. Being 'still, and knowing that He is God' (Psalm 46:10). Aware that He is with us. As we do, as we spend time in His Presence, just being, we will see Him more and more.

Three became four again as Elianne re-joined the group. I don't know why she decided to re-join but, one day, there she was on the screen alongside her brother, and has been each day since. And Mum, Caleb and I welcomed her back. Although we had enjoyed being three, there had been someone missing.

*All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.
(1 Corinthians 12:27)*

One day, Elianne came to sign language feeling sad, because her favourite pair of shoes didn't fit her anymore. Her feet had grown. So we

talked about that for a bit, and other things too, and at the end of that day's session, Elianne said, "Today has been Giggle Day, because we've had so much fun!"

She had started off sad and, by talking about it, by sharing what was upsetting her, she'd begun to feel better.

As we share our worries, our sad times, our hearts, with God, our days will not necessarily become Giggle Days, but they will be better.

*My son, give me your heart and let your eyes delight in my ways
(Proverbs 23:26)*

The very first thing we learned in sign language, even before the alphabet, was 'Peace Be With You.' Before lockdown, but not allowed to shake hands, I taught people at church to share the peace in sign language, and so 'passed the peace' on to the children, too.

Times were and are changing, and we needed new ways of sharing – and perhaps knowing – peace.

*For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News
(Ephesians 6:15)*

Unlike Elianne's shoes, our 'shoes of peace' never stop fitting. Whatever our situation, those shoes will fit. But maybe we sometimes forget to put them on?

Like many, the children were – and are – unsettled by Lockdown. They don't like saying goodbye at the end of our sessions. They don't like the fact that we have to go.

Before I became deaf, I remember hearing a song from the musical *Annie*, called 'Tomorrow'. So at the end of one of our sessions, I sang – and signed - to the children; 'Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love you, tomorrow, you're only a day away.' That has now become tradition at the end of our sessions, as we sing/sign it together, to reinforce the fact that we'll see each other again. We'll be back.

Tomorrow may be only a day away, but we don't have to wait even that long to meet with God. We don't need to wait at all.

Caleb reminded us of this when he asked to learn Psalm 46:1 in sign language:

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
(Psalm 46:1)*

Ever-present God.

Not 'Bye. See you tomorrow' God.

Ever-present God.

With us right now God.

'Be still, and know' God.



Mike and Fiona's News from Nepal June-July 2020

Psalm 46:10 "Be still and know that I am God."

Dear friends and family,
We hope you have all stayed well and are coping with the lockdown and isolation over these past 4 months. It is

good to be in touch with many of you and thank you for your prayers and for many generous gifts to Ear Aid Nepal and INF.

We are long overdue for sending our newsletter and would like to bring you up to date with what is happening both here and in Nepal.

Mike and I came home together in late February, as planned, to spend some time with the family and especially our mothers.

By early March there were signs of the Corona virus spreading across Europe but nothing too alarming at that stage. Mike therefore returned to Nepal while Fiona stayed in the UK to spend more time with her mother.

However, two weeks later the situation changed. Mike started to feel very uneasy about being away from the family in case they became unwell or indeed if he became sick on his own. With advice from the INF leadership he decided to return to UK and after a lot of heart searching and time spent trying to arrange travel, managed to get one of the last (business class!) scheduled flights out of Nepal on 22nd March.

Since leaving Nepal things have moved on at Green Pastures hospital. The team there rapidly turned the Ear Centre into an isolation area, started screening anyone who came to the gate, stopped all routine work and began training staff.



The government instituted a lockdown (renewed many times since March), people were only allowed out for local food shopping and most road and public transport ceased. All of this led to a severe financial loss for the hospital. All patients other than the poorest pay for or make a significant contribution towards their care. Only in this way can we maintain a long-term, financially sustainable service. There were considerable concerns about our ability to retain and pay staff. Virus cases were actually very few in Nepal and virtually none in Pokhara, so some local patients started to find their way back to the hospital and some surgery was done.

ENT is considered a high-risk specialty for COVID because all the work is with the respiratory tract. There is limited scientific information, but ear surgery, especially the use of a drill for the mastoid bone is thought to be an especially high risk. So, for a while surgery stopped again, but as local virus cases were so few, work resumed in a small way. People with hearing problems often rely on lip reading, so the Speech therapy team developed face masks with see-through panels.



Then we started to hear that many Nepali migrant workers in India were finding their way back into Nepal despite the closed borders. As we write, this has led to increasing virus cases in the country, we are all worried that this many mean the hospital has to close down again for routine work and that the Ear Centre may be needed as an isolation unit. This would of course be a valuable service, but that leaves the financial strain. We have been incredibly grateful for gifts we have received during this time, these and existing donor agreements will enable us to cover necessary staff costs at least for a few more months. INF staff usually have a one-year rolling contract, this is going to be renewed, for six months initially this time, which is a great relief to many. After training so many it would also be huge loss if we had not been able to keep them on the team.

Despite being away from Nepal, Mike has kept busy coordinating links with two important international research trials for developing hearing aids for Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). He has also joined an international committee of advocacy for hearing health, with an organization called the Coalition for Global Hearing Health (CGHH). He has also been editing some of his surgical videos, which

hopefully can be put on the educational pages of the Ear Aid Nepal website in due course.

He is in regular touch with the hospital team and hopes to return to Nepal once the lockdown and travel re-open safely. Aside from all this he is building a radio-controlled model yacht, and very much hopes to do some real sailing before the summer ends!

We have also much enjoyed zoom church meetings with our local fellowship in Bodenham, while keeping in touch with friends and doing what we can to help our church in Naya Gaun. Many church members and their neighbours there usually survive on daily wages, the church has worked hard to help meet those needs and to maintain fellowship.

This has been a valuable time to rest, take stock, catch up and to pray.

We have found comfort in the verses of Psalm 91, such as:

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

With love and God Bless,

Mike and Fiona Smith

www.inf.org www.earaidnepal.org

Renewing or Recycling?



The Committee of Open Ears, as you know, meets regularly over the year. Along with many others, we have moved these meetings to take place on Zoom – thank God for modern technology!

Here is a resume of the opening devotion from our latest meeting. We hope that it will encourage you to share with us in the things

the Lord has been saying to us as your committee.

Please do let us know your thoughts and responses, and any further words you may feel the Lord is giving you to help us move this ministry forward to His glory and to the benefit of all our members.

“Recently I have been thinking about the difference between renewal and recycling. This arose from a conversation I had over Zoom with my grandson, who is 6. I said something about recycling and he said, “No, that is renewable.”

That got me thinking... what's the difference? I looked up what renewing is and discovered that it is: restoring to its original purpose or better. How does that affect us spiritually, and, more particularly, as the Committee of Open Ears?

It seems to me that God is in the business of renewing, not recycling! I felt excited in our last meeting when Kevin, our new ‘media man’ was sharing his ideas, and it felt to me as though God said, ‘I will renew, refresh, re-establish this ministry.’

That led me to think about how we read in Scripture that the Lord makes the desert flourish.

Particularly over this time of Covid, people have become more aware of the need to reach out to others and we as Christians have realised there are so many people who feel shut away; many of them are people with hearing loss.

I felt the Lord saying, he wants to make streams flow from those hard places; that he's going to use Open Ears as a conduit for that, bringing renewal, refreshment and fruitfulness where there is currently dryness and a sense of despair. I was so excited by that, so moved and humbled that he's called us to be part of this.

Psalm 107 says;

‘He turned rivers into a desert... he turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs; there he brought the hungry to live, and they found a city where they could settle. They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a harvest; he blessed them and their numbers increased.... he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the Lord's great love.’

I felt him saying to us, we in Open Ears are to be family for those people who feel forgotten, abandoned - we are here to bring renewal, refreshment from the Lord.

Heavenly Father, thank you that you are a God of renewal.

Thank you that you long to pour out refreshment - life in all its fullness.

Thank you that you've called us into this ministry to be a channel of your renewing, life giving hope.

Help us now and always to hear the voice of your Spirit, that we may do the work of your Kingdom here on Earth in Jesus' name, Amen.”

Anthea Owen

In Fond Remembrance Tony Clifford



As well as Mary Watts (on the left in this photo) we have also been saddened to hear of the passing of long-standing OE member Tony Clifford (on the far right). Here are some thoughts from Cynthia Leeman to remind us of Tony who will be greatly missed, especially at our residential events.

Tony was a twin and had another brother or two, who were married and one living abroad. He was the weaker twin being hard of hearing and suffered from epileptic fits which affected him badly. As far as I remember he was a clerk and possibly worked as a civil servant.

Tony used to come down to London (Waterloo) to attend Hard of Hearing Christian Fellowship meetings when we met at the Christian Alliance, near Waterloo Station in the 1980s. (It was here that Janet Andrews started coming to HHCF). He attended a number of conferences over the years.

It was probably in the early 80s, that he did a trip to visit South Africa, where one of his brothers was and spent a day with my parents in Cape Town. They took him to St. James Church and for a drive along the Mountain. Tony also had a very unfortunate experience while staying in the city, in that he was mugged and robbed near the hotel he was staying, and his spectacles was damaged! Not a nice experience!

I found him very cheerful company despite all his ailments. He soldiered on bravely. **Cynthia**

I too found Tony a real 'uplifter'. He loved to chat and to laugh and especially to worship, always asking for just one more song that we can clap along to during the worship sessions at the residential breaks. He was caring of others and had a passion to pray for those in need. A lovely man of God. **Tracy**

New addition to Open Ears

We are delighted to welcome Marketing expert Kevin Campbell to Open Ears. Kevin will be working with us 2 days a month to help us develop our social media and internet platforms and connect with similar organisations.

Open Ears Committee

Back row – Anthea; Susanne, Dominic, Nadine, Victor, Mary. Front row – Marilyn, Tracy; Goldie; Marilyn (Associate Committee); Chris; Julia



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Of the Trustees, Marilyn Kilsby is Chairperson; Christine Pitts Is Administrator and Julia Chapman is Treasurer

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