

## EDITORIAL

Welcome back to our second edition of In the Loop. I have received a number of very positive comments about our first edition, so hopefully you will all enjoy this one too – it is packed with some great stories of things that have been going on in DDS, there is a pen portrait of DDS Chairperson, David Blackwell, and some really interesting info on Palantype.

Don't forget, we would love to feature your stories in future editions. Just contact the office (details below).

On behalf of DDS may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a happy and healthy New Year.

**Julie Underwood**, Editor

## KEEPING WARM THIS WINTER

Did you know that you could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2019 to 2020 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between September and March. You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity. Contact your supplier to find out. The discount will not affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment Eligibility.

There are 2 ways to qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme: you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension

Credit - known as the 'core group', or you're on a low income and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme - known as the 'broader group'. How you apply for the Warm Home Discount Scheme depends on how you qualify for the discount.

You can go to the Government's website:

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/print>

to find out more about the scheme, or if you're unsure, Pam Thirlaway and other hearing members of the team are more than willing to make the call on your behalf.

## THE FIRST 'SANDRA COTTRELL DAY'

We held the first Sandra's Day at Bowburn Community Centre on Friday 18th October.



Sandra Cottrell's portrait by Julie Underwood

The day was a chance for those who remembered Sandra to get together to remember this wonderful woman and to celebrate what she meant to DDS. During the day an amazing portrait of Sandra was unveiled, the portrait will be given pride of place in our group room.

The day was just as Sandra would have wanted it, very informal, several of Sandra's friends shared very moving tributes as to what Sandra had meant to them. We even managed to start 5 minutes late which Sandra would have thought highly amusing, one of things that Sandra was renowned for was never being on time!

In addition to friends sharing their memories of Sandra, people were able to enjoy a buffet lunch, try new age curling and sample holistic therapies from reflexology to reiki. Sandra was passionate about reflexology, and it was a really important theme of the day that we were able to pass on her passion for alternative therapies.

A raffle and a tombola were held on the day and we raised £231.98 which will be used to fund further events such as this.

Watch this space for details of next year's event!

**Jane Dennison**,  
DDS Administrator

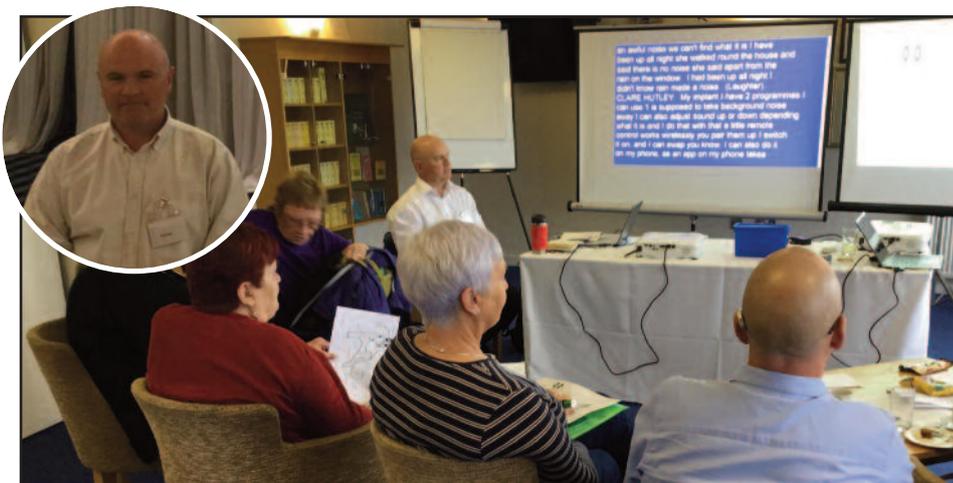
# THE FACTS ABOUT PALANTYPE

Palantype, is what is known as 'speech to text reporting' (STTR), which provides communication support to people with hearing loss. The reporter types every word that's spoken in a meeting or conference, and the text appears on a laptop screen, large screen or other monitors for people with hearing loss to read. There are over seven million people in the UK with some degree of hearing loss, from mild to profound. The vast majority of this seven million cannot use British Sign Language but need access to communication in written English. The STTR profession was developed as a response to that.

STTR reporters manage to keep up with the speed of spoken English by using systems called Palantype® or Stenograph®. These systems have an electronic shorthand keyboard, which lets the STTR reporter type words phonetically (how they sound

rather than how they are spelt). A computer software program immediately converts the text back into English, before it's shown on the screen. The resulting text is usually spelt about 95% correctly with the remaining words spelt roughly how they sound. Typing at something over 200 words per minute, I think the reporters can be forgiven for sometimes making little mistakes!

The reporter, or Palantypist, that many DDS members will be familiar with, is Franny Barrett. Franny hails from Liverpool, and like many of his colleagues, started his career as a court reporter where very similar types of equipment are used. He travels widely around the country and is a well sought-after reporter, we are very pleased that he continues to support DDS's events and functions.



Franny Barrett (inset) and presenting Palantype

## MEETING RAYMOND ANTROBUS



In an event arranged through East Durham Creates, this year's Durham Book Festival Laureate, poet Raymond Antrobus came to visit DDS. Raymond recently published his first full-length collection, *The Perseverance*, which is described as a book of loss, where elegies for the poet's father sit alongside meditations on the D/deaf experience.

Raymond has been deaf since childhood and was extremely interested to meet groups of people who had a hearing loss. In addition Raymond was interested in obtaining the perspective of ex-mineworkers as he believed obtaining knowledge about their experiences could be used to shape future work. He was also interested in how communities in County Durham had changed with the closing of the coal mines.

Raymond met with several of our members including some ex-mineworkers on the 11th October. Palantype was used to facilitate communication during this event and this also enabled Raymond to obtain a verbatim



transcript of the experiences shared by DDS members.

Those present were also able to hear Raymond read a moving example of his wonderful poetry entitled "Echo". This was inspired by a visit to Gaudi's Sagrada Família cathedral in Barcelona, as viewed from a deaf person's perspective. Raymond described how poetry could be used to express the feelings of deafness and how writing and sharing literature could be seen as a therapeutic aid.

# AROUND YOUR AREA



## FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Therese Guy, a DDS volunteer who runs the Inner Ear Balance Support Group in Bishop Auckland, sent us this photo of herself on the Wynch Bridge at Low Force in Teesdale. She challenged herself to walk across this 'wibbly wobbly' bridge as part of supporting the Meniere's Society's Balance Awareness Week.

Well done Therese.

## INSPIRATIONAL CRAFTING

Ninety year-old Veronica O'Reilly, who is registered blind as well as being deaf, is pictured here with her bench cushion that she made at Coxhoe Craft Group. It is truly remarkable what she has created given her sight impairment.



Veronica likes to work with 100% pure new wools, giving her work a timeless classic quality.

Her family are thrilled with the finished pieces, giving them pride of place in their home!

I would be thrilled to have them in my home too Veronica.

## POPPY POWER

DDS's craft group in Coxhoe have been busy making poppies for Remembrance Day. These were sold in the Co-op Store in Coxhoe, and donations to the Royal British Legion from the sale of these reached £290.47 this year. A great achievement, and one to be very proud of, I'm sure you'll agree.



## A RIGHT ROYAL SUCCESS

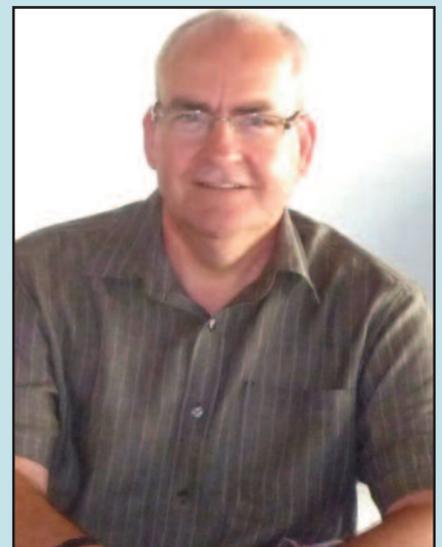
I am sure that most members will have come across really bad customer services when dealing with different organisations on the telephone – quiet and unclear speech, accents which make it almost impossible to understand what is being said, etc, etc. However, here is a story with a difference.

Recently I had reason to contact my pension company, Royal London. Hoping for understanding, but expecting the worst, I explained to the chap on the other end of the telephone that I had hearing problems and may have to ask him to repeat himself. At which point he said "Ok, can I stop you there. I want to make sure that you can hear me clearly and understand what I am saying. Please do not hesitate to ask me to repeat myself or explain things in a different way". In fact, during the conversation he frequently asked if I could hear

him properly and was everything ok. What a pleasant surprise! Needless to say, the telephone call went very well indeed, and I was over the moon with the service I received.

Let's hope that many more organisations do the same.

### *Sam Underwood*



*Sam Underwood*

# WHO'S WHO AT DDS: DAVID BLACKWELL

We thought you might like to know a bit more about the people who help to make DDS the success that it is, so we plan to give you a 'pen portrait' of someone in each addition where possible. To start this off, David Blackwell, Chairperson of the DDS Management Board, told us a few things about himself that not many people know!

David Blackwell was elected as Chair of the Management Board of Durham Deafened Support in June 2016. He was born in Seaham and has lived there all of his life. David retired in 2015 after working in the field of Education for forty four years. He started his working life as a secondary school teacher and then as a lecturer in a Further Education College. For the second half of his career, David worked at Sunderland University, starting as a lecturer, where he carried out teaching and research. He later



progressed to Senior Management and became Dean of Student Experience. On retirement David decided to devote some of his time to charity volunteering.

David's wife, Margaret, experienced sudden hearing loss having previously suffered from Tinnitus and Vertigo. She has now been diagnosed with Meniere's disease. Margaret received much help and support from DDS and

attended various groups. This helped Margaret to adjust to her hearing loss and also enabled family members to help her. David views his role as an opportunity to repay DDS by making a contribution to improving the quality of life for individuals with acquired hearing loss.

David is also a Board member of East Durham Area Action Partnership and plays an active role in one of the current priorities of maintaining the social fabric of communities in the East Durham area. He also carries out some volunteering work at Eastlea Community Centre in Seaham. In his spare time David likes sport and is a keen follower of Sunderland AFC. He has a passion for music and plays in HWB, a sixties/seventies rock band, which performs at various venues within the North East mostly for charity events.

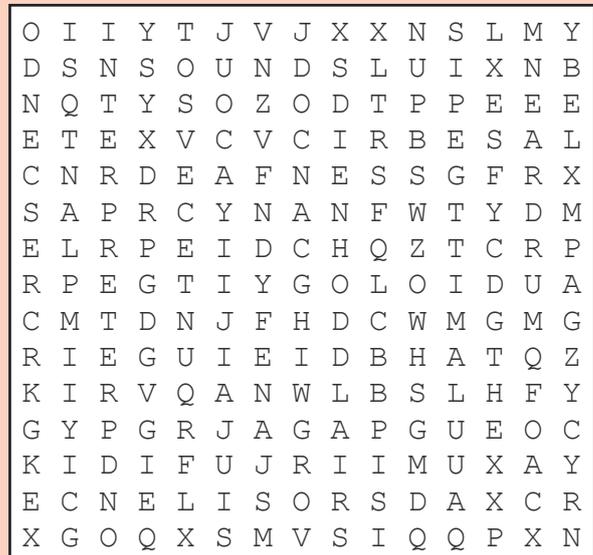
## I NEED THE LOO – NOW!

Sometimes you really can't wait, and trying to find a loo in a strange place can be daunting, especially if your deafness makes it difficult to ask people for directions. The Bladder and Bowel Community have produced a small card to help in just such situations – Jane Atkinson tells me it really works, as has proved to be most useful. If you would like a card, you can order one for free from the Bladder and Bowel Community's website:

[www.bladderandbowel.org](http://www.bladderandbowel.org).



## HEAR TODAY! WORDSEARCH



WORDS TO FIND:

AID	COCHLEAR	EARDRUM	INTERPRETER	SILENCE
AMPLIFIER	CRESCENDO	HEARING	LIPREADING	SOUNDS
AUDIOLOGY	DEAFNESS	IMPLANT	SIGNING	TINNITUS

**Contact information: Durham Deafened Support,**  
Horden Social Welfare Centre, Seventh Street,  
Horden, Peterlee Durham SR8 4LX  
**Tel: 0191 5183358 Email: [admin@ddsupport.org.uk](mailto:admin@ddsupport.org.uk)**



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