

# Annual Report 2008



## A message from the Chair

*Signs of God's* twelfth year was another journey full of activities, consultations, training and quality provision of skilled BSL interpreters and signers.

Please do read the Report of the Activities of *Signs of God* during 2008, in this Annual Report, to note especially the parts where *Signs of God's* work has ripple effects in a two-pronged approach: to both supporting and working with Deaf People, and training people's BSL skills in Christian settings.

*Signs of God* reached newer heights of professionalism and professional practice within a specific field, still unique in the United Kingdom. The administrator continues to receive high numbers of enquiries for our services and demand is growing.

The Trustees maintained excellent communications throughout the year proof of our utilised common goal within *Signs of God's objectives*. The standard of British Sign Language skills amongst our members and participants continues to rise, with some achieving interpreter level and others simply happy to improve their BSL at any level. Those achievements both motivated and inspired an amazing variety of people to sign with quality, qualification-wise and community-language-wise, giving Deaf people more opportunities to access Christian events. The events that *Signs of God* covered for Deaf people during that year continued to be wide-ranging, and included both large and small events.

One new development I was particularly honoured to support and participate in, was the successful Team Leader training. It was an eye-opener for us Deaf people (Bob and Gabi McFarland, the venue hosts, and myself) to 'hear' the interpreters' 'voice' on that day. Being a team leader in BSL interpreting in Christian settings is an incredible learning curve for every person, and we look forward to more Team Leader training days.

Christian interpreters have been being encouraged by *Signs of God* to become trainers within the team, in workshops and the Summer School, effectively continuing the objectives of *Signs of God* in the years to come. We have sought new faces for the BSL teaching team, and the search continues as the demand for *Signs of God's* work increases.

More of the Deaf Christian Community had the opportunity to see *Signs of God* in action at Spring Harvest 2008, signing access in many sessions and events, alongside doing voice-over for the BSL Stream. Previously, small groups of Deaf participants saw how we worked at other Christian events, but Spring Harvest (at Minehead) was the first time a significant number of Deaf people saw *Signs of God* in action. This opened up greater 'visual' awareness of *Signs of God* with Christian organisations serving Deaf people and we were pleased when their representatives gave us input at the first ever successful information-sharing day at our Summer School.

*Signs of God's* e-group continued to be a valuable forum between Deaf people, BSL students, communication support trainees and interpreters. It is now becoming a sounding board for quality, support and request for signing access in every corner of the UK.

We are mindful of our roles in the Kingdom of God, supporting and reaching out to Deaf people in mainstream Christian events, at the same time more and more Christian organisers have learnt the way BSL access needed to be planned and booked in advance, giving us time to recruit good quality volunteers for the teams.

We look forward to more developments, quality and reaching high in the year ahead.

**Penny Beschizza - Chair**

## Administrative Information

Charity Number: 1113882

### The Objects of *Signs of God*

To advance the use of British Sign Language in Christian settings

To promote and enable full participation in the Christian faith of people who use British Sign Language

### Trustees

Penny Beschizza	Chair
Trudy Field	Secretary
Rachel Smith	Treasurer
Sarah Haynes	

### Registered Office:

1 Saxon Way, Bradley Stoke, Bristol BS32 9AR

tel/fax/minicom 01454 202483

sms administrator: 07715 707135

email: [info@signsofgod.org.uk](mailto:info@signsofgod.org.uk)

Website: [www.signsofgod.org.uk](http://www.signsofgod.org.uk)

Administrator: Gill Behenna

Bank: HSBC 46 Cardiff Road, Llandaff, Cardiff CF5 2DT

Independent Examiner: Melva J Corcoran BA MBA FCA CTA

Cunningham Wishart business advisers and chartered accountants

"Pren Ceirios", 66 Pwllmelin Road, Cardiff CF5 2NH

### Members

Members will be individuals who actively contribute to the objects of the Charity by

1. Teaching
2. Interpreting
3. Consultation
4. Administration
5. Developing training

### Members at 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009

Rosie Addis – Edinburgh

Gill Behenna – Bristol

Penny Beschizza – London

Derek Boardman – Weston-Super-Mare

Barrie Curtis – Camborne

Beccy Field – Leeds

Jonathan Field – Leeds

Trudy Field – Scunthorpe

Ali Fuller – London

Sarah Gallagher – London

Debbie Harvey – Camborne

Sarah Haynes – Bristol

Ros Hunt – Manchester

Tj Jobson – London

Jo Lindley – Hull

Wayne McMillan - Peterborough

Esther Maycock – Ashted

Catherine Moxon – Blackburn

Roma Parrick – Oakham

Janice Silo – Derby

Anna Smith – Derby

Mark Smith – Derby

Rachel Smith – Cardiff

## Report of the Activities of *Signs of God* in 2008

### Charity Development

At our Annual General Meeting in June 2008 we were pleased to welcome Roma Parrick as a new member. Roma is a free lance interpreter living in Rutland.

One member resigned in 2008 – Patricia Hodgson. This was due to work commitments.

Three Trustees were re-elected at the AGM to serve for three years: Penny Beschizza, Rachel Smith and Trudy Field.

The trustees have met formally three times since the last AGM and have also kept in regular contact via email.

At the AGM in June 2008 Members agreed that the Reserves Policy should be left unchanged for 2008/09 and a proposal for a flexible policy should be brought to the AGM in 2009.

During the year the Trustees have dealt with one complaint concerning someone listed on the Christian Interpreters' Network. This alerted them to the fact that the complaints' procedure needed to be revised in order to cover complaints against individuals as well as the organisation. This work has been completed.

### Workshops

Day workshops were held as follows:

May 2008	London
	Yorkshire
	West Bromwich
June 2008	Bristol
September 2008	Farnborough
November 2008	Cardiff
	Brentwood
February 2009	Stoke
	Coventry

*Signs of God* is always open to invitations to run workshops.

### Summer School

2008 saw the sixth Summer School held, once again, at King's Park in Northampton. 72 students gathered for a week of intensive training in BSL and interpreting/translating skills.

This was the largest Summer School yet and also the most challenging in terms of content with a wide variety of speakers and activities. It was also the first time that a significant number of Deaf Participants attended. Included in the week was a day when representatives from Deaf Christian organisations came and shared information about their work. This also enabled them to learn something of the work of *Signs of God*.

### The Church Colleges' Certificate in Ministry

10 students have enrolled on this course based at the University of Chester and delivered in British Sign Language by *Signs of God*. They will complete their course in July 2009. The course was reviewed by the university and judged successful. Some suggestions were made for improvement including working with the university to develop better on-line communication for the Deaf students and planning to run the course every two years instead of every year.

### Christian Interpreters' Network

*Signs of God* continued to provide good quality interpreting teams to a wide range of Christian holidays and conferences thus enabling access for Deaf participants.

In 2008 Spring Harvest included a BSL stream with three Deaf speakers. *Signs of God* provided a team of 8 interpreters to this event as well as interpreting teams to the other Spring Harvest weeks.

## **Team Leader training**

To enable our teams to work well together we introduced a new training event in January aimed at interpreters who had met the National Standards in interpreting and so could be team leaders. This training was delivered by Trudy Field and Sarah Haynes, supported by Penny Beschizza and was designed to equip the team leaders to manage their teams well.

## **Support and information**

Our administrator deals with an average of a hundred email enquiries a month. These are usually requests for interpreters and requests for our publications and information. The e-group is well used for advice and information on a wide variety of subjects.

We have a small, but committed, core of people who support us in regular financial giving. From time to time we also receive one-off gifts and donations. We are extremely grateful to everyone who supports the organisation in any way.

We have over 1350 supporters on our mailing list. About half of these people receive information via email which reduces our postage costs.

In November *Signs of God* exhibited at a National Festival Day for Deaf Christians. This raised public awareness of the organisation and enabled people's enquiries to be answered.

## **Summary of achievements**

*Signs of God* has worked towards enhanced access for Deaf people to various churches and Christian events as 288 people attended one-day workshops to develop their BSL/presenting/interpreting skills and confidence.

72 people improved their skills at the Summer School. Of these 15 acted as intern interpreters, working under supervision.

Christian events interpreted by *Signs of God* teams enabled Deaf people to attend and access events of their choosing. A total of 83 interpreting places were filled at these events.

Team Leader training was given to enable interpreting teams at Christian events to work well together under a confident and trained leader.

Skilled Christian interpreters have enabled and supported Deaf presenters and speakers to contribute to major Christian events, raising the level of Deaf awareness at the events and helping to promote a positive view of deafness.

More user-friendly information has been made available to organisers of Christian events, Deaf people and the general public, enabling Deaf people's access to a variety of events.

10 Deaf students enrolled for the Church Colleges Certificate in Ministry.

Information and updates on the work of *Signs of God* was made available to over 1300 regular contacts and approximately 1200 informal contacts.

## **Into the future...**

In August 2010 we will be returning to King's park, Northampton for our seventh Summer School.

Development and launch of a new bi-lingual website promoting the work of *Signs of God*.

We hope to be delivering the Chester Course to a new group of students starting in November 2010.

## **Finally**

We give thanks to God for everything begun, achieved, and continued in His name.

<b>Signs of God</b>	<b>Notes to the Accounts</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>
<b>Workshops</b>				
	Leicester	422.40	458.63	-36.23
	Leeds	385.00	231.35	153.65
	West Bromwich	226.70	186.70	40.00
	London	358.00	300.90	57.10
	Bristol	300.00	157.36	142.64
	Farnborough	387.23	352.13	35.10
	Cardiff	170.00	115.91	54.09
	Brentwood	382.80	270.60	112.20
	Stoke		88.00	-88.00
		<b>2,632.13</b>	<b>2,161.58</b>	<b>470.55</b>
<b>Training</b>				
	Summer School	22,839.50	27,956.81	-5,117.31
	CCCM	2,000.00	840.31	1,159.69
		<b>24,839.50</b>	<b>28,797.12</b>	<b>-3,957.62</b>
<b>Consultation and Representation</b>				
	Team Leaders Workshop		89.81	
	Spring Harvest		32.50	
	Go Sign Stall		10.00	
			<b>132.31</b>	
<b>Donations</b>				
	Standing orders	2,905.00		
	One off donations	1,249.10		
		<b>4,154.10</b>		
<b>Fundraising - Conference bags</b>				
		244.00		
<b>Net interest Current</b>				
		10.60		
<b>Net Interest BMM</b>				
		96.60		
<b>Gift Aid</b>				
		802.83		
<b>Stationery, printing, computer supplies</b>				
	Stationery		713.16	
	Photocopying		54.38	
			<b>767.54</b>	
<b>Equipment</b>				
	Data Projector		434.71	
	Leisure Battery		89.99	
	Carpet		140.00	
	Tent		272.00	
			<b>936.70</b>	
<b>Telephone &amp; internet</b>				
	Web hosting		150.63	
<b>Admin Support - Travel</b>				
			56.50	
<b>Insurance</b>				
			453.60	
<b>AGM and Trustees meetings</b>				
			617.98	
<b>Bank Charges - cancelled cheques</b>				
			20.00	
	<b>Total for period : 04/03/07-03/03/08</b>	<b>32,779.76</b>	<b>34,093.96</b>	<b>-1,314.20</b>
<b>Restricted Funds - Tent</b>				
		228.00	228.00	

Signs of God  
Accounts for the period 04/03/08 to 03/03/09  
charity number 1113882

<b>2007/08</b>		<b>2008/09</b>
10,115.04	Balance bf Current account	14,388.40
	Balance bf BMM account	4,022.79
	<b>Incoming Resources</b>	
18,822.15	Workshops & Training	27,471.63
254.50	Fundraising	244.00
3,372.40	Donations	4,154.10
3.85	Interest	107.20
1,258.48	Gift Aid	802.83
260.00	Consultation and Representation	- 0
<b>23,971.38</b>	<b>Total Income from 04/03/08</b>	<b>32,779.76</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>	
12,962.33	Workshops & Training	30,958.70
134.00	Consultation and Representation	132.31
406.94	Stationery, printing, computer supplies	767.54
70.50	Telephone & internet	
97.20	Admin Support	56.50
	AGM and Trustees meetings	617.98
30.00	Gifts	- 0
453.60	Insurance	453.60
	Website	150.63
	Bank Charges	20.00
	<b>Assets</b>	
702.65	Equipment	936.70
<b>15,698.02</b>	<b>Total Expenditure from 04/03/08</b>	<b>34,093.96</b>
<b>8,273.36</b>	<b>Balance during period</b>	<b>-1,314.20</b>
	<b>Restricted Funds - Tent</b>	
	Income	228.00
	Expenditure	228.00
		<b>- 0</b>
4,000.00	Money transferred to BMM account	4,600.00
<b>14,388.40</b>	<b>Total Current account</b>	<b>7,574.77</b>
<b>4,022.79</b>	<b>Total BMM account</b>	<b>9,522.22</b>
18,411.19		17,096.99