

ABSLTA Chair's report – 25th April 2015

Hello Members,

I would like to say thank you all for joining us and showing your support for ABSLTA.

In 1989 **Liz Scott-Gibson** suggested the need to set up an organisation specifically aimed at BSL teachers, because she knew and understood exactly how we as all felt as BSL teachers, isolated with no real opportunity to collaborate as a professional community, share experiences and uphold good practice. 25 years later, we are still going strong!

Last November, we celebrated our 25th anniversary to mark the occasion, held at St John Deaf Club in Green Lanes. This was a very successful event in acknowledging the roles of previous ABSLTA committee members from the past right up to the present day; professional networking and sharing good practice. We know that there is a need to keep abreast with professional development, raising the standards of language teaching and the need to become flexible with our professional teaching skills in a challenging educational environment in the UK.

Together, we strive to provide a wide range of information, resources and advice for those involved or interested in teaching, assessing and verifying British Sign Language qualifications.

We are very proud that we replaced 'Tutors' with 'Teachers' at the last AGM on Saturday 5th April 2014 which we believe looks more professional. Now we are BSL Teachers!

As members of the executive committee, we strongly believe in learning, developing, sharing, and understanding from old and new combined experiences, in order to build our ideals of a strong, united and supportive team, to empower, encourage and promote continued professional development (CPD), support and mentor each other via networking opportunities, a valuable tool to keep abreast and up to date with Ofqual and Awarding bodies curriculum changes.

Re: **Joanne Thomson**

It is with sadness that we are losing a very well respected and valuable long serving committee member, Joanne Thomson, as she bid to spend more quality time with her family. Joanne first joined the committee in 2000. From 2003-2004 Joanne became membership secretary.



From 2004-2005 Joanne became the Editor of ABSLTA newsletters (see the photo above) which were wonderful and inspired us with relevant resource materials for our level 1 and 2 BSL teaching: Agony Aunt Melinda Napier, information about 'Who are we?' 'What are the aims?' 'Who is ABSLT for?' 'How can ABSLT help you?' 'How is ABSLT funded?' Some interviews with BSL Teachers and Assessors, letters and articles etc. All done without the internet!

Joanne has diverse, multi-tasking, teaching and assessing skills and her biggest strength is delivering training workshops. It goes without saying that Joanne had done a fantastic job over the past 15 years serving and promoting ABSLTA on her travels round the country.

We shall miss Joanne and would like to wish her the very best of luck for the future. We will continue to keep in touch with Joanne and call up on her expertise for future training workshops.

In the present climate, with the advancement of information and learning technology at a rapid pace and keeping abreast of IT skills, the Executive committee has become more adept at going forward and creating e-newsletters on line, and sending up to date information via our Facebook ABSLTA page. We encourage you, as members to participate and are very welcome to email us to contribute any news relating to BSL Teachers & Assessors. Our next challenge will be the setting up a brand new website which is in the pipeline, so watch this space!

Re: Penny Beschizza:

Penny resigned from the committee for personal reasons at the end of last November. We would like to say thank you for her role as Secretary. Penny is happy to keep in touch and share news of campaigning and union updates for any BSL teachers and assessors. ABSLTA wish her good luck for the future.



For Joanne and Penny



Huge thanks to everyone who was involved with the past and present committees, who worked extremely hard on a voluntary basis to achieve things and succeeded because of their passion.

Re: Two workshops:

Huge thanks to Tessa Padden and Frances Elton for doing their exciting workshops for us.

Have a wonderful day!

Emma Iliffe
ABSLTA Chairperson

April 2015