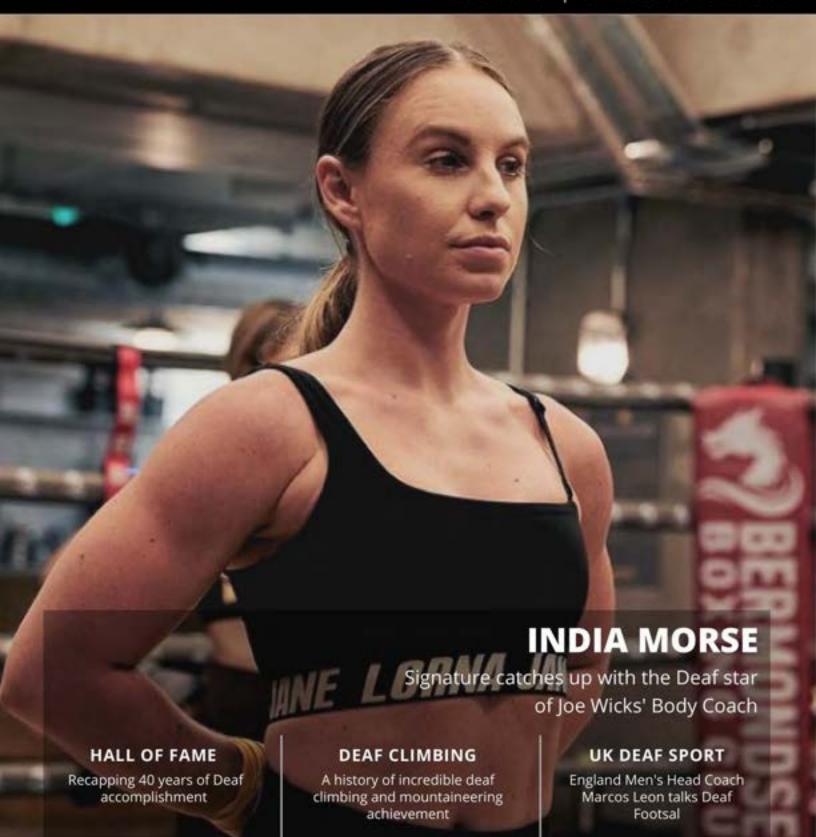
Signature.

ISSUE 6 | DECEMBER 2022



WELCOME

...to the 6th edition of Signature's Inspire magazine

I'm delighted to welcome you to our latest edition of the Signature Inspire Magazine.

As you are may know, the Inspire magazine aims to raise Deaf awareness amongst hearing young people, inspiring them to learn sign language, as well provide Deaf young people with a selection of inspirational stories.

This issue is perhaps more targeted towards this aim than any previous, with its lifestyle theme encompassing a wide range of topics from influencers to sport to adventurous hobbies.

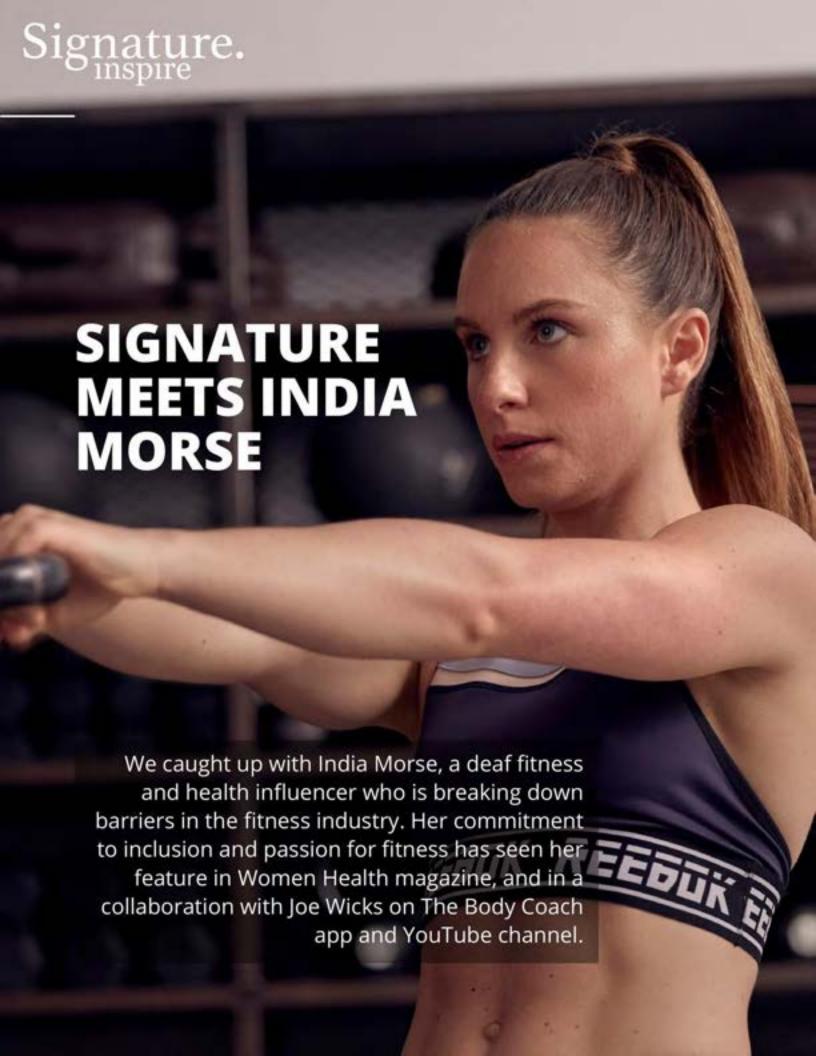
We also want this issue to be more interactive than ever, and so we have created as many opportunities as we can for you, the reader, to get involved.

This includes for the first time a submissions page, in which we've cultivated your opinions, as well as a recommendations page where we hope to support deaf created content you may or may not be familiar with, and promote people we think deserve more recognition.

On that topic, the past few months since the last issue have been incredibly busy at Signature. In November, we held our 40th anniversary Hall of Fame event, which celebrated the iconic people who have made an impact on Deaf communications and culture over the past 40 years. It was great to see a lot of people there, and to come together as a community to recognise the historical strides we have made.

"IT WAS GREAT TO SEE SO MANY PEOPLE AT THE HALL OF FAME, AND TO COME **TOGETHER AS** A COMMUNITY TO RECOGNISE HISTORICAL STRIDES WE HAVE MADE."





Can you tell us a little about yourself and your deafness?

I am India (but everyone calls me Indie), and I was born proudly deaf. As I'm a BSL user, I went to deaf schools until the age of 17, and I combine hearing and deaf worlds to build my confidence to communicate and put myself out there.

How long have you been involved in the fitness community, and how did you start?

I've been always sporty in school, as I used to play football. However, when I left school I had no interest in it. Eventually I started to get into fitness when I was 'heartbroken' so I went to the gym to distract myself. Now I've fallen in love how it makes me feel and realised the barriers in fitness industry for deaf people, so let's say around 10 years.

"Somebody pinch me, as I cannot believe its finally happening! Accessibility in the fitness industry is slowly growing. I'm just so glad that I didn't ever give up. It's been hard, but it's absolutely worth the wait!"

Did you find that your deafness impacted your ability to get into fitness?

At the start, yes, because of the inaccessible barriers to gaining some knowledge into fitness, as I am often behind with things that are going on in fitness industry. However, eventually my confidence grew as I took further steps to explore. So ultimately, deafness cannot stop you if you are confident and driven to gain more knowledge!

What do you think needs to change within the fitness industry to make it more inclusive?

before sharing Think twice promoting any educational posts. People need to think about how to make them easy for everyone to access. Fitness classes are one of the most difficult aspects of the gym as they are often inaccessible. The instructors need to adapt not just to their teaching skills, but also things like the lightening and music. In general, action rather than words. I believe every fitness studio should give their instructors basic deaf awareness training.

That's something that we really agree with, and that's the reason why we created our online Deaf Awareness course - to give every company a chance to access an affordable introduction to Deaf Awareness. What advice would you give to people with disabilities or difficulties who feel obstructed from getting into fitness?

Just take one step at a time, not the whole staircase. Take it easy on yourself and reach out to the right personal trainer who is willing to help you. If you feel that you are struggling, please tell your trainer as it's important and they need to know. It is not a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength that you can reach out to make a difference!

In a gym or fitness class setting, how could a hearing person help to ensure a Deaf gym-user feels as comfortable as possible?

Again, it's all about ACTION, ACTION, ACTION. Approach them to ask how they are. Even a very basic level of sign language makes a bit of difference in making them feel at ease, and make sure to use gestures or bring paper with you when pointing the equipment out and giving demonstrations.

Getting involved with Joe Wicks must have been a brilliant experience. How did it happen?

Well, Joe shared the announcement that they are looking for three personal trainers to join the team so I thought why not give it a go. About 5,000 people applied! I was gobsmacked when they told me that I got through the first round. I remember clearly as I was waiting at the bus stop to receive the email. I went crazy and screamed while running down the street! So I went through two more rounds, until the final round that sadly I didn't manage to get in.

But you then went on to deliver a class with Joe in person! What was it like meeting and working out with him?

Joe was just like other people, very friendly and laid back and when he arrived, reaching out for a hug was the first thing he did! I had so much fun training with him!



India poses with Joe Wicks on the set of The Body Coach TV after their 20 minute beginners HIIT session It's fantastic to have such a big name in the fitness sphere make such an effort for inclusivity. How have you found the public reception to your course, both among the deaf community and the hearing?

The public reception is amazing! A lot of the hearing audience had tried my workouts, and always tagged me in the stories and gave me feedback which is so lovely, although I would prefer to receive it from the deaf audience so I hope they will feel able to message me and share with me what it means to the world.

What's next for you? Have you got any new projects on the horizon?

Well... I'm sharing the secret with you, the announcement will be shared shortly! I will be hosting clients face to face in the gym for the first time, I'm trying to have both training online that can be accessible anywhere and in person training based in London to push more barriers and to allow my clients to feel confident in the gym! There will be more coming from The Body Coach too but one step at a time.

To find out more about India, check out her social media channels or her website



@youleanmeup www.youleanmeup.fit



WHAT SIGNING MEANS TO ME

Introducing our winner of the first Signature article writing competition, Stephanie Barrows

"Hmm... Say again...? Let me dance around you so you've got my good ear. No, stay where you are – it's my bad!"

I may hold eye contact a wee bit longer than is comfortable for you, or you may think I'm leaning in for a kiss (usually I'm not!) when trying to turn to hear someone talking straight into my right ear. If I don't, you may as well talk to a brick wall, especially if there is loud music, noisy traffic or lots of people talking loudly. My left ear will hear what's across the room, not the pearls of wisdom you are discreetly sharing with me.

Born with zero hearing in my right ear, this is my life. I'm blessed to have nearly 100% hearing in my left ear. I've thus never considered myself to be half deaf, rather that I am half hearing. In reality I have a foot in both camps, or an ear for both. I've always relied on the good ear and a large dollop of lip-reading and non-verbal clues to hear and hide my 'deafness'.

Want to get involved and potentially see your article in the next magazine? We run a seasonal blog competition, announced on our social media channels, in which we ask for you to write an article on a set theme each time. The winning entries receive a cash prize as well as a goodie bag and publication!

Not that I'm ashamed of it. I just didn't want to scupper my chances in the workplace. Being half deaf for me is an invisible impairment or disability, and I chose not to draw attention to it unnecessarily.

I'm 62 now, and it took the amazing deaf actress, Rose Ayling-Ellis, dancing with my favourite Strictly Come Dancing professional (also my dance teacher), Giovanni Pernice, for me to be more open about my hearing.



I've not needed to use British Sign Language for my own hearing needs, but had long wanted to learn it to facilitate communication in my work with the physically and sensory-impaired folks I was training and coaching. Financial and family responsibilities meant the time was never quite right to turn this dream into reality. However, early in 2022, the stars aligned and, inspired by Rose and the BSL Act Now initiatives, I signed up for lessons. I now have my BSL Level 1 award from Signature.

For several years, in addition to coaching, I've been script-writing for theatre and my vision is now to be more inclusive of the Deaf community in the Arts.

My own theatre company, Invisible Women, was set up around seven years ago to provide opportunities for a wide variety of actresses to find and use their voices through drama, offering roles in spoken language. My current aim is to incorporate British Sign Language within the scripts as well as including BSL interpreters at performances in future productions.



Stagetext is an example of innovation in deaf accessibility to theatre by providing live captions to plays

Invisible Women's first professional play was "Invisible Web" (written by me and Maggie Driver). This told the story of four women unaware they were linked by an invisible web of people-trafficking. Two of the actors were hearing-impaired – the characters were not deaf women. We adjusted the staging to accommodate our needs.

I have a love of language. I studied Latin and French at school, and Italian, online during lockdown, and subsequently on an intensive course in Italy a few months ago. I also love the language of music, mime and movement. Half-hearing means I hear in mono. I've never experienced sound in stereo and I don't miss what I've never had! I love the expression and drama of signing to convey not only words, but also emotions and feelings.

I'm looking for opportunities to help drive forward initiatives to have BSL taught in schools. Ideally, taught on an equal footing to the European languages currently offered as second language lessons and qualifications, so that we can be truly inclusive of the Deaf Community locally and globally and explore the beauty and impact of signing in performance.

A month or so after achieving Level 1 BSL, I went on my own to see Deafinitely Theatre's production of "Everyday" at the New Diorama Theatre in London, I enjoyed thoughtthoroughly this provoking performance and signing with members of the audience before and after. It was both humbling and amazing for me to be able to take part in the BSL conversations. I thank everyone for their patience as I slowly signed in basic BSL and those who occasionally signed 'voiceon' for my benefit.

I'm currently working on an exciting new script-writing project which I aim to stage early in 2023. Fingers crossed! DEAF FUTSAL WITH HEAD COACH MARCOS LEON

We spoke to the UK Deaf Futsal manager after their recent success at the European championships in Italy. We discuss the tournament, the challenges deaf people face in sport and his plans for the future.



Signature.

Can you tell me a little about yourself and how you got into football coaching?

I was born and raised in the futsal game back in my home country, Spain.

I played for several teams between the Alicante-Valencia region and at different levels, including a World Cup that I played in Russia when I was 17 years old as a semi-professional. Furthermore, I was introduced into coaching through my youth, which I managed through several school teams.

I travelled to England when I was 21 years old to enrich my English. Now, I am 36 years old and still here where I met my wife, our children have born and an unborn baby is coming at the beginning of December.

Between my time in England, I have coached various teams at national and international stages such as, Manchester Futsal Club, Wrexham Futsal Club and Stockport Futsal Club.

I was introduced into the England Men's Deaf Futsal Team in 2012, by Ex-Manager Paul Harrison who I worked together with as Assistant Coach until The Football Association (The FA) withdrew the funding in 2019.

Following this withdrawal, England Deaf International Futsal (EDIF) was established non-profit as a organisation in August 2021, with the preserve and develop opportunities for Deaf Futsal players to be able to compete at an international stage and represent their country at the highest level. In addition, EDIF were on the look out for the next men's manager, which I applied for and I continue here on a volunteer basis.

What advice would you give someone with disabilities or difficulties who feel obstructed about getting into football and sports in general?

There are now more opportunities than ever for disabled people to gain access into futsal, football or any other sports in general. My advice to those who may feel obstructed about getting into sports is to look at UK Deaf Sport for any sporting opportunities and stop living in fear. Everyone has ability, talent and capability of their own, which they can flourish and reach their full potential while being healthy, successful and happy in sport.



What does deaf culture mean to you?

The deaf community may be small, but it is unique and has a strong identity within the society. Even though I have been working for over ten years with deaf and hard of hearing players, it did not take me long to embrace deaf culture. They may not be able to hear but they have a brain and heart that works and plays sports like any other individual.

What do you do to make sure the team you coach feel comfortable?

It is essential to get to know each individual on and off the court. Every player is unique and understanding their personality may unlock their full potential. We have a team culture and identity where every individual is treated as a key part, alongside belief and trust in the process.

We encourage a huge amount of teamwork and challenge the mental strength of our players. This way we gain a greater knowledge which we can use to overcome challenges we may be presented with in our performance and together we can meet our goals.

Doing so well in the European Deaf Futsal Championship was an amazing achievement. The Men's team you coach narrowly missed out on the semifinals, finishing 6th place in their best placement in tournament history, while the Women's team went on to win the entire competition and become Deaf European Champions! How was the whole experience?

I have had first-hand experience of the international game which has benefited me both personally and professionally. Only we know the amount of challenges we have had to overcome to make it happen so I am really pleased with our performance. When you sit back and reflect, we have made progress and gained the qualification at the World Cup for the first time in history.



The penalty score from Marcos' team's nailbaiting final 3:3 game in the European Deaf Futsal Championship

What about your team do you think makes you stand out from others?

I would say our group of players and staff go above and beyond in ambition and dedication, always giving 110% in any required area to ensure we meet our expectations. As volunteers, I highly credit everyone's contribution. Together we have stood out and become even more resilient.

How do you think England will do at the world championships next year?

England have shown in the last Championships that they can compete against the best teams in Europe. But with the team not having experience at the World Cup stage, anything could still happen. I know they are restless for change and impatient to continue to make progress happen.



What is one thing you would like to see happen with deaf sports in the next 5 years?

I would like to see deaf and sports organisations come together to ensure our players and future generations can participate in as many activities and competitions as they can throughout their sporting lives. The vast majority of players in our case participate in both the Futsal and Football competitions. However, there are clashing events which can hinder this. We should be working together to embrace athletes and make sure it is possible for them to work on a combination of different sports activities competitions during the sports calendar.

Whats next for you? Have you got any new projects planned?

With several opportunities to join different projects, I still don't know what will be next. However I will be heading in a direction that works for me, my family, and can continue challenge my personal and professional growth.





The picture on the left depicts Heidi Zimmer, perhaps one of the most accomplished deaf mountaineers: she was the first deaf person to summit Mt Elbrus, the highest peak in Russia, and the first deaf woman to reach the peak of Kilimanjaro as well as Denali, the highest peak in North America.

As well as being deaf, she was diagnosed later in her life with Usher Syndrome, which lead to a progressive loss of her vision. And yet she has not let any of this come in her way on her journey to the top: she wants to be the first Deaf person to climb all the Seven Summits, the highest mountains of each of the seven traditional continents.

This illuminates how iust incredible Heidi's achievements have been. For anyone to climb seven of the highest peaks in the world is amazing (only 416 people have); to do it while deaf and partially sighted phenomenal. This is not demean the talent and skill of deaf climbers and mountaineers like Heidi, but instead to highlight some of the unique challenges which they face.

As an example, see Sonya Wilson, American deaf climbing legend and founder of the ASL Climbing Network, talking to Common Climber magazine about attempting to do the same challenge:

'Miriam [Richards] and I were trying to join a climbing group to climb all seven of the highest world summits. We were told we had to hire the interpreters privately and they would charge us a lot more. Even when we said we were both experienced climbers and both teachers and we could show them how to work with us in a group, they still refused. Don't charge us more just because we are deaf or don't expect us to carry the entire cost of interpreters. This makes it next to impossible for us to afford the adventure.'



And these barriers are not limited to world class mountaineers like Wilson and Zimmer. Let us move away from the incomprehensible peaks of the Himalayas, and into a more relatable climbing gym, the kind which thousands of deaf climbers in the UK frequent, from social climbers to hobbyists to athletes in training.

Most people who want to try climbing for the first time would find a class at their nearest gym led by a qualified instructor. For deaf climbers, this is much harder as there is a dire shortage of instructors who are also interpreters. Rather than their local gym, they may have to travel long distances to find an accessible introductory class.

And it doesn't stop at the beginner level. If anything, it only gets more difficult as a climber progresses, as Tonya Stremlau, a Deaf climber and professor, pointed out in an interview with climbing.com. She is forced to rely independent self-teaching via YouTube videos. 'Especially for learning advanced skills,' Stremlau signed, 'I feel like my climbing has developed at a slower pace because the clinics for learning those different techniques have not been accessible.'

It comes down to the same issues which India Morse raised about fitness: that there was more widespread awareness, and more hearing people were able to communicate even at a basic level with deaf people, the world of sport would be a much more accessible place. In conversation with Climbing.com, Deaf climber and teacher Caitlin Mosholder encourages the hearing community to be open-minded. 'Once the hearing community and Deaf community partner, it's deeper than just climbing. It's cultural language awareness, acquisition... understanding different communities.'

We can hope that this will improve in the future as organisations like UK Deaf Sport continue to make strides in making sport across the UK more accessible. They offer an Effective Communication Course for coaches of any sport including climbing, which aims to give hearing coaches the ability to 'support any deaf participant that you encounter in, just as much as the next player'.

However, coaching aside, there are far more accessibility challenges to overcome. Even with bouldering, often seen as the most accessible form of climbing for beginners due to its lack of ropes and lower heights, communication is important to ensure safety in a busy gym and for climbers to be able to communicate with those on the ground for help.

Beyond bouldering, more gear presents more challenges, from helmets sometimes being incompatible with certain types of hearing aid, to the importance of proper communication between climber and their belaying partner.

Sonya Wilson outlines the importance of this connection with a partner in her viral social media video on Deaf Communication Strategies. This also presents excellent advice and strategies overcome this, and while in ASL, there are captions and a transcript provided, and she advocates against a 'one size fits all' approach. You do not have to follow the communication strategies that we use, what matters is that you find what works for YOU'



'Whatever strategies you and your partner use to communicate always agree before climbing begins. Communication in the outdoors requires the ability to adapt, improvise and experiment with various methods to fit the situation. [...] Make sure it is short, simple, to the point, clearly differentiated so there is less chance for error.'

The reason why we have to turn to an ASL user for this advice is because there is an unfortunate lack of BSL resources on the topic. There was an organisation called Deaf Climbing UK, but unfortunately this no longer appears to exist, and their website full of resources, is no longer active.

That is not to say that there is no help there, however. As the representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales, the BMC has an Equity Steering Group which works to remove any barriers to participation and is also implementing a Disability Action Plan. As part of this, they have a resource pack of advice entitled Hearing Impairments In Rock Climbing And Bouldering, and they also run an annual BMC Paraclimbing Series. This accessible competition consists of eight different categories of entrants, one of which is sensory impairment.

However, there are still issues with this, as Susanne Rees, co-founder of Deaf Climbing UK points While out. of the appreciative success Paraclimbing, she says that it is not representative of deaf climbers as 'Deaf climbers cannot be selected for the GB Paraclimbing team because there is no international category for deaf climbers' and 'there isn't enough representation for deaf climbers on the Equity and Steering board of the BMC nor the IFSC Paraclimbing board.'

This lack of representation has led to deaf climbers taking it into their own hands and forming groups to support one another, from national groups to regional groups like the Milton Keynes Deaf Climbing club.

These groups provide their members an excellent way of socialising with other deaf people through a fun and healthy hobby. For some deaf climbers, their lack of hearing also provides advantages over their hearing competitors. In the words of Andre Hedger (not while dangling from a cave roof as pictured...)

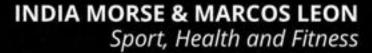


'Being profoundly deaf is definitely not an issue for climbing, in fact I think it's a benefit. For example, when I am climbing there are some people shouting the sequences from the bottom of the crag which can be really distracting. This opportunity gets me into the rock, much more focused.'

This quote is from a BSL Zone documentary which provides an excellent insight into deaf climbing. As well as an excellent source of inspiration for anyone considering giving climbing a go, it also provides a perfect sentiment on which to end this piece. Despite the challenges of poor accessibility, deaf athletes continue to embody the spirit of climbing: to break down barriers, find their own path, and go further and higher than ever before.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Interested in what we've been talking about so far? We list some books, films, TV shows and more from Deaf creators which you might or might not be aware of! Scan the QR code for links to all recommendations.



The Body Coach app and YouTube channel both have BSL fitness courses led by India from beginner to advanced

The UK Deaf Sport website is full of well made official resources including accessible fitness videos and deaf athlete profiles



BSL Zone has a short film documentary on Andre Hedger, an inspirational piece not just about an excellent climber but about how to fit such an adventurous hobby alongside daily life

Eddie Bauer recently produced a documentary called Elevated on Sonya Wilson, perhaps the most influential deaf climber in America. Though her signing is in ASL, the video is captioned.

WHAT SIGNING MEANS TO ME Documentary and Lifestyle

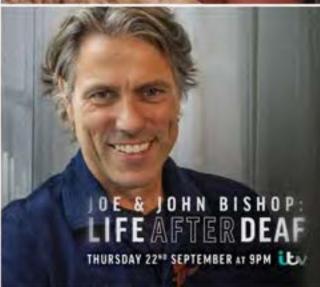
Joe Bishop: Life After Deaf. For some reviews of this recent documentary on a hearing family learning to adapt to their son's hearing loss, see the next page

Coming soon to the BBC is Rose Ayling Ellis' new documentary Signs for Change which will question if society is adapting fast enough to allow for equality amongst the deaf and hearing worlds









AS SOMEONE WHO WAS LATE DIAGNOSED HOH, JOE'S CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE REALLY RESONATED WITH ME AND MADE ME FACE A LOT OF WHAT I HAD TO DEAL WITH, PEOPLE JUST THOUGHT I WAS RUDE, I HOPE THIS SHOW HELPS A LOT OF PEOPLE REALISE HOW DIFFICULT IT ACTUALLY IS BEING HEARING-IMPAIRED.

> IT MAY BE THE NEWEST TREND TO LEARN SIGN LANGUAGE BUT I HOPE THE IMPORTANCE OF IT NEVER GOES UNAPPRECIATED AND UNDERSTATED. EVERYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE.

> > @WHATLYDIALOVES

YOUR THOUGHTS

We reached out on social media to get your opinions on loe and John Bishop's Life After Deaf











JUST BRILLIANT! I'M SEVERE H.O.H. AND MY HUSBAND HAS SUGGESTED WE LOOK TO LEARN BSL

@MICHELLE_LOUISE CHALLIS

IT INSPIRED ME TO SIGN UP TO LEARN!

HELPED ME AS A HEARING PERSON UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF DEAF IDENTITY, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY

@NORDICNORTHEAST

POIGNANT COMMENTARY ON WHAT IT FEELS LIKE BE DEAF AND FEELING LIKE OTHERS WANT TO 'FIX' YOU

@JULIAWH48229546

@LUCY_JCA

AMAZING AND REALLY INSPIRING

BODANIEL TOLEASDALE



HALLOFFAME

We recap the recent Signature Hall of Fame event in the National Football Museum in Manchester, which celebrated 40 years of d/Deaf culture.



The Signature Hall Of Fame event took place in November. It recognised and celebrated those people who have gone above and beyond to improve deaf communication over the last 40 years.

At this event over 200 people were nominated, with 50 people shortlisted, and ultimately only 10 people and organisations being inducted into the Hall of Fame.

These final inductees were:

- * Ahmed Mudawi
- ★ Charlie Swinbourne
- * Clark Denmark
- * David Buxton
- * Performance Interpreting
- ★ Deaf Village North West
- ★ Chief Inspector Emma Gilbert
- ★ City Lit
- ★ Leeds City Council (DAHIT)
- ★ Lipspeaker UK and Lesley Weatherson



As well as the inductees, there was also a special award named the Stewart Simpson award, after the founder and former Chief Executive of Signature. Rose Ayling-Ellis was given this award. This was due to her incredible success in the past couple of years, using her fame to help break down boundaries which prevent deaf access.

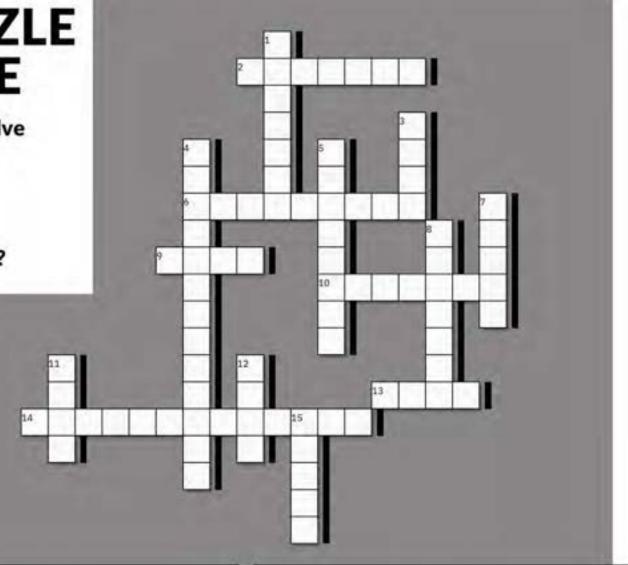


Stewart Simpson's wife Val collects the award given in his name on behalf of Rose Ayling-Ellis



PUZZLE PAGE

Can you solve the first Signature Inspire crossword?



DOWN

- Lecturer, mentor, and tutor are all forms of what? (7)
- 3. Read my ____ (4)
- 4. You can obtain a _____ in BSL (13)
- 5. Medical term for ringing in your ears (8)
- 7. Opposite of revoke (5)
- 8. Anagram of infests (7)
- 11. Another word for journal (4)
- 12. Joe and John Bishop: Life After ____ (4)
- 2nd most populated country on the planet (5)

ACROSS

- 2. In the court there was a (9)
- 6. Online deaf _____ course (9)
- 9. Find these on the side of the road (4)
- 10. Online blue bird (7)
- 13. Exam you sit in secondary school (4)
- 14. What does the COM in OFCOM stand for? (13)

SOLUTIONS

1. Jeucher 6. Awareness 11. Biog.
2. Hearing 7. Award 72. Beat 2. Lips 8. Finess 13. GCSE 4. Qualification 9. Says 14. Communication 4. Qualification 10. Twitter 75, Indus.



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See our website: www.signature.org.uk

