

Signpost Newsletter

Summer 2026

*We hope you have a
great relaxing Summer
Best Wishes
Damien & Denise*

wearenugent.org

Issue 43

Letter from the Editor

Hello Readers,

I can't believe its Summer 2026 already – time really does fly by so fast.

There has been lots happening here this year, including the CDA Day conference, Archbishop Emeritus of Liverpool Diocese, Malcolm celebrated Deaf Mass with us and tells us how he's enjoying his retirement, and two inspiring Deaf Individuals currently undertaking remarkable challenges through climbing and walking adventures. You will be able to read more about them, along with other exciting news, in the articles throughout the edition.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer ahead.

Best Wishes,
Damien Mahon, Nugent



Catholic Deaf Association Day conference – Blackpool, held on Saturday 14th March 2026

Around 50 people attended the Catholic Deaf Association Day conference in Blackpool. Deaf participants travelling from Manchester, Liverpool, Dublin, Newcastle and beyond. Although we were blessed with beautiful weather, the day was fully focused on the conference programme.

The theme was 'The Jubilee of St Francis' marking 800 years since the death of St Francis of Assisi. Running from January 2026 to January 2027, the Jubilee message – shared by Pope Leo XIV – encourages us to live as joyful Catholics, following St Francis' example of faith, simplicity and service.

We reflected on key aspects of St Francis' life, including his conversion after war, his commitment to prayer and poverty, and his deeper understanding of Christ's call to renew the Church spiritually. His teachings continue to inspire us today, especially through themes of peace and reconciliation, love of creation and living with joy and humility.

There was also time for group discussion, prayer, and reflection on how we can support today's world-through prayer, inclusion, and inviting others to feel welcome.

The day included a three-course meal, Mass celebrated by Father Paul Fletcher and a fundraising auction. We finished with strawberries and cream before heading home.

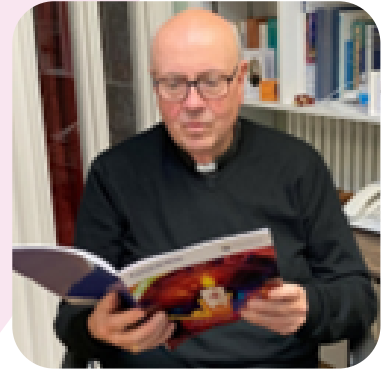
It was an inspiring and enjoyable day, and we are looking forward to the next conference in 2027.

By Damien Mahon



My Retirement by Archbishop Emeritus Malcolm

Retirement came to me as a shock. Although I knew it was going to happen I didn't know exactly when I would have to step back from my role as Archbishop of Liverpool. Usually, bishops and priests retire at seventy-five years of age, but bishops must wait for the pope to appoint their successor. In my case I had to wait for nearly a year, so I was almost seventy-six when I handed over to Archbishop John.



This uncertainty plays tricks with your mind and with your ability to plan. In one sense nothing changed I just carried on as normal with my parish visits, Confirmations, and the endless meetings that bishops attend or chair, but I was also trying to get my new house ready and prepare myself for one of the biggest moves in my life.

When retirement did eventually come on 27 May last year, I felt greatly relieved. It was though a weight had been lifted from my shoulders after so many years of being a bishop in Liverpool and before that in Nottingham. This was followed by a period of confusion as I tried to sort out my diary.

I found that I had double booked some day, forgotten other appointments and I even turned up for events on the wrong day!

For many years I had the support of secretaries and now that had finished and I had to look out for myself. However I do get wonderful support from the priests, people and staff of the diocese and that really makes an enormous difference.

Fortunately, my health is quite good, and I am able to get round and visit my friends who I have neglected for many years because I didn't have time. I am also able to stand in for priests if they need to get a break, and even though I have retired I am still a bishop and so I am able to do Confirmations, if Archbishop John and Bishop Tom are not free.

One important thing to do in retirement is to look after your health. In my case I have managed to lose 3 stone in weight over the last year, and I have joined a walking group which meets twice a week.

The result is that my type-2 diabetes is better controlled, and I feel a lot better. My spiritual health also needs care, and I have made a room in my house into a chapel. There I can pray before the Blessed Sacrament and offer Holy Mass from time to time.

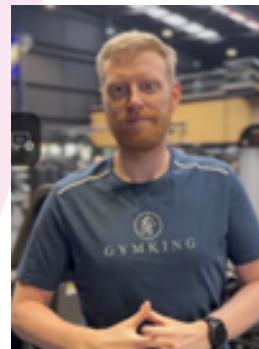
Finally, I am so pleased that I stayed in Liverpool.

The people in the city and throughout the diocese are some of the best in the world. They are friendly, funny and warm hearted and have made me feel at home. What more could I ask for?

God bless you all,
Archbishop Malcolm

Michael Woods climbs Mount Everest

Michael Woods is a profoundly Deaf mountaineer from Liverpool and has successfully achieved his aim to climb Mount Everest as part of his Seven Summits challenge. He uses BSL and hopes his climb will inspire both Deaf and hearing communities by showing that barriers can be overcome through determination.



He loves the mountains and has been climbing for over 10 years now, starting with just some basic equipment, he had no idea the journey would take him. He's climbed Snowdon in Wales to the Himalayas, Michael has pushed himself to achieve his dream of climbing to the summit of Mount Everest in May 2026.

He had released videos to give a glimpse of who he is and what he was working towards; his ultimate goal is to inspire others, especially in the Deaf community, to believe that nothing is impossible. According to Michael, it's been a 'crazy journey' which has taken him around the world and over the years he has been injured, had doubts, lots of comebacks and plenty of summits. When Michael starts something he aims to finish it!

Everest is more than a mountain as it is a mission. Undertaking the climb for his family and for the Deaf Community; also to show everyone who ever told him that "you can't". Michael is the first Deaf UK man to have climbed Everest, inspiring so many people and younger generations. He wasn't just climbing a mountain, he was proving that limits are only in the mind. #Deaf #Determined #Unstoppable.

Michael has already completed major climbs, including Aconcagua in Argentina and Mount Elbrus in Russia, while preparing for Everest. His Everest expedition began in 2026 and is also raising money for Deaf children and Deaf charities.

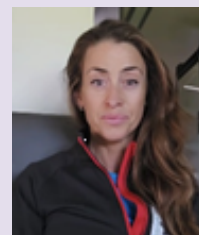


Michael Woods is the first Deaf climber from the UK and Europe to reach the summit of Everest, the very first Deaf person was Satoshi Tamura from Japan in 2016.

You can read about Michael's journey on his official website:- [Michael's Summits](#).

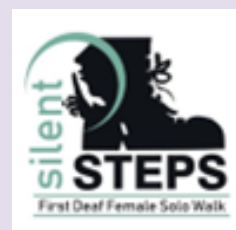
Silent Steps'

Avril Langard-Tang is from Wolverhampton University Deaf lecturer currently walking over 1,000 miles from John O' Groats to Land's End in a challenge called "Silent Steps".



Avril started the walk on May 1st and aims to become the first Deaf woman to complete the journey independently while raising awareness of the barriers Deaf people face, especially in healthcare. The walk is expected to take around 10 weeks and is supporting SignHealth.

Massive respect to Avril Langard-Tang, absolutely inspiring, showing determination and resilience.



National Disability card

The card is a national scheme that allows disabled people to easily communicate their access requirements at around 250 venues, including events, attractions, and entertainment settings across the UK and Europe.



The card is widely recognised and can help support access arrangements, including companion tickets, reasonable adjustments, accessible seating, queue adjustments and other support. It can also give you discounts on admission at certain places, such as Museums and Art Galleries.

Order your card (valid for 2 years) at www.nationaldisabilitycard.co.uk

The cost is around £23.50 (that includes postage)

Deaf Expo gathering at NEC in Birmingham 15th & 16th May 2026

Attendees agreed the main benefit of attending Deaf Expo at the NEC is that it was more than just an exhibition, it combined Deaf community networking, learning opportunities, accessibility technology, services and deaf culture in one place. The 2026 event brought together thousands of visitors, dozens of exhibitors, workshops and included the annual BDA conference.



Deaf Expo 2027 will take place over 2 days on May 14th & 15th it will be held at the NEC Birmingham with 50 accessible stalls, expert-led workshops and the annual BDA conference with full BSL interpretation.

A Prayer for Peace and Healing in the World

Heavenly Father, source of all life and love, we come before You with hearts that ache for our broken world. We pray for all who suffer from violence, poverty, hunger, and oppression.



Pour out Your spirit upon the leaders of all nations. Guide their steps away from division and the temptation of domination, leading them instead to the path of diplomacy, justice, and lasting peace. Change the hearts of those who inflict harm, that they may turn from violence to forgiveness and mutual respect.

We pray for the vulnerable, the refugees, and families torn apart by conflict. Protect them, grant them strength, and give them hope for a brighter future. Open our own eyes and hands to be instruments of Your peace in our local communities, that we may recognise every person as our brother and sister.

Lord of Creation, we also pray for the proper care of our common home and for a more equitable sharing of the earth's resources. Inspire us to cultivate solidarity so that everyone may have access to what they need to thrive.

Amen

Through the intercession of Mary, Queen of Peace, may the grace of Christ unite us all in love. Amen.

Historic moment for the Deaf community in Wales

The British Sign Language (Wales) Bill was officially passed by the Senedd on 11th March 2026. It then received Royal Assent on 27th April 2026, thus transforming the bill into a legally binding Act - officially becoming the law BSL (Wales) Act 2026.

This important Act aims to strengthen accessibility, promote equality and improve public services for Deaf BSL users across Wales. It is another huge step forward for the recognition and rights of Deaf people throughout the UK.



RNID worked closely with other deaf organisations, charities, individual BSL signers and campaigners from across Wales. Working with Mark Isherwood MS on the content of the Bill, to ensure it met the needs of BSL users in Wales.

What will the British Sign Language (Wales) Act mean for Wales?

- A National BSL Strategy: The Welsh Government will create a national plan explaining how they will promote and encourage the use of BSL across Wales.
- Guidance for public bodies: Welsh Government must work with BSL signers to produce guidance for on how they promote and provide BSL.
- Appoint a National BSL Adviser and Advisory Panel: To lead on the strategy, work with Welsh Government and public bodies to support progress.
- Public bodies must take action: All public bodies must publish their own plans showing how they will promote and support the use of BSL.
- Regularly report on progress: This must be done by the Welsh Government every 3 years and public bodies annually, to meet their duties under the law.

Northern Ireland Sign Language Bill



Northern Ireland passed the first stage of a landmark Sign Language Bill recognising both British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL). The Bill was passed unanimously by the Northern Ireland Assembly on 28th April 2026.

It now waits Royal Assent to fully complete the legislative process.

The legislation:-

- Officially recognises both BSL AND ISL in Northern Ireland law
- Places duties on public bodies to improve accessibility
- Promotes sign language education for Deaf children and families
- Supports accreditation for interpreters and teachers
- Recognises Deaf communities as linguistic and cultural minorities.

It is particularly historic because Northern Ireland is the first place in these islands to pass a bilingual sign language law covering both BSL and ISL together.

How Artificial Intelligence (AI) can affect our spirituality, our individual and Deaf identity and the gift of our cultural region language in Britain."

More and more young people are turning to GPT chat/AI for relationship advice or how to react to serious life situation, becoming reliant on it. AI doesn't know a person's background or situation, needed in order to support this person. AI has no knowledge and understanding of human relationships or emotions. This could taken away natural interaction which is an important part of the relationship between family members; missing out on valued information, life stories and shared history.

AI programmers are in process of creating Sign language by Robot, which we have seen for ourselves is very mechanical, with no natural emotion and no soul. BSL and Creative expression has developed from cultural influences and our way of thinking and living through community and Deaf schools for over 150 years. People may start to learn BSL from AI online; instead of native grass roots Deaf BSL users.



The danger of AI is how this will affect our BSL, there are discussions amongst the Deaf community concerning how AI translators are 'managed' Will AI start using international signs and not BSL, loosing our 'english-ness' of national identity and language. Will this lead to a greater confusion for young Deaf children in school, who depend on both English Deaf and Hearing role models who are using British sign language to learn and support reading English.

Will Ai actually lead to lower standards, lack of description and meaning in facial expression to match the sign language, which would be a great loss. BSL could also be lost, the community history affected alongside cultural variations and norms.

Isaiah 64:8 "Yet you ,Lord , are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. Core theological meaning... Clay does not become a vessel by accident. The metaphor shows that God creates every individual with deliberate thought, care, unique talents and a specific destiny.

We experience God through life, supporting our faith in God, of course AI can never replicate this. It is about humans sharing with each other and younger generation. Children of the future have the right to freedom of a relationship with God without technology, but through humanity and nature.

I understand that there may be many uses for AI, maybe in Banks or Post offices, shopping and maybe emergency announcements when travelling. Is AI to be used in wider areas (medical for example) where we need live sign interpreting, not machine interpreting.

Currently artists, writers and musicians are fighting for their right against AI taking their work without permission.

Sometimes when I am working on laptop often I decide not to use GPT chat/Ai for translation to 'Hearing structure English'; giving my colleagues an opportunity to see the richness of my non hearing English grammar, it encourages them to accept, understand and appreciate the Deaf world more.

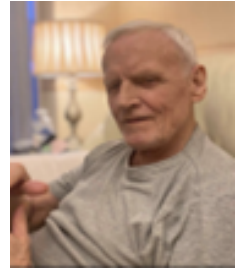
It is important to we remind ourselves is not to let AI take away our unique individual expression, personality which keeps the world turning and more colourful.

'The way God mould Us, before we were born'

Denise Armstrong-Hart

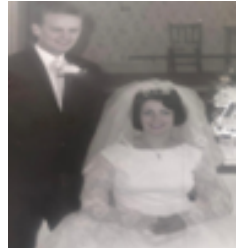
Obituary – Richard Roughley by Cathy

Richard known as Richy Roughley, RR, or Tommy Steele in his younger days was born on 28th January 1939 and was one of 6 Brothers and Sisters. He was the only Deaf person in his family. His early life was spent living in Myrtle Gardens, a place he always felt connected to and often talked about.



He attended Crown Street School for the Deaf where he met many other Deaf children who became friends for life. Including his best friend Frank Handley who he remained close with all his life. Frank was a loyal and wonderful friend who visited regularly up until his own sad passing last year.

Richard met his beloved wife Dolores while working at Plessey's and they were married for 47 years. They had 2 Daughters, 3 Granddaughters and a beautiful Great Granddaughter. Dolores sadly passed away in 2012 and Richard missed her terribly.



Richard worked at Plessey's on Edge Lane for 47 years with many of his Deaf friends. In his younger days he loved sports and became an accomplished footballer. He loved snooker and crown green bowls and was a member of Fairfield Deaf Bowling Club for many years. He also took part in the Deaf Choir signing during Mass. He attended Fairfield Deaf Club every weekend, the 55 Club in Prescot and bingo at MSDP and was a valued member of the Deaf community.

Richard passed away from Parkinson's disease on 21st May 2026 and will be sadly missed by his family and friends but our wonderful memories of him will stay with us forever.

Members of the Deaf Community who attended my Dad's funeral have kindly donated a total of £110, which we have decided to give to the 55 Club that he attended with his friends before his illness. Thank you to everyone who attended his funeral, your kindness is very much appreciated.

We pray he is at peace with his beloved wife Dolores and his dearest friend Frank. May God grant him eternal rest.

Deaf Masses at Christ the King and Our Lady Church – July & September 2026

- Sunday 5th July at 3pm
- **Please note** – There will be no Deaf Mass at Christ the King and Our Lady church in August 2026
- Sunday 6th September at 3pm

