Dear Readers,

this issue provides you with the latest information about the upcoming 4th DHI conference in June, written by President Ulf Hedberg and Secretary/Treasurer Ausma Smits. Like the first DHI conference in 1991 this fourth one will be hosted by Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. The first conference aptly named "birth of a discipline" was a stirring experience since it brought together many people active in the field of DH worldwide. This upcoming 4th one will benefit from about ten years of organizational development and it will surely be an exciting experience, completing the circle begun at this historical institution which was the first to provide higher education for Deaf people.

This issue of the Newsletter invites you to take a look at recent Deaf biographies. The new rubrick starts with a recounting of events at the end of World War II in Germany.

Brenda Boaz has informed the Newsletter editor of a Laurent Clerc stamp project in the USA. You can find some information about this project at:

http://www.laurentclerc.org

My term of office as editor of the Newsletter is coming up for reelection at the 4th conference and I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to those who contributed and good-bye to all of you. Due to other commitments I will unfortunately be unable to attend the conference.

Wishing you all, at Washington again, a very successful and inspiring DHI conference,

your editor

Renate Fischer (Germany)

address correspondence to:
DHI * NEWSLETTER
c/o Prof. Dr. Renate Fischer
Institute of German Sign Language
Binderstr. 34
20146 Hamburg
Germany
fax: ++49-40-58 40 32
e-mail: Renate.Fischer@sign-lang.uni-hamburg.de
Dear DHI Members,

this is the last time that I address you as President of DHI; my appointment will expire in June 2000 because, while serving as Vice President, I unexpectedly had to fill the position when, in 1997, the DHI president found it necessary to resign. The new president’s term will be 2000-2006.

Serving as DHI President has been a high point in my professional life, but at the same time the experience presented some interesting challenges for me. Maintaining contact with the DHI Bureau members internationally is a real challenge for anyone serving as an officer or a bureau member! Because of this I strongly recommend that anyone running for a DHI Bureau position have access to e-mail.

As you already know, Gallaudet University will be the site for the 4th DHI conference. Ausma Smits, chairperson of the conference, has been working hard to make it a very informative and participatory one. Read about it in her column!

As president of DHI I am calling a general assembly meeting of all members to take place Wednesday afternoon, June 28, 2000, around 3:15.

Please feel free to submit any nominations for President, Secretary/Treasurer, and three members-at-large to secretary/treasurer Ausma Smits (in writing or e-mail at: Ausma.Smits@gallaudet.edu) before March 31 because a special supplemental Newsletter dealing with conference matters will be sent out in April. Make sure the nominee is a DHI member or join the organization when accepting the nomination to serve. Membership fees are still only USD 20 per year.

We want DHI members to get the meeting agenda before they arrive for the conference. And, please, do not forget to pay your fees if you haven’t done so already.

Seven DHI Bureau member terms, in addition to the president’s, will expire in 2000, too. These are: Secretary/Treasurer (Ausma Smits – USA) because DHI bylaws limit the officer position to two terms (6 years), Bureau members-at-large whose terms are for one period (3 years) include Jochen Muhs (Germany), Bernard le Maire (Belgium), Breda Carty (Australia), and Odd-Inge Schröder (Norway). My experience is that it is very important that the Bureau members each have Internet access.

Vice President Brian Bernal from Australia is the only one who is to remain in the position (6 year term). If you are interested OR know someone who is qualified and will be interested in serving as either president or secretary/treasurer of DHI (6 years each for president and secretary/treasurer position), OR as a Bureau member-at-large (3 years each), please inform secretary Ausma Smits right away so that she can announce the nominations before the 4th international convention takes place.

The DHI Newsletter Editor position depends on the decision of the DHI Bureau and will be determined by the newly elected Bureau. Our current editor, Renate Fischer (Germany), has done a great job and I want to say "you did a real great job, editor, Renate!". The new Bureau will determine who the editor for the next term will be.

The DHI Bureau is accepting bids for the 5th DHI Conference. Several European nations have expressed interest in hosting the next conference (in 2003) but have some questions. If your organization would like to make a proposal to host the 5th conference in your home country please contact me for information on how to proceed about this. The bureau hopes to determine the best site before they meet so that it can be announced during the 4th conference. Somebody wants to make the proposal of meeting in 2004 instead of 2003.

Finally, I want to thank you all DHI members for your supporting me in those DHI years and also thank you DHI Bureau members for your interest in the DHI community and good cooperation with my administration during the past three years.

Respectfully,

Ulf Hedberg (USA),
DHI President
Ulf.Hedberg@gallaudet.edu

P.S.: The 4th Conference on Deaf History will begin on Tuesday, June 27, 2000. However, on Monday, June 26, there will be one day workshop involving two areas in demand: Preservation and Teaching for those who are interested in in-depth learning.
Please contact
MaryLou.Novitsky@gallaudet.edu about details for this separate event.
-->>> 4th DHI Conference

..... latest news

by

Ausma Smits, Chair

4th International Conference

The program for the 4th International Conference on Deaf History promises to be a very thought-provoking one! As this goes to press we still are waiting for presenters to confirm attendance. Accordingly no specific names or topics are mentioned at this time.

**Monday 26 June (optional)**
An all-day pre-conference workshop on preservation and teaching is planned, limited to persons already familiar with sign language skills. An announcement with the appropriate form will be sent out in March.

Note: registration for this workshop is SEPARATE from the conference registration fee. Information available from MaryLou.Novitsky@gallaudet.edu.

**Tuesday 27 June**
The grand opening of the 4th International Conference on Deaf History will take place at 1 p.m. with our own Jack Gannon giving the keynote address, followed by the first session which will take place afterwards. Participants may be able to pay a brief visit to University president I.K.J. Jordan's on-campus home before moving to another historic site for the reception. A second, more informal session, will occur in the evening.

**Wednesday and Thursday 28 and 29 June**
Two parallel sessions will take place so it may be difficult to choose which one to attend! Apart from the usual diversity of topics, certain presentations carry common themes; the following being indicative:

**"The Message from Within" -- (what do research results reveal about what and how deaf persons themselves have attempted to influence others in society?)

* "The Challenge of Preserving Deaf Identity and History in Mainstream Society" (self-explanatory)

**"Preserving/Disseminating Deaf People's History" -- [What "we" (as individuals, as schools, as museums, as archives and so on) have or are or could be doing]

**"Surprise!" (best describes the content of two presentations)

**Friday 30 June**
The morning is reserved for discussing the conference results, and for holding a forum during which participants will discuss how best to encourage preservation efforts, do more research, and teach/disseminate what is already known and available.

By the time you finish reading this summary, the specific conference information should be available on www.gallaudet.edu/~dhiweb/dhi.html

Or contact DHI conference liaison
Audrey.Wineglass@Gallaudet.edu
(Fax 202-651-6041) for the information.

For your information: another conference will take place Saturday 1 July at the same site: "American Deaf Community." It is separate from the DHI conference.

Ausma Smits (USA),
Chair, 4th International Conference
Ausma.Smits@gallaudet.edu
Conferences and Activities:

To the memory of Ferdinand Berthier
(1803-1886)

Bernard le Maire from Brussels (Belgium) has provided some information on the festivities held in May 1999 to honor Ferdinand Berthier, a French deaf leader of the 19th century.

In May 1999, the French Deaf Association (FNSF) has organized a national congress at Louhans which is Berthier's birth place. The association Culture et Langue des signes Ferdinand Berthier, on this occasion, has inaugurated, right in the town center of Louhans, a commemorative statue of Berthier who was one of the most famous French deaf people. 150 years ago, in 1849, he had been honored as member of the French Legion of Honor. Because of his activities in favor of deaf people's rights, Berthier got surnamed as "Napoleon of the Deaf". He wrote biographies on Abbé de l'Épée and on Abbé Sicard, he founded the tradition of the Deaf-Mute Banquets (1834), he was a teacher at the Paris deaf school and member of learned associations.

Today in three French towns all in vicinity to each other, deaf people can search and find their roots, as Bernard Truffaut put it in an article: at Louhans, Berthier's birth place, with the new statue, at Sagy nearby where Berthier as a child used to spend his holidays, where he was buried and where you can find three commemorative plaques to honor him, as well as at Balme-les-Grottes where Laurent Clerc was born, Berthier's famous colleague at the Paris deaf school and America's first deaf teacher of the deaf.

To know more about the event in May 1999, please contact Bernard le Maire (Belgium):
Bernard.LeMaire@Electrabel.com

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Deaf United: A celebration of Deaf football

a report by

Martin Atherton

Deaf United: A celebration of Deaf football held at the University of Central Lancashire 12 October 1999

As part of the Deaf United: football and the Deaf community research project, a one day conference was held at the University of Central Lancashire to celebrate the history and place of football in the Deaf community. Representatives of several Deaf football clubs attended, along with others involved with the game, as well as members of the Professional Footballers Association and the Scottish Football Museum. Sadly, because of the draw for the European Championship playoffs, David Davies of the Football Association was unable to attend. Mr Davies has personally supported the project...
throughout, not least by providing substantial sponsorship funding for the research.

The conference was opened by Dr. Dave Russell of the University's Institute of Football Studies, who has been one of the supervisors of the project. He welcomed guests and outlined the history of the project. The first formal presentation was given by the project's Principal Researcher, Martin Atherton. Martin outlined the history of Deaf football, starting back in 1871 with the formation of Glasgow Deaf Football Club, and continuing through the development of Deaf cup competitions and international football, up to the present day. These developments have included the establishment of Deaf Cup competitions in Scotland (1889) and England (1926); home international football (Scotland first played against England in 1891); and the growth of international football across Europe from 1924, leading to the first Deaf World Cup competition in the summer of 2000. Martin also illustrated the careers of some of the Deaf players who have appeared for professional teams, such as Billy Nesbitt of Burnley and Raymond Drake of Stockport County.

The conference and project also looked at the role of football within the Deaf community, and a panel discussion chaired by the project supervisor Graham Turner, and including Alitha Melling, Gary Quinn and Noel Traynor dealt with the way in which football has been one means of maintaining the Deaf community, and has served as a means of entry into the life of the Deaf community. The way in which football has served to bring the members of the dispersed Deaf community together, and as a way of forming and reinforcing friendships, and social and cultural links between Deaf people were also discussed. Alitha Melling gave examples of other minority groups' involvement with football, such as women and ethnic groups, and demonstrated how such cultural and social links were common across football, and played an important part in developing and maintaining cultural identities. The Deaf members of the panel gave examples from their own experiences of how this process manifests itself within Deaf football.

In recent years, Deaf football has experienced a period of steady decline, and in his keynote address, Doug Alker of the FDP outlined some of the reasons for this decline. These include the emphasis placed on football at international level, to the detriment of grassroots football, and the effects on Deaf children's access to football and sport generally caused by changes in Deaf education in Britain. Doug went on to suggest ways in which this decline can be arrested, and he called for more investment in the development of training and access to the game for young Deaf players.

Doug's views were echoed in the closing address, given by Martin Atherton, which outlined the recommendations of the project to the Football Association for the future development of Deaf football. These recommendations are aimed at addressing the decline in Deaf football, and cover a wide range of topics which arose during the course of interviewing Deaf footballers for the project. These include improving opportunities for Deaf people to become qualified coaches, through the FA setting up courses run in BSL; Deaf awareness courses for hearing players and officials who play against Deaf players and teams; and the need for the FA to support Deaf football in seeking funding not linked to disabled sport.

The conference was well received by all those attending, and many were keen to be actively involved with the FA in helping to promote and resurrect Deaf football. The University would like to thank everyone - both Deaf and hearing - who contributed to both the research project and the conference. Without their help and enthusiasm, the project would not have been successful or worthwhile. It is hoped that further funding will be attracted to continue what has been an exciting and valuable research exercise. The findings of the project are being published as a book by Douglas McLean Publishing. Deaf United can be ordered from Forest Bookshop:

deaflbooks@forestbk.demon.co.uk

Martin Atherton (Great Britain)
m.atherton1@uclan.ac.uk

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deadline
for
DHI NEWSLETTER
no. 9
July 15, 2000

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Contributions to the Newsletter come out of the personal opinion of the author.
Mr. Eugen Tellschaft (born in 1929)
interviewed by
Renate Fischer and Cathrin Jürgensen

Mr. Tellschaft comes from a deaf family. In October 1929, he was born in the German city of Königsberg (which after World War II became the Russian city of Kaliningrad) and now he lives in Hamburg in northern Germany. He relates how he had to flee his home town at the end of World War II, how he got separated from his family and then happily found them again many months later, far away from home.

"Farewell to Königsberg (East Prussia). Early at 4 o'clock in the morning the train to Pillau." This is how he started the diary of his difficult escape on January 23, 1945, in the middle of the icy winter. And then, on October 28, 1945, the entry: "My father fetches me from the farm. I'm [...] with my parents [...] again. I talk with my parents and my brothers about <What I went through during the escape.>

Starting with events in August 1944, Mr. Tellschaft relates in the interview:

It was war, you know. When I lived there, everything was already being bombed. Until the end of '44, Königsberg was still a beautiful town. There were no air raids and no bombs. But in late '44 ... in August, there were serious attacks.

[During the air raid alarms] Our neighbors rang at our door. There was an air raid shelter beneath our house. We waited below, until ... suddenly, there was an explosion. The floor shook strongly. We were terribly scared. When I came out, I saw that everything was black. There were no fires. But there was an announcement that we all had to leave Königsberg. Because of the danger of fire. We went to the public gardens, there used to be fortifications there before the war. And I saw that there were fires all over Königsberg. All quarters of the town were burnt out. Many died. And the next morning ... it was still burning. Father wanted to check if our flat was still spared. He came back. Our flat was burnt out.

We had a suitcase. All the important papers were kept in the basement. But because of the sudden bomb droppings, we had forgotten to take the suitcase. When you didn't have any papers, you went to the NSDAP-

Bombengeschädigten-Auffangstelle [NSDAP support office for air raid victims]. You could get papers there, they did it on trust. If one tried to cheat, it meant a death sentence. Those were cruel times. We got our papers stamped. And then we had to go to Groß Scharlack. About 40 km from Königsberg. To a big landowner. Groß Scharlack near Tabiau. We lived there, slept there, and ate there. Later ... Father had to work ... the business hadn't been bombed. He had to go back to work. And he took the family with him. Well ... when we were back, we asked at the NSDAP office ... and there was a forest warden flat that was vacant.

The war was coming closer. Our neighbor told us that we should leave Königsberg at once if there was an alert today or soon. We were all scared and thought it was better to leave Königsberg. We packed our things. There wasn't much to pack, anyway. Everything had been bombed. Just bedclothes, papers and such. We went to the station, on the streetcar. At the station, we waited. We wanted to go to Berlin. Somewhere west. We didn't mind where. Later, there was an announcement that there were no trains. A bridge had been blown up in Dirschau. So we had to go by ship from Pillau. We had to
take another train, a small one. First we had to wait in the camp. It was an ordinary camp ... maybe it used to be a concentration camp, or an army camp. It was clean, and the beds were neatly lined up. They were wooden barracks. The beds had sheets.

In Pillau, we had to wait for the ship. It took a long time. Nothing happened. Suddenly ... "Wilhelm Gustloff," a very large ship. We wanted to go on the ship, but it was only for wounded people and mothers with children. We adults weren't allowed to go, we had to stay. So we had to wait again. One day, we got passes for the merchant ship "Essberger." And we were allowed in. We lugged our baggage to the ship. But there were problems again. Only women and children were allowed to go. My father wasn't allowed. I was allowed to go, though. I was still small, only 15 years old. But Father was clever. Somebody on the ship said that his luggage was still down there and could they please take it up. The sailors said all right and took a net. The suitcases were stowed in the net and carried up to the ship. Father asked: "Can I go up with them? I can't hear." They didn't mind. So he was carried up in the net.

We sailed till morning ... the whole night through. The journey took two days. There were Russian ships in the area, we had to be careful. I was still small. We arrived in Swinemünde. My father's brother lived in Swinemünde. He was happy. Then he told us that the "Wilhelm Gustloff" had sunk. We were horrified. Such a large ship ... we wanted to go on that ship but hadn't been allowed. The ship was hit by torpedoes on the journey and sank. There were 5000 people dead, including wounded people, mothers and children. Some were saved, but it wasn't many. We had agreed before that we should all meet up in Swinemünde if something bad happened. Our uncle was there. It was better and safer. My parents met a deaf man and my mother asked him: "Where are my sons? Where is the ship coming from? From Königsberg? Do you know my son?" The deaf man said he was still on the ship. Mother ran to the harbor and asked for her son. The first brother arrived ... great.

Then the NSDAP said the refugees had to go on. Okay ... we got on the train. There were no seats, it was very crowded. They were freight cars, not passenger cars ... yes, it was dirty, on the train to Rostock ... We had to get off there and were sent to families. The families were ordered to share one, two, or three beds. My brothers got one room, and I with my parents got another. Yes ... things were going well. Later ... I wanted to go to school, but didn't know where. There was a school in Ludwigslust, and I wanted to go there. I was not really aware that the war was dangerous. I badly wanted to go to school. Okay ... so I came to Ludwigslust. I lived with my foster parents there. My parents stayed in Rostock. After two or three weeks, I think, the war came closer again. And the school had to close.

I wanted to go back to Rostock, on the train. The train had to stop often because of the air raids. I didn't arrive until night. I went to the sub-lodgings. The neighbor told me they were all gone. My parents, everyone was already gone. I was completely speechless. It was 1945 exactly ... I was 15 then. A deaf acquaintance ... we used to visit often. My parents were deaf, they were always in a deaf club. You had close contacts there. I learned that the NSDAP had ordered all refugees to go west. And she [the deaf acquaintance] didn't know where they might be. No one knew. I thought it was better to go back to Ludwigslust. Because my parents ... they had maybe sent me a postcard there. So I went back. My mother wrote on the card that they were in Barnstedt now.

The foster parents told me it was better to wait until the war was over. So I waited until ... later, yes, this was in May. It was during the capitulation. And I stayed in Ludwigslust until October. Then I thought about what I should do. I had a nice room. The foster mother ... my foster father was very good, but not the foster mother. Because ... the foster mother kept saying "He doesn't pay anything. Not even for food and lodging." Because of the war, everything was in a mess. There were no social services or welfare offices any longer. She was often cross and told me: "You're eating too much." She was always complaining about me. And later ... the foster father told me it was better to work in the cemetery. Cleaning, weeding. I was quite happy to do that. Because ... what else was there to do for me. The school was shut down. I got pocket money, five marks a week. That was a lot of money for me. And I was pleased about it, too.

The war wasn't over yet. Then the Americans invaded the country and occupied Ludwigslust ... and, of all places, the concentration camp graves were ... there was the palace chapel and the palace on either end, and beautiful gardens in between. Next to the palace chapel was the house where my foster parents lived. My foster father was the palace chapel sexton. The Americans said that we had to dig up the palace gardens. The concentration camp victims were supposed to be buried there. I didn't see them myself. I wanted to see what was up. But my foster father told me: "No! Stay here and work in the cemetery!" The next day ... they [the graves] were already closed up. The deaf people I met told me: "It was awful, the bodies, the concentration camp prisoners ... terrible!" I didn't know anything about it; I hadn't seen anything.
 Subject: EUGEN TELLSCHAFT

To: Mr. E.F. Harris
   D.P. Camp, Wolfsburg,
   Near Hesslingen.

This boy, who is deaf and dumb, is shipped to you because he states he has a father living in the Schleswig-Holstein area of Germany. If it were not for this, as he claims American citizenship, we would have retained him, but in view of his handicap it seems desirable for him to rejoin his father and I have no doubt you will assist all you can to reunite the family.

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I had to give up my room then. My foster mother wanted her friend ... the friend was a landowner, and she had to get out of her place. They were friends, after all. And I had to sleep in the attic. Then I went to Direktor W. He was the deaf school principal. I told him I wanted to leave now, go to the West. The director asked, "HOW on earth?" I said: "It doesn't matter, over the border somehow." I was 15 years old. The director saw that I wanted to go badly. He gave me his best wishes.

Then I went to the border on a train, to Gadebusch. Towards Ratzeburg. But the Russians were there and kept watch so that no one got through. They "nabbed" me. I was told to go back where I came from. And I thought, go back to the foster parents ... no, thank you! I thought about what I should do now. Then I thought of Schwerin. I went to Schwerin. I knew many deaf people in Schwerin. I always had good contacts to other deaf people. And when I arrived in Schwerin, I became very ill. Then I thought of Berlin. There were four sectors in Berlin. I thought at once, Berlin, yes. And I went there on a train.

[Having arrived in Berlin] ... there was a problem, however. Because ... where could I sleep? I thought: "Well, I'll sleep in the rest rooms." At the Friedrichstraße station. It was warm there. My bread was stolen. I thought and thought. Then I thought of the American army of occupation, and of the Berlin sectors ... Zehlendorf. I went there and didn't know where to go, and then I thought. "It doesn't matter, I'll just lie," and so I told them I was an American. I told them a pretty story. I said my grandfather was an American and had married a German woman, and so on. We communicated in writing. The commander was black. He listened to me. And then I said that I wanted to go to the West, to [Barmstedt]. I was told I could go in a car. "Great," I thought.

But the car had already left. I had to wait until the next morning. A big bus came, a military car with an open roof. Many people got on, most of them foreigners. They had lost their jobs or had been forced laborers. We drove on the highway ... to Helmstedt. And then ... there was a splendid red flag over our heads. This was the Russian occupied zone. The driver told someone that there were only foreigners in the car. Then he showed some papers to that person and we were allowed to go on. Then the British soldiers stood there in clean uniforms and hats. They looked pretty stiff. Well, yes, we stopped and got off. There was bread and sausages. I was supposed to leave the same day. A small British car drove me to the station.

But the train didn't go until the next morning. So I had to wait at the station. The English soldiers gave me five cigarettes. I had to wait in the room at the station. A man asked me if I had cigarettes and wanted to buy them from me. They were very good English cigarettes. The man said he would give me three marks per cigarette. I thought, he must be crazy ... three marks for a cigarette. I got 15 marks for five. Reichsmarks ... but still!

Then I got on the train. I went to Hanover on that train. In Hanover, I had to change, and go to Hamburg. And then on to Altona. I had to change there. A train to Elmshorn. I didn't know precisely. I was on a journey for the first time. And in Elmshorn, on a small train from Elmshorn to Barmstedt. It was night. There was a nighttime curfew. But I had papers written by an American. I showed the papers to a British commander, and he said okay and ordered a soldier to get a car and bring me to Groß Offenseth. I went with him.

Well ... but we were not there yet. Halfway on the route, we saw a sign ... Groß Offenseth. He turned right there. One kilometer further on ... Sparrieshoop. It was night. But the soldier said, this had to be it. I got off. I saw a farm. It was night. I rang the doorbell. I asked if Brandmann lived here. They looked at me curiously. Five kilometers on ... that was the right way. But I had got off too early. They let me sleep in the barn, though. The next morning, the farmer called Herr Brandmann, also a farmer, and asked: "Do you know a family named Tellschaft? Are they with you?" Herr Brandmann said: "Yes, they're here. Why?" He said: "I've got their son here, and he wants to go to his family." Farmer Brandmann then told my parents that their son was there, in Sparrieshoop. They didn't believe it at first. They thought I was still in Ludwigslust. They didn't believe at first that I was already here. They wondered how I had got there. Father ran to the station and then came to me. I opened the door ... well.

Eugen Tellschaft, interviewed by Renate Fischer and Cathrin Jürgensen (Germany)
Renate.Fischer@sign-lang.uni-hamburg.de

[Translation: from GSL into German: Cathrin Jürgensen and Eugen Tellschaft, 5/1/05; Complete English: Trivi Elling]
--- New publications:

Guy Jouannet: 
L'écran sourd. Les 
représentations du sourd 
dans la création 
cinématographique et 
audiovisuelle. 
309 pages + index. 
ISBN: 2-87710-126-6

Guy Jouannet who is a French expert in deaf films, has compiled a big impressive book on his favorite topic: the ways of representing deaf people in international visual media (cinema, TV, videos etc.). It is written in French with illustrations from the films and is divided in several sections. The core section is a useful film lexicon, i.e. one filmography for the cinema and another one for TV films, differentiating between documentaries, series, short films etc. At the end of this more than 300-page volume there is an alphabetized index of the French titles of these international films, including year of release, director, cross-reference to other films, types of films etc. 

If you're interested in writing a review of this interesting book for the DHI Newsletter just contact the editor.

Finnish Association of the Deaf / Museum of the Deaf: 
Learning by Signing. 
History of Deaf Education in Finland. 
CD-ROM. 1999. Helsinki

In June 1999, a sign language multimedia program Learning by Signing – History of Deaf Education in Finland was published. The program is produced by the Finnish Association of the Deaf, and the members of the team were project co-ordinator for Deaf educational material Riitta Lahtinen (project manager), museum curator Tiina Naukkarinen (texts and historical materials), specialized teacher Petri Virtanen (programming) and secretary for cultural affairs Helena Lehtomäki (sign language realization). Drawings for the program were made by a Russian Deaf artist, Alexei Svetlov.

Presenting history in a new way

It was decided that the program would tell about the history of Deaf education in Finland during the 19th century when the debate on the need for Deaf education in Finland began and the first schools for the Deaf were established. The period to be covered would culminate in the enactment of the first national statute concerning provision of Deaf and Blind education in Finland. During this time sign language was used in Finnish schools for the Deaf and one indication of the close of that era was the introduction of speech method into teaching in our country.

Once decisions on the content of the program had been reached, it was time to pay attention to the presentation of the information. In choosing a suitable style of presentation the hope was to avoid "bookishness", the objective being to work in as visual a fashion as possible. In the early planning stages several interface ideas were tried out and soon came the idea of "Malm's room".
The content of the program

A good introduction to the whole program is to begin with the path dealing with what had happened in Europe before the foundation of the first school for the Deaf in Finland. It includes vignettes on several of the more influential historical figures in Deaf education such as Pedro Ponce de León, Abbé de l'Epée, Samuel Heinicke, Thomas Braidwood, as well as Nordic pioneers in the same field.

From the point of view of the history of Finnish Deaf education, the Manilla Institute in Stockholm is significant. This is where the founder of Finnish Deaf education, Carl Oscar Malm, himself deaf, was educated. One of the paths informs about the Manilla Institute.

Next comes the possibility to find out more about the life and activities of this Carl Oscar Malm and about his family background. Then comes a short introduction to the establishment of the first Finnish schools for the Deaf. Three of the paths explain what kind of schooling was given there.

One path tells what kind of teachers worked in schools for the Deaf in the 19th century. It begins by showing what kinds of qualifications were required of teachers, followed by accounts of eleven different teachers. Then two paths inform about Deaf students. In the one, what kind of students came to the schools, how long their schooling lasted, how it was funded, etc. In the other, several students from the 1860s are...

In the Museum of the Deaf a room is dedicated to the founder of Deaf education in Finland: Carl Oscar Malm, which contains artefacts related to his life. The artist, Mr Svetlov, drew up a picture of Malm's room and it was decided to use this as the basic menu for the program. Using animation the objects in the room were made to move. When a moving object is clicked on with the mouse, various paths open up.

Each path functions as an independent entity and provides information on some field related to the theme. The program doesn't lead the user forwards by predetermined steps, but offers the possibility of roaming around at will. Within a certain path, movement from one screen to another is by means of buttons. The screen always changes when some new graphic material is available.

Each screen allows information to be accessed either in Finnish Sign Language or in written language. The written language in question is selected at the very beginning of the program, the choices being Finnish, Swedish or English. To get information in written language the text button is pressed. To get information in Finnish Sign Language, the sign button is pressed.

The program includes more than 100 old photographs, documents and artefacts primarily from the collections of the Museum of the Deaf. Besides using sign language and three written languages, multimedia gave an excellent opportunity to present museum collections.
presented. Then comes a path which discusses how Deaf students were educated and what kinds of teaching methods were used.

From the municipal archives in Stockholm the old diary of Carl Oscar Malm, founder of Deaf education in Finland, was found. He had kept the diary during his school years at the Manilla Institute. It was decided to take short diary entries over six days for the program. As suitable illustrations that could be linked to the diary material were not available, the artist Svetlov was asked to depict the events of these six days. The last two paths offer an insight into the school memoirs of two students.

Many different user groups
It was decided to name the program Learning by Signing. The name has a double meaning. First it harks back to the days in the history of Deaf education when it was permitted to use sign language in schools for the Deaf. At the same time it refers to the possibilities opened up by the new media we have used – multimedia provides new opportunities for the use of sign language in producing study material for the Deaf and in information gathering. The program is primarily intended for Deaf students in secondary education, but it is our belief that it will also interest Deaf adults and other people whose work touches on the Deaf community or who are interested in multimedia in general.

If you are interested...
The CD-ROM Learning by Signing can be bought from the Finnish Association of the Deaf at the price of 30 USD or 30 Euros.

If you wish to get more information on the CD-ROM or to get an order form, please contact:

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---advertisement---

CENTURIES OF DEAF HISTORY!

"Per Eriksson's Source Book gives us a long awaited comprehensive overview of Deaf people's history." —Tage Erlander—Sweden's former prime minister

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Absolutely fascinating to anyone in the Deaf World! Originally published in Sweden, this English edition is now available through DawnSignPress.

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