

# Loud & Proud

Summer 2000

© 2000 - Choices & Rights Disability Coalition

## Campaigning - What's the point?

Over the last 7 years, we have been asked many times, "What's the point of disabled people campaigning? It doesn't change anything and it just makes disabled people look like a bunch of whinging so and so's".

Well, campaigning can take many different forms. It might be the very public, very dynamic, stop the traffic kind of approach used by DAN. On the other hand, it might be a petition, letters to an MP or a publicity campaign. Sometimes, it might be a simple letter to point out bad practice or a request for a better service. However, all can (and do!) work.

Since the formation of the disabled people' movement in 1981, there have been huge changes to benefit disabled people. These include the development of the Independent Living Movement, the improvement of the image of disabled people in the media (although it still has a long way to go) and the establishment of the Disability Discrimination Act.



On a more local basis, since the formation of Choices and Rights, we have improved the opportunities and services available to disabled people. Our biggest success has been the establishment of the Centre for Independent Living (CIL), which is featured in our special pull and out and keep section of this issue.

The CIL has been on our agenda, alongside direct payments for over five years. That it is now up and running is a tribute to all those coalition members and staff who have sat through numerous meetings, read and responded to lengthy documents and sometimes spoken as the only disabled person in a room full of "disability professionals".

The CIL is YOUR service. Now it is established, we need to make sure we keep it. The best way you can help, is by using it! The more you use it, the more we can justify it's funding. So ring us today, get the services you need by disabled people who understand what you

want and where you are coming from.

What about 15 new wheelchair accessible buses that have been brought into use in the area. Would bus companies have bought these without disabled people fighting for accessible transport? I think not!

Finally, in the last couple of years, we have noticed that other disabled people are starting to campaign as well. Whether it's the establishment of RAPID (an organisation of disabled parents), the establishment of a major service for people who have had a stroke (thanks to disabled people conducting an excellent campaign) or an individual raising access issues all our welcome and should be celebrated.

Choices and Rights are not precious about these successes. We do not see them as "rivals". If every disabled person took action like the examples above, maybe we just might achieve what we want. Equality. Be Loud and Proud.

### Inside:

- Attitude Problems
- Star Interview!!
- PA's Wanted
- 4 page CIL pull-out special
- Question Time
- Bit of this and that
- HND Struggle
- ... and a few other things you might have missed !

## L&P Roll Call:

### Editor:

Mark Baggley  
Choices & Rights  
01482 336106

editor@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk

### Typesetting/Design/Layout:

Shaun Hague  
dtop Web Design  
01482 323010

shaun@dtopwebdesign.com

### Repro/Printing:

Centre 88  
01482 324541

### Submit Articles to:

Loud & Proud Newsletter  
Choices & Rights  
Disability Resource Centre  
Arthur Richardson Centre  
Savoy Road  
Hull  
HU8 0TX

Tel: 01482 788668  
Fax: 01482 788668  
Minicom: 01482 788668  
lp@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk

If you have any comments or suggestions for future issues of Loud & Proud, please let us know.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue of Loud & Proud.

# It's an Attitude Problem by John Gilling

I wonder if there readers of loud and proud who feel the same as me, and if so how many?

I have been disabled for nearly 4 years after suffering from a stroke at the age of 32 which has left me with balance, mobility and occasional speech problems.

Being disabled isn't a problem for me now, its something I can't change and have learned to live with, and its also helped me to become a stronger and better person to know. What I find hard to live with is the attitudes of some able bodied people and the structure of the society we live in. I have a strong dislike of the patronising of people in positions of power towards people with disabilities, physical or mental.

Over the last 2-3 years I have done a lot of voluntary work with various disability organisations and have met many people with different talents, singers, poets, computer whiz kids, electricians, authors etc; I could go on the list is endless. The one thing that all these people have in common is that they all have some kind of disability and have never been given the chance to fulfil their potential because able bodied people such as their own family members or people in positions of power assume they know what is best and hold the disabled person back.

My biggest dislike is the people who make laws and the service providers who say they give provisions to disabled people to help them live a more independent life, but don't implement the fact. This is aimed

at the service providers who put up signs pretending to comply with the DDA.

- Its no good supplying disabled car parking bays, if able bodied people are allowed to use them without being fined or clamped.

- Its no good a shopping centre putting up signs saying "Give priority to disabled people or people with pushchairs", if it is not monitored and implemented.

- Its no good councils supplying dropped curbs for wheelchairs, if drivers are not prevented from parking across them.

- Its no good having DSS benefits for disabled people, if nobody advises them that they are entitled to claim them

These are just a few issues and there are a lot more that need to be challenged. Since I became disabled I have become one of those people who stands up and fights for their rights. In fact if I come across something in my life that isn't right, and I know it isn't then I will complain and stand my ground until it is put right.

Some people, including my own family and friends say that I should stop moaning and put up with things but they're not disabled, I am. I tell them that there is a difference between moaning and standing up for your rights and I will continue to complain to the relevant people and authorities until disabled people are given the right to live in society as independently as possible.

# News Desk : Some of the things you might have missed ....

The Guardian reported back in March that Ladbrokes had dropped a ban on recruiting people who have asthma to work in their betting shops.

They dropped this policy, and you may like to sit down before you read on, because the Employment Service refused to advertise Ladbrokes job vacancies as they believed the policy could be a breach of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Ladbrokes declined to tell The Guardian's Gary Finn why they had this policy in the first place, however a 'betting industry source' told him that it was probably to prevent "damages actions due to the smoky atmosphere in betting shops"! No comment!

And reports in the press claim Disability Laws are working! Which ones you may ask? According to Industrial Relations Services who conducted a survey of employers, most firms have reviewed their job advertisements, selection procedures and access to their buildings in order to comply with The Disability Discrimination Act.

IRS claims that the pace of change can only increase because the government is committed to stopping the "use of welfare benefits ... as a means of shunting people with injury, ill health or disability out of the labour market".

They also announce that there has been an 11% increase in the number of employers who have a formal policy on the employment of disabled workers. This may

sound good, but in fact this is a meaningless statistic, as we are not told how many employers had a policy regarding the employment of disabled people in the first place. Furthermore, it tells us nothing about what their policies actually say!

Jane Campbell, co-director of the National Centre for Independent Living, has warned social services departments that they could face thousands of court challenges over services to disabled people when the Human Rights Act 1998 comes into force in October.

She stated that disabled people were "bored to death with endless consultation exercises which rarely deliver what we ask for".

The introduction of human and civil rights legislation will provide disabled people with a potential alternative to being forced to use complicated and bureaucratic Social Services Department official complaints procedures.

Ratna Dutt, director of race equality agency REU, warned Social Services Departments that they must design services around the needs of black and ethnic minority service users. She expressed outrage that race issues were treated as an afterthought even in areas where ethnic minorities made up the majority of the population. "We are sick of consultation because we get nothing out of it. " She stated.

Congratulations to the Asda store in Bilton on their nomination for an award for good practice in

the provision of facilities for disabled customers. I do hope this means that they are ensuring that only Orange Badge holders are parking in their Orange Badge parking bays!!

We have long objected to the large disability charities claiming to "represent us", whilst at the same time putting us in residential homes and not employing us.

The latest edition of "Common Ground" the magazine of the MSF union reports that both *The Leonard Cheshire Foundation* (over 5000 staff) and *Scope* appear to have a problem with unions. Both organisations expressed their preference for a "works council". A works council does not have the powers an independent union can have and can often be put under pressure by the employee's organisation.

*Leonard Cheshire* didn't distribute any union material to its workforce and *Scope* pressed ahead with a works council despite staff expressing a clear preference for a union. Although bad news for their staff, it's nice to see that the charities don't just disempower disabled people, but their employees as well!

And finally, congratulations from all of us go to Karl Dean, C&R member and independent Pub access enforcer (see previous issue of Loud & Proud), on completing his degree. Take a look at *page 14* to see what it took for Karl to reach his goal, maybe it'll inspire you to reach for the stars?

# “From The Edge”

Loud and Proud meets Kim Tserkezie. Kim was one of the presenters of "From The Edge", a programme about disability issues that has been running on BBC 2 for a number of years. Kim is a young woman who is a wheelchair user and as well as a presenter is also a researcher, actress and full time mum. I recently met her at a conference in Manchester and I thought it would be a good idea to interview her for Loud and Proud.

## **How did you get into working for television?**

Well, I'd studied "O" and "A" Level TV/Film studies at school and was always interested in the media. I hadn't really thought about working in TV as it appeared to be an area that certainly wasn't easy to get into as a disabled person. I mean, you see so few disabled people on TV that it doesn't strike you as something you can achieve. I'd actually done a lot of community development work and I saw an advert asking for a disabled person to work on the BBC Learning Zone on a programme called Disability Today. I hadn't thought about working in front of the camera and I started off doing both presenting and researching.

**I remember the first time I saw myself on a holiday video, I was quite upset by how I looked and pushed myself. I thought I looked different to what I did! How did it feel for you?**

Yeah, I know what you mean. Your voice as well. When I first started broadcasting, getting used to your look, image and voice was quite weird! I guess I was quite lucky as I'm a bit of a perfectionist and as Disability Today was on in the middle of the night, I could make my mistakes without many people seeing me!

## **So how did you get the job for "From the Edge"?**

I had to go through an audition that was pretty scary. I had to prepare a piece to camera (I did mine about personal assistants) and take part in a role-play where I had to deal with a very difficult interviewer.

You also had quite a few people watching you do all this and it was terrifying. I suppose I did think that if there was one job I should be able to do it would be on From The Edge as I had done lots of work in the disability field and loved broadcasting. I was still amazed when I got the job and I did lots of screaming and celebrating!

## **What was your best and worst assignment on From The Edge?**

That's a difficult one! I'd have to say when we went to Tenerife. It was great because I was working abroad, it was warm and sunny and I got to take my son with me. On the other hand, the hotel was horrible and it was working very much from a medical model of disability.

I'd have to say though, that being able to get out, meet loads of different disabled people doing many varied things and going to places I'd probably never ever visited made the job as a whole, really good experience.

## **Has "From the Edge" finished now?**

Yes, for good. BBC2 has got a new controller and she wants to go in a different direction with disability programming. I don't know what kind of programmes it is going to produce in the future....

## **So, what are you doing now?**

I've just finished acting in a TV film with Robson Green (of Robson and Jerome fame) called Blind Ambition. Robson plays the part of a blind athlete and there are a number of non disabled actors playing disabled people in it. I'm not very comfortable with that, but there are also other disabled people in it. There are so few parts for disabled actors that it is annoying but hopefully if disabled actors can get some roles, we can start to show our potential. Robson was really friendly and funny and he is very much like you imagine. I better plug the programme! It's going to be on ITV on 7th September at 9.00pm. I only have a small part though!

I'm currently working for BBC Radio Newcastle as a researcher for the mid morning programme which looks at arts, lifestyles, etc.

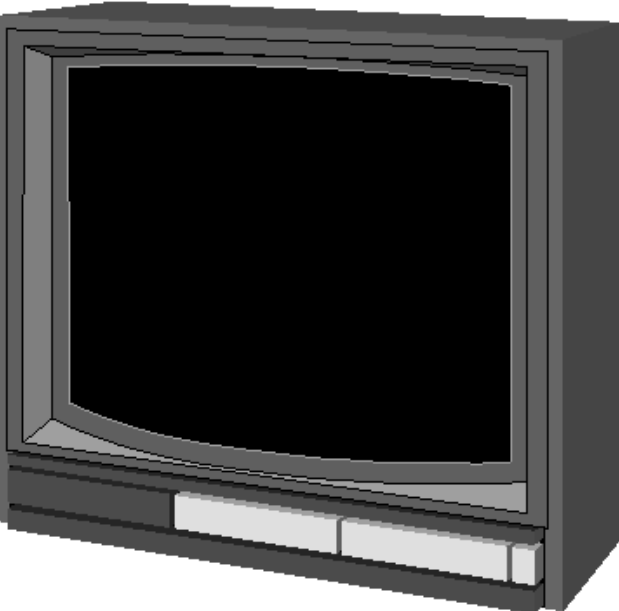
# Mark meets Kim

In addition, I'm doing some social research with Jenny Morris (a well-known disability researcher) looking at the social level exclusion of young disabled people. I'm also involved with Stage Focus Theatre Company.

## **If you had to have an actor play you, who would it be?**

You keep asking some really difficult questions! I can't think of any one person in particular, but it would have to be a disabled woman.

## **One thing I've noticed about you is that unlike some other**



## **What do you think has been difficult for you as a disabled actor?**

The lack of fair opportunities for work. Too many parts are just not considered suitable for a disabled actor, when I know they could be. We need to provide more training opportunities for

disabled people to get into the media, better education and raise awareness, so that disabled people consider becoming actors, writers, etc.

I remember mentioning to my careers officer that I wanted to work in the media and they said I could maybe become an editor as that involved sitting down all the time!

## **If you could play any part in a movie or play, what would it be?**

Erm, another difficult question! I watched the modern version of Romeo and Juliet last night, so I'd like to play Juliet.

## **Do you have a favourite film?**

No, too many to mention, although I do like a good romantic movie!

## **What about music?**

Again, I love all sorts of music, but I'm into garage and R 'n' B at the moment.

## **Finally, if you were the controller of the BBC, what one change would you make to improve opportunities for disabled people?**

I'd want to set up a consulting group of disabled people to make sure we could get what they wanted. I'd also make sure it had a sufficient budget to work properly.

I'd like to thank Kim for agreeing to be interviewed for Loud and Proud. I've met a number of disabled people who are becoming well known and I have say, I haven't been impressed by their attitude towards the disability movement or to individual disabled people.

This certainly doesn't apply to Kim who has no pretensions, is very friendly and has a great personality. If that wasn't enough, she is even better looking than she appears on TV. And, no, she didn't pay me for this article either!

Watch out for her on ITV in "Blind Ambition", starting on 7th September.

# Job Opportunities - Personal Assistants Wanted !!!

If you're a regular reader of Loud and Proud, you'll know that Choices and Rights manage the Independent Living Scheme (Direct Payments). This service now forms part of the Centre for Independent Living (see centre pages).

We've a number of disabled people now using the scheme some of whom, choose to employ their own Personal Assistants (PAs). – This provides the job opportunities!

The role of a PA depends upon the specific needs of disabled person employing them. However general tasks might include some of the following:

- Assisting someone getting up and dressed in a morning / to bed at night.
- Assisting someone with household tasks such as cleaning and preparing meals
- Assistance with getting out and about eg. To go swimming or shopping or other social activities.
- Others tasks as identified and agreed.

## What qualifications and/or qualities do I need?

Formal qualifications are not usually necessary however, being a PA might involve lifting, pushing and bending, you may not have to



be physically strong but in some cases it might help. General good health would also be desirable.

Having the attitude that disabled people require *assistance* and not need '*caring for*' in a patronising way' would be useful. Being open to learning new ways of doing things would also be an advantage.

## What hours do PAs work?

Hours vary – might be a little as 3 hours to full-time depending on the person /people you are working for.

## So I'm interested how do I find out more?

As Co-ordinator of the Independent Living Scheme, I'm able to provide / send out more information.

New people are expressing interest in using direct payments all of the time and as a result of

this demand, I'm developing a PA Register (a database or list of people who want to be PAs / are already PAs looking for more hours. The database will include the PA's details, the areas they want to work, hours they want to work and so on.)


Disabled people wanting to recruit will be able to access this database to choose the people they are interested in interviewing.

Only people using the independent living scheme will have access to the database and personal details on the register shall be kept confidential.

For more information about the role of a PA, or if you are interested in working as a PA and want to be added to the PA Register, contact:

Liesel Dickinson  
Centre for Independent Living  
**Telephone: (01482) 336103**

## The Centre for Independent Living

Part of  a healthy living network in Hull and the East Riding Of Yorkshire.

Managed by:



4  
Pages

**Pull Out - New Series**



**..... Everybody's talking about it!**

Multi-agency funded by



Habinteg Housing Association  
Joint Finance  
Hull and East Riding Health Action Zone

**Pull Out  
& Keep!**

## So what is The Centre for Independent Living?

Simply, a collection of in the first place, 4 key services. These are:

### The Independent Living Scheme (Direct Payments)

- Receive support and information on your options to have greater control over your care needs, employ your own staff and enjoy more flexibility.



**Disability Housing Service** – providing support, information and impartial advice to disabled people who may be considering adapting a home or moving home.



**Information Service**- providing information you want on all kinds of subjects in a way you can understand.



**Peer Support Service** – Talk and support with people you can identify with because they have been or are in a similar situation. One to one and group work.



**One employee is currently employed to manage each service (total 4 paid workers) but the Information Service and Peer Support Service involves volunteers as well.**

**Choices and Rights staff members manage 3 of the services and a Habinteg Housing Association employee working in partnership with Choices and Rights manages the other (the Disability Housing Service).**

**Choices and Rights have overall responsibility for how The Centre for Independent Living (CIL) is run.**

**What does this new opportunity mean for Choices and Rights and its members - has the Organisation changed it's focus?**

**The answer to this is NO! Developed as an Organisation run and controlled by disabled people we have now reached the point where we have 2 separate but equally important roles.**

- 1. The role of managing and developing the CIL and the development and delivery of key services in a way which suits the needs of disabled people locally.**
- 2. The role as Hull's only Campaigning Organisation of disabled people completely run and controlled 100% by disabled locally. (Of course we welcome our non- disabled allies as associate members but without voting rights). The Organisation in this role has previously successfully campaigned for direct payments and more recently funding for the CIL. In this role we plan to continue working with our membership, providing a regular and improving newsletter, updates, Website, training and events as identified as appropriate.**

**We see the continuation and expansion of this role as very important so that the rights of disabled people remain on the agenda locally (and nationally).**

**The CIL like Choices and Rights works to promote the 7 needs of Independent Living: Accessible Information, Housing, Personal Assistance, Peer Support, Accessible Environment, Equipment and Adaptations and Accessible Transport.**

**Is the CIL unique to Hull and the East Riding?**

**The unique thing about The CIL managed by Choices and Rights is that it forms part of in a healthy living network - a network initiative funded by Hull and East Riding Health Action Zone. But CILs sometimes called Centres for Integrated Living have been around a long time.**

## CILS a Brief History.

There are CILs dotted about across Britain and beyond! CILs vary in the services they deliver and the funds they have, but the two things they all have in common are: The promotion of independent living (meaning the inclusion of disabled people into society) and, the way in which they are managed- by disabled people.



A trend for CILs can be traced to America in the 1970's. The first one was set up in Berkeley, California by a group of disabled students who wanted to study and live independently and so decided to arrange their own support and personal assistance systems and the CIL concept as we understand it today was born.

## What do we want from disabled people locally ?

Simply, for you to contact us, use our services and spread the word! Let us know what you think.



## What should you do next?

Contact us and find out more! We're available on the numbers below

**Independent Living Scheme**  
**Managed by Liesel Dickinson**  
**Tel: 01482 336103**

**Disability Housing Service**  
**Managed by Mark Baggley**  
**Tel: 01482 336104**

**Peer Support Service**  
**Managed by Scott Smith**  
**Tel: 01482 336105**

**Information Service**  
**Managed by Duncan Edge**  
**Tel: 01482 336106**

**Fax/Minicom Number: 01482 788668**

**Email: [cil@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk](mailto:cil@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk)**

# Question Time



## Membership Survey

This is the second in a series of questions we're asking the readers of Loud & Proud. We'd really like to hear from you, so please send us your answers by letter, phone, fax, email or minicom:

1) **Do you know what BCODP stands for?**

Yes/No

2) **Would you like Loud & Proud to provide more information on BCODP activities?**

Yes/No

3) **Have you applied for individual Membership of either:**

- A. BCODP
- B. RADAR

4) **Would you go on a demonstration to support Civil Rights for disabled people?**

Yes/No

If not, why not?

- A. Difficulties with transport
- B. Worry about police, injury, etc
- C. Don't believe in demonstrations
- D. Other: .....

5) **Do you consider yourself as part of the "disability Movement?"**

Yes/No

# Bit of this ...

## IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE!

I recently attended a meeting in London for Habinteg and met up with Bert Massie, the Chair of the newly formed Disability Rights Commission. We had to get taxis to move from one meeting to the other and of all the people who could end up in such a situation, Bert was told by his taxi driver that he couldn't lift him into the cab as he had a bad back!

Now first of all, there should be no need to lift Bert, as the driver should be using ramps. Secondly, if the driver has a bad back and Bert decided he was being discriminated against would it be one disabled person against another?

Luckily, in this situation, someone else assisted Bert into the cab, but the driver was informed that this was someone he shouldn't mess around with!

## CLINT EASTWOOD

"Our Clint", who's not known for his left wing views has been lobbying the American parliament to try and weaken the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). He has testified in front of congress that the ADA needs to be revised.

However, he presumably still expects us to go and see his latest movie Space Cowboys. Disabled Americans are calling for a boycott of this film. This film is a Warner Brothers Production, so if you would like to call or write to Warner Brothers and protest at their involvement with this film,

then you can e-mail them at - [wbst@warnerbros.com](mailto:wbst@warnerbros.com)

## DO ANYTHING YOU WANNO DO

Want to be an astronaut, a rock star or TV presenter? Well, Nuria del Saz is reported to have made history by becoming the world's first blind TV newsreader (unless you know differently?) 25 year old Nuria is employed by the state-owned Canal 2 Andalusia fulfilling Nuria's childhood dream.

Once, the Spanish charity for blind people, provided special equipment to help Nuria successfully complete a journalism course and has gone on to offer practical advice and assistance so that Nuria could present the news in a natural and flowing way.

Congratulations to Nuria on her achievement and we look forward to more disabled people obtaining such high profile television careers. (I'm available for Match of The Day, ER or Brookside! -MB)

(Original article appeared in Disability Tribune June/July 2000)

## MORE STAFF TO GO AT CHARITY

The Guide Dogs for The Blind Association, who have enough funding to ensure that every person requiring a dog can have one for the next five years (serious money!), are cutting staff by 40%. Out of 140 staff, only 14 are disabled. Various reasons are

given for the cuts, including a report that states the organisation was over centralised and bureaucratic, but we'd like to believe that slowly, but surely, people are realising that supporting organisations OF disabled people is a much better use of resources.

## DAN STRIKES AGAIN!

Remember DAN (the Disabled people's Direct Action Network) that came to Hull and kidnapped a bus? Well, they have recently demonstrated in Newcastle, protesting at the opening of a centre based on genetics and biology. The centre launched the "Life Interactive World" as part of the International Centre of Life.

DAN also set up three days of action demanding a Centre for Independent Living, better housing and ending care charges for disabled people. In a meeting with the local authority, councillors refused to meet any of the demands made and stated that DAN did not represent any local disabled people. This was despite a petition supporting DAN's views from over 1000 local people.

## ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

After a long campaign for accessible transport (including hijacking a double decker bus in Hull!) it appears that the Direct Action Network (DAN), plus

# ... Bit of that

lobbying by local disabled people has made a difference. The East Yorkshire Motor Services have taken delivery of four double deckers and 10 single deckers that have wheelchair access. Although, we strongly believe it's about time, we'd like to send our congratulation to EYMS for being the first to recognise that disabled people can be passengers too! Hopefully, this is the end of specialised, expensive, segregated transport schemes and the start of new freedom and equality for disabled people.

## TOP TEN MYTHS ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

Nick Hornby, the author of "Fever Pitch" (one of the best books about football) also wrote a book called "High Fidelity" (probably one of the best books about men and their ideas ever written, and one of the funniest).

The main character is constantly creating his top ten lists of favourite bands, food, films, etc. and as a tribute to this, here are our top ten myths about disabled people.

If you have a favourite top ten, it could be TV programmes, it could be accessible places, etc, why not send it in to Loud and Proud?

1. We Don't Have Sex
2. We have "special needs"
3. We can't dance
4. All we talk about is disabled toilets

5. We all use wheelchairs
6. Blind people need to "touch" people's faces
7. We don't take illegal drugs
8. We like Jimmy Saville (ARRGHHH)
9. We can't work full time
10. All we do is visit the doctors.

Did you like that - bring a smile to your face? - well let's have *your* Top 10 .....

## JONATHAN ROSS - DISABLED FRIENDLY?

Jonathan Ross, the well know BBC TV presenter of Film 2000 and regular guest of "They Think It's All Over" has been showing what a funny guy he is.

At the Sony Music awards, he picked up an award for his Radio 2 show and stated that the only award he had previously won was "A best dressed award from the Spastics society- and that was because I managed to do all my buttons up the right way". (*Article from Disability Now*)

Despite criticism from disability groups, he followed up his "joke" with another one at the expense of Heather Mills, Paul McCartney's girlfriend who is a model and has mobility impairment.

No doubt Mr Ross will be on some future charity event, showing what a good guy he is and how he's socially aware.

Loud and Proud were tempted to make jokes at the expense of Mr Ross, but were unable to do

so, as we realised there is nothing funny in making jokes about talent less, thoughtless and gutless TV presenters.

## INFORMATION, WOT INFORMATION?

Hello, my name's Duncan and if you have a sudden sense of déjà vu it's because we really have been here before.

A couple of issues of Loud & Proud ago you may remember me introducing myself as your volunteer access officer, but since Monday 17 July I have been in post as the Information Worker for the Centre Of Independent Living. (You will find out more about the CIL in a future update. )

Accessible information has been identified as one of the seven needs for independent living and it is my aim to provide a fully accessible information service.

We have not had an information worker before so my first task is to sift through all of the information that we currently hold and ensure that it is all up to date.

I will be continuing to provide information and guidance on access issues and can be contacted on Hull (01482) 336106 or by email: [duncan@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk](mailto:duncan@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk)

## FANCY A DABBLE?

Would you like to see your name up in lights? (well, in black and white anyway !) - send us something, go on, write about anything you like, and send it in !!!

# STRUGGLE TO GET TO THE TOP - How Karl Dean got his HND !!

In 1994 I started HND in computing at University of Humberside. I have Cerebral Palsy and I operate an electric wheelchair. My speech is not always audible or understandable and I often communicate using a speech synthesiser. Although it's initially difficult to understand me, after a short while people soon begin to pick up words and phrases and speak to me like anybody else. It's almost like learning a new language, only it takes less time to become fluent!

I enrolled and began following a timetable of lectures and seminars specially arranged around me; staff had to ensure that my classes took place on the ground floor as the regulations covering the listed buildings would not allow installation of lifts.

Two months before the course started I ordered a new laptop free from my Local Education Authority. A few weeks passed, still no laptop. I had to use my five year old one, but it was so slow my tortoise could go faster and it kept crashing. I battled on with it, handing in my assignments in on time and kept asking, "When is my new laptop coming?" I used to get the same old story, "It's coming soon." I thought "I bet it is!" My new laptop finally arrived in March 1995. I couldn't believe it, it was only seven months late!!

I use a head pointer for typing, sometimes this can be a laborious process, but it still allows me a writing speed of 12 words per minute. This is slow compared to an able bodied person, and I had great difficulty in keeping to assignment deadlines and had to

take two years to complete the first level of the HND. I made the decision to try to complete the final year in just one year along with the other students. This presented me with a real challenge - I had to work harder than ever just to keep up and there were many written projects to complete. Phew!!!

Most students worry about exams and I was allowed double the time to sit mine because of my typing difficulties. The other students sat regulation three hour exams, but each exam basically took me all day. And it was not just a matter of doing the work, I use a lot of energy when I am typing and my hair and T-shirt were soaked in sweat at the end of each paper. When I received the letter saying I had passed, I had to read it twice just to be sure.

After completing the HND in Computing, I decided to get transferred to the second year of the BSc in computing. Sadly I had some disagreements with the access and they kept forgetting about me. I failed the year by one unit and this meant I couldn't go on the final year. I failed one unit due to access problems and they kicked me off the course. I had worked hard to get to this position and I thought this was unfair so I went to Humberside Law Centre to fight my case.

After 5 months we came to an agreement. I could resit the unit for free and if I passed I would be allowed on the final year of the BSc. I passed the single unit with flying colours (of course)!!

The final year was the biggest



challenge of my life. It's hard enough for an able-bodied person so it was even harder for me, especially with a head pointer, and I was still having some access problems. Despite all the problems I actually kept up with everyone else in the semester of the final year. In the final semester of the final year I had a little more time as I had to do a dissertation, and a group project on top of the normal assignments. I did have extra time and so did some other students.

Overall I have enjoyed doing the course, it's been a good challenge, and I have met a lot of friendly people from all over the world. I hope my success will encourage disabled and non-disabled people to take that uncertain step towards higher education. 12 years ago the odds for me going to University would have been a million to one. So everyone can achieve something in life, but you have to work hard to reach your goal. I wonder how many people have done a degree with a head pointer?

**Karl Dean (HND, BSc)**

## Habinteg Disability Housing Service Forums

Although now part of the CIL, the Disability Housing Forum's are continuing and all Choices and Rights members are invited to attend. The next Disability Housing Forum will take place on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2000 between 1.30pm and 4.30pm.

It will be held at Centre 88, Saner Street, Hull and will feature as it's main topic, the issues around medical priority. (This is what some housing providers use to decide which disabled person is "most in need" of housing).

Already confirmed to attend is Ginnie Shaw from HoDis (National Disability Housing Service) who has been working on looking at housing applications from the social model of disability. The forum is free to attend and disabled people and service providers are welcome to attend. Please let Mark Baggley know in advance if you are attending, so he can sort out refreshments and meet your access needs.

Please contact Mark on Hull (01482) 336104.

## The Post Office and RADAR - a marriage made in heaven?

The Post Office, in conjunction with RADAR, the Royal National Institute for Deaf People and the Royal National Institute for the Blind, recently held a seminar, aimed at local businesses in Nuneaton to promote disability access. Unfortunately (or should that be stupidly), the venue was upstairs in a pub with no lift!

Mary Beaumont who is the

manager of DIAL in Nuneaton and Bedworth (and the Lord Mayoress) of Nuneaton) is a wheelchair user complained and was told by the Post Office that if they'd been informed she was coming, they would have held a presentation for her downstairs! By chance, a friend of mine works with Ms Beaumont and she gave me the inside track on this story. They contacted The Sun who ran the story, but described her as "wheelchair bound mayor"! Sometimes, we just can't win.

I suggest to get our own back on the post office, we all ring our local branch on a Monday morning to let them know we will be coming in for a couple of stamps and to pay our TV licence. Let's see 6 million disabled people all ringing on a Monday morning. Might slow things down a bit!

Its also interesting that three "Royal" organisations with millions of pounds between them, couldn't think to book an accessible venue. I understand RADAR has recently had to make eight people redundant in order to save 300,000 per year. They have managed to find eight staff willing to take voluntary redundancy. Good news I think. If RADAR is losing money, organisations OF disabled people might get the money instead. Despite not having anything like 300, 000 to spend (or lose), we can guarantee that Choices and Rights will never use inaccessible venues, as we KNOW how important access is, as we need it too.

Got any interesting stories you want to share with the Loud & Proud readership?

Write, fax or email - go on, do it now !!!

## How to send us your articles ...

We prefer you to send articles as computer files since this makes our layout work easier and quicker. If you don't have access to a computer, handwritten articles are best submitted in BLOCK CAPS text where possible.

### Tips for sending computer generated files:

Save/Export your file as:

*Plain Text (.txt)*

*Rich Text Format (.rtf)*

Please DO NOT save the files in your programs native format as we may not be able to read/access them. To send us a computer file please use one of the following media types:

### (IBM / PC Format)

3.5" Floppy Disc  
Zip 100/250MB Disc  
CD-ROM

### (MAC Format)

3.5" Floppy Disc

### Notes for email:

Please insert as a file, or clearly mark where the article starts/ends.

### Where to send your articles:

#### Email:

lp@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk

#### Post:

Choices & Rights  
Arthur Richardson Centre  
Savoy Road  
Hull  
HU8 0TX

#### Fax:

01482 788668

## STOP PRESS

### New Format

We'd like your opinions and advice regarding the latest issue of Loud & Proud.

We've made some changes to the layout for this issue that hopefully you'll like, but if there is a way we can make Loud & Proud more accessible for you, please let us know.

# Disability Information Service



Using our own *local area* data and the national database provided and updated by DIAL UK, we are able to offer you lots of practical information on all sort of topics including:

- Law & Rights
- Education
- Social Issues
- Holidays
- Transport
- Accommodation
- Direct Payments
- Volunteering
- Personal Matters
- Arts & Leisure
- Aids & Equipment
- Sports & Interests

Contact Duncan Edge 10am to 4pm weekdays, or you may leave an answerphone message at all other times.

 - **01482 336106**

Minicom - **01482 788668** Fax - **01482 788688**

## Contact Details



### *Independent Living/Direct Payments*

**Liesel Dickinson** Independent Living Scheme Coordinator  
**01482 336103** Voice/Answerphone  
 email Liesel: [liesel@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk](mailto:liesel@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk)

### *Housing Issues*

**Mark Baggley** Habinteg Training and Information Officer  
**01482 336104** Voice/Answerphone  
 email Mark: [habinteg@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk](mailto:habinteg@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk)

### *Peer Support*

**Scott Smith**  
**01482 336105** Voice/Answerphone  
 email: [scott@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk](mailto:scott@choicesandrights.demon.co.uk)

