

# A dedicated event for SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Friday 14th and Saturday 15th October 2011

The UK's leading Special Education Needs (SEN) event is once again returning to London this autumn, the only exhibition that focuses exclusively on the needs of special education. Situated in the Business Design Centre in Islington, the event is a must for anyone working in SEN, with over 150 special needs suppliers presenting the latest products and service developments available.

All children develop in different ways and at different rates, yet the early years for a child are some of the most vital for their physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. This time is none more so important than for a child with special needs, even more reliant on the help of parents and teachers through their development than other children. It is therefore essential that the resources and training are readily available for those who need it.

And there is no arena more perfect for just that than the TES Special Needs Event, this October, attracting educational professionals from both mainstream and specialised schools across the UK. The exhibition is driven by the motive that all children can and should achieve. Whether caring for just one SEN child or an

## By Sophie Hurcom

entire class, there is an exiting array to suit everybody.

Taking place over two days, visitors can sample and purchase the products on offer, attend a series of professional development seminar sessions and keep up to date with all the latest advances made within the sector. There's even an opportunity to benefit from a huge number of discounts and stock up on free samples.

Focusing on Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training of everyone from parents to teachers, SENCO's (special educational needs co-ordinators) and support staff, the highly popular seminar programme provides up to date advice, support and practical solutions from renowned experts.

This year, leading experts offering sessions include Pat Chick, Maggie Johnston, Fin O'Regan, Ronnie Young, Rob Long, and many more top speakers. Guests can experience every aspect of the curriculum from ADHD to Dyslexia and Autism as well as gain advice on how to deal with and handle an array of situations and conditions.

Taking place at the perfect time for the new academic year, each time attendees leave the exhibition feeling optimistic and motivated, inspired by an array of fresh and creative solutions, classroom activities and lesson plans.

## Seminars

To kick start the seminar sessions on Friday morning is Maggie Johnson, a Speech and Language Therapy Advisor and Educational Consultant. Maggie, a repeated contributor to the exhibition year on year, is holding two separate seminar sessions on the Friday. The first entitled 'Creating a Communication and Learning Friendly Environment' focuses on how the learning environment for children can be made most effective. Therefore, if children are reluctant to participate, we need to ask what can be done differently. Maggie will discuss eight factors that will ensure children experience success and take risks.

Maggie's second session on Friday afternoon tackles a slightly different but topical issue, namely language problems in children and the effects it can have on their behaviour in later life. Statistically, language prob-



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Continued from previous page

lems lead to behavioural problems at best and criminal activity at worst, yet still so many children with language processing difficulties go undetected. 'Language Difficulty or Behaviour Problem – chicken or egg?' will examine the true nature of communication and how to recognise the early warning signs in children so they can be best dealt with.

## Insight

Another regular seminar speaker is Pat Chick, an Independent Educational Consultant, this time discussing 'Communicating with Parents'. It is expected that parents will continuously worry about their children, yet it is almost impossible for parents to care for them 24/7. One of the biggest reassurances for a parent is knowing that the person caring for your child when you are not there is someone you have a trustworthy, conflict free relationship with.

Pat, who has worked for Parent Partnership Services for many years, will share her insight into how teachers and SENCO's should best communicate with parents about proposed changes to their child's care.

As the SEN Green Card says, 'parents need to be clear about their options and understand how decisions are made that affect their child's support'.

Yet the seminar schedule is only half the story at this event, with up to 150 SEN suppliers exhibiting the widest range of ICT, soft-

ware and classroom resources to all under one roof. Attracting the best of everything SEN, professionals are able to get up close and try out the latest products, see demos and maybe even take advantage of exclusive show discounts.

One of those on show is the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), an umbrella body for many member organisations and individuals who are dyslexic, or who support dyslexic children. Although a staggering 10% of the British population is dyslexic, many are unable to fulfil their maximum potential as the difficulties which the condition presents means people do not know how best to support those with it.



► Special Needs London gives visitors the opportunity to try out the latest products.



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as these, to parents and SEN teachers.

'The SEN market is very fragmented and not always easy to target so as this event is often extremely well attended it's important for a small business like us to be there,' Lesley told *actionnetwork*, 'We get to meet with customers who can try out our products and buy them there and then or take a catalogue away. We also get feedback from practitioners as to resources they are looking for which helps us to expand our range as well.'

A range of fun, products will be on display to try out, including wooden toys, tactile and sensory products, puppets and interactive books. For more information visit [www.sensetoys.com](http://www.sensetoys.com)

Another exhibitor is Rising Stars UK Ltd, an independent publishing company that has



▲ An impressive line-up of expert speakers will be in attendance at this year's show.

developed an award-winning range of books, teaching resources and software that support teachers and learners in the UK and across the world. Products on offer cover the entire curriculum and ability spectrum, such as the Brain Academy series requiring children to use their thinking skills to complete challenging missions, or the Dangerous Games collection of fictional graphic novels for reluctant readers.

For those considering exhibiting, it is extremely beneficial. It provides an opportunity to reach a new market, launch new products and raise your organisations profile. As well as that, more than 75% of those who do exhibit make sales directly from their stands.

As always, the entire event is sponsored by the UK's leading educational publisher, the Times Education Supplement (TES), who are situated directly in the heart of the teaching community. Understanding the importance of an event such as this to many teaching professionals, they are able to use their standing to bring the event to the mass teaching population.

### Prestigious

The TES are also offering a range of sponsorship opportunities for organisations throughout the event. The most prestigious of these being the Principal Exhibition Sponsor, a position that situates a company at the forefront of the entire event, exposed to the high level audience within the venue and associated with the integrity and prestige of the exhibition.

The conference takes place on Friday 14th and Saturday 15th October in the Business Design Centre, Islington in London. Entry to the resources exhibition is free but visitors must register first, while positions in the seminar sessions must be pre-booked.

To book or register, enquire about exhibiting or apply for a sponsorship position please visit: [www.teachingexhibitions.co.uk/](http://www.teachingexhibitions.co.uk/)



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# Hands-On Hay

Scotsman John Hay is one of the most influential figures within the deaf community, widely respected by colleagues and peers. As a senior lecturer at the University of Wolverhampton, John's research and achievements have gone a long way towards revolutionising the education of deaf people, as well as creating a uniquely important deaf culture, which preserves the history of deaf people.

Highly revered today, John's education and career did not start entirely smoothly and his path to success was definitely not easy.

After spending his childhood growing up in Edinburgh, John moved to Newbury, Berkshire to attend the Mary Hare Grammar School for the Deaf, in the later stages of his school life.

## Kick start

Upon leaving school, he moved back to his hometown to work as an architectural assistant for Edinburgh City Council, a job that would kick start his entire career.

Alongside his employment, John attended the local college of Science and Technology, now Napier University, on a day release basis, completing a course to become a member of the Architectural Technicians.

Teaching methods in the 1960's were much tougher on deaf people than they are today, with little attempt made by lecturers to assist those with hearing problems. Lecture handouts, something that seems relatively simple and common today in many universities, were rarely given out making it difficult for John to follow what was being said in classes.

Instead, friends and fellow students proved crucial for John



▲ John Hay

throughout his time in college, helping out by putting carbon paper under their own writing pads, so they could give John a copy of their notes after lectures.

John is the first to admit that his early academic and employment success came as a surprise to many. 'The deaf community was really surprised that I was working as an architectural technician,' he said, '(They) asked me how I got a job there, as so many roles seemed unattainable'.

Qualified as a certified architect, John was able to finally realise the career he had pursued for many years. However, it was his passion and strong ties to the deaf community that led him to the position he has maintained today for over a decade, the chance to impact and improve the lives of fellow deaf people to tempting to resist.

Leaving Scotland, John moved with his family to Wolverhampton in 1998, taking the job of Senior Lecturer in Deaf Studies and British Sign Language/English Interpreting, at the University's School of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences, a position that became much more than just a job.

John's role extends much further beyond his teaching position, as he explained during the *Under the Lamp* television interview. 'People think that I'm just a lecturer but I actually have other responsibilities', he declared. 'I'm an Academic counsellor. I advise students with problems, such as applying for extensions. Also I'm a special needs tutor and support a wide variety of students, not only deaf students, but those in wheelchairs, blind, those with learning difficulties, dyslexia and so on'.

Since John started at Wolverhampton University, the area around deaf studies has developed vastly in recent years, which his colleagues are the first to recognise, 'We are very proud of John's achievements and his tireless work for the Deaf community', Barbara Gwinnett, Dean of the School of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences stated.

Unlike John's time in education, support for deaf students in education has come on leaps and bounds, being greatly improved with help from teaching assistants, such as note-takers and sign language interpreters.

## Higher education

Similarly, the educational opportunities for deaf people have significantly progressed in recent years. Both John's sons attended the same school he did, and while John states that only two out of 30 in his school year went directly into university, during his sons' time, that figure has skyrocketed to 80% who left school for higher education.

Additionally, the number of opportunities for employment has significantly risen for the deaf community. A change in attitude alone towards deaf people, John tells the University of Wolverhampton, is ground-breaking. 'The floodgates are now open with more opportunities for deaf people to be engaged in employment with responsibilities,' he declares.

Gradually, Wolverhampton University became more than just a place of work for John, but a family affair. John's wife Shirley teaches sign language to staff and provides cover for absent lecturers in the school, while both his son's graduated from the University. Eldest son Gordon even met his wife Iva there when she was visiting on an exchange trip from the Czech Republic.

Aside from teaching, much of John's work for the deaf community is done on a voluntary basis. He holds a number of key roles within organisations for deaf people, such as, Chairman and Trustee of the BDHS (British Deaf History Society), Trustee of BID Services for Deaf People, Vice President of the Midlands Regional Association for the Deaf and Patron of the charity My BSL.

John is also a published author, successfully writing two books with fellow academic writer, Raymond Lee, the first being released 1993, followed closely by the second in 1994.

He regularly features on *See Hear*, the BBC magazine programme

for deaf viewers and contributes year on year to *Deaffest*, the only film and television festival in the UK solely for deaf people. Based in the Lighthouse Centre, Wolverhampton, since 1998, the highly successful festival attracts around 1700 people and is currently in its thirteenth year.


John's work for the deaf community has been widely acknowledged by his colleagues and students. In 2001 he was named Teacher of the Year by his peers at the University. Following this he received the Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship in 2006. The Fellowship enables those awarded to travel abroad to get a better understanding of overseas cultures.

## Deaf history

For John, the Fellowship allowed him to research deaf culture abroad to create more of a 'deaf history' here in Britain. Explaining to *Under the Lamp*, John says, 'It allowed me to research deaf culture, museums and archives in Europe, America and Canada for two months, which we don't have yet in Britain,' he said. 'The British Deaf History Society wants to investigate available funding sources to set up a museum here. My travels meant that we could compile a report detailing what other countries have and what we want to set up'.

However, it was in 2008 that John was awarded his most prestigious honour, being made an MBE by the Queen for his services to the Deaf community and Higher Education. Upon receiving the title, a delighted John said he was 'very much honoured' to be recognised for the award and even described how the Queen had 'sparkling eyes and a lovely smile'.

When asked about the honour, Professor Geoff Hurd, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Wolverhampton University said, 'John has had a remarkable career and has shown great energy and dedication in his wide-ranging activities for the British Deaf community. We are delighted that his achievements have been recognised in this way'.

John Hay continues to be triumphant in his campaign to develop communication and knowledge for both the deaf and hearing communities, whilst carefully preserving the history of the pioneers from the past. 

## CHAMPION OF THE DEAF COMMUNITY

Wendy Daunt, like John Hay, is an integral part of the deaf community. She has campaigned tirelessly throughout her life for the deaf community, dedicating her time to supporting and encouraging hundreds of deaf children through school and work.

Throughout her career, Wendy has worked for many years at the Royal School for the Deaf in Derby, to which she is now a Governor. This position enables Wendy to implement her ideas and ensure her enthusiasm for deaf culture is put to good use and results in success for the school.

Wendy is so dedicated to the cause for deaf people that she works as an ambassador for multiple deaf charities and organisations, volunteering in her spare time. She served on the committee of Communication Unlimited for ten years, an independent organisation providing communication services to deaf people, as well as acting as Secretary to the Birmingham Deaf Club for eleven years.

Some of her proudest achievements include working as a committee member and trustee of two of the largest deaf organisations in the UK, the British Deaf Association, in a position she held for fifteen years, and the Royal Institute for the Deaf.

## Photographer

Alongside her work, Wendy is an avid photographer, many of whom who know her will vouch that she is rarely seen without her camera or video-camera. This passion for photography and film making led her to develop CHASE Video Productions, a company specialising in translating topics and events for deaf children using British Sign Language (BSL) descriptions.

Wendy's inspiration for the company came upon realising how few resources were available in BSL. In an interview with *Under the Lamp* she explained, 'My aim was for deaf children to go to the library and have English resources, books, magazines down one side of the library and then BSL DVD's down the other'. After twenty years of development, the company is now famous in the UK and around the world for its work.

Similarly to John Hay, Wendy is a big champion of the preservation of deaf culture and history. Under her leadership, a number of deaf cultural festivals and events have been organised, aiming to encourage deaf people to come together to share their language and cultural history.

She has expressed how vitally important she feels it is that deaf history and sign language is preserved and filmed, so that deaf people are able to see first where they've come from and second how much the culture has developed. As Wendy summed-up to *Under the Lamp*, 'Deaf culture is something to be proud of'.



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