



# Unheard Voices: interviews with deafened people

Wanda Knight  
Interviewed by Colin Ellis

British Library ref. C1345/34

## **IMPORTANT**

This transcript was created at the time of the interview by a Speech-to-Text Reporter. The summaries were completed by the interviewer after the interview using the STTR transcript.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it. Should you find any errors please inform the Oral History curators

Oral History  
The British Library  
96 Euston Road  
London  
NW1 2DB

T: +44 (0)20 7412 7404

E: [oralhistory@bl.uk](mailto:oralhistory@bl.uk)

This interview and transcript is accessible via <http://sounds.bl.uk>.

© Hearing Link. Please refer to the Oral History curators at the British Library prior to any publication or broadcast from this document.

## Interview Summary Sheet

**Ref no:** C1345/34

**Collection title:** Unheard Voices: interviews with deafened people

**Interviewee's surname:** Knight

**Title:**

**Interviewee's forename:** Wanda

**Sex:** Female

**Occupation:**

**Date and place of birth:** 1951, Redruth

**Date(s) of recording:** 15<sup>th</sup> March 2009

**Location of interview:** The City Inn Hotel, Bristol

**Name of interviewer:** Colin Ellis

**Speech to Text reporter:** Georgina Ford

**Type of recorder:** Marantz PMD660 on compact flash

**Recording format :** WAV 16 bit 48 kHz

**Total no. of tracks:** 4

**Mono or stereo:** stereo

**Total Duration:** 1 hr. 29 min.

**Additional material:**

**Copyright/Clearance:** Open. © Hearing Link

**Interviewer's comments:**

**[Track 1]**

*This is Colin Ellis interviewing Wanda Knight on Sunday 15th March for Unheard Voices Project in Bristol. Wanda would like to tell us your full name, when and where you were born and a little bit about your family, your mother and father and if you have brothers or sisters and where you all came from.*

Okay. Right my full name is Wanda Janet Knight. I live in Bristol although I was born in Cornwall. I moved up from Cornwall when I was three to Bristol. Unfortunately, my parents are no longer with me. They died one ten years, one three years ago. I have no brothers or sisters but I have two children, a daughter that is 40 with two granddaughters and a son that's 38, no children, two horses, four dogs and a parrot.

[End of Track 1]

**[Track 2]**

*Would you like to tell me when you were born and what part of Cornwall if you can remember you were born in.*

I was born on 15th January 1951. My Dad was in the RAF in Cornwall. We lived in a place called Saint Columb Major and I was born in Redruth. I don't remember an awful lot of when I lived in Cornwall as I was only three when I moved up, only when we would go down on holiday I'd go to visit the places that I lived in.

*So would you like to enlighten us about your father's career in the RAF and what he did when he came out and do you remember what your Mum did?*

Right, my father was in the RAF. He was Polish. He came over just -- I think it was just after the war. So he wasn't in the RAF for very long and my Mum she was also Polish. She came over from Poland 1948 or '49 just after the war. She was a nurse in Africa and came over to England as a refugee, I think you would say and they both settled down in Cornwall where they met each other and married there and that's where I was born.

*Do you know anything about your Polish grandparents or where they came from in Poland?*

I did know but unfortunately I've forgotten. I've had meningitis and my memory's not as good as it was before. I don't know where they were born. My grandmother came to England with my mother so she was here until she died about 30 years ago.

*Would you like to describe your childhood experiences and your friends and hobbies, what you liked as a child and your education and your dislikes.*

Okay. I was an only child, which I didn't like very much. I always sort of hoped and longed for a brother or a sister, somebody to play with or somebody to go out with. When I first went to school, my first language was Polish as my parents were Polish so we spoke Polish at home so when I went to school, I had to also to learn English. I used to say to my Mum and Dad -- I can remember saying it now -- "why aren't you like all the other Mums and Dads? Why are you Polish? Why aren't you English"? But I mean, it didn't worry me that much growing up

but at the time when you're sort of 4 and a half and everybody else is -- you just feel different or I did then. One of my earliest memories that I can remember is it was when nylon first came out, nylon dresses, and my Mum and Dad bought me a yellow and a blue one and I remember

wearing one to school and putting a biro in the pocket of the dress and it broke and there was ink all over my dress. It didn't worry my Mum, it's just a dress but it's an expense -- don't worry, it's just a dress. That was one of my earliest memories.

*Can you remember where you went from your first school to your senior school?*

Yes. I wasn't very good at school but also I used to come home and sort of say to my Mum or to my Dad can you help me with my homework? But they couldn't because they couldn't speak the language very well. So I used to go visiting friends that could possibly help. One of the things I do remember that my Mum did was if anybody was ill with chicken pox, measles, all the childhood illnesses, she'd send me off there to play with them so I would get it as a child, which I never did. I just didn't get any of it. So that didn't work. But I enjoyed going round visiting all these people that were trying to make me ill.

[06:17]

*Would you like to tell us about your first experiences of leaving school and having employment or did you have to through your difficulties have Further Education?*

I left school at 15. I didn't want to stay on. The only subjects I was good at was sewing and cooking but all those years ago you couldn't take those as a -- I can't remember, O level or whatever -- you had to have English or maths as a first subject and these as a second or third and they said that I couldn't take English or maths because I wouldn't get very far in it. So I didn't have any qualifications so I didn't want to stay on and my Mum said the only way that I could leave school is if I got a job. So I went out and got myself a job working in a garage not far from here actually as an office junior, which I enjoyed but it was a long way to go and I had to catch two buses and walk. But I was determined that I wasn't going to stay at school, I was going to get a job. Three weeks later I bumped into a friend of mine that worked up in Clifton which was a bit nearer and she managed to get me a job there, which I enjoyed and I worked there until I was 18, three years.

Then at 18 I met my husband. We got married and I had a baby. So I didn't work for a while after that.

*What job did you do until you was 18? Was it office work again?*

It was office work but it was varied. It was invoices, it was on reception, it was postal clerk, it was just varied work which I enjoyed.

*So you met your husband and settled down into family life and he became the bread winner for a while?*

Yes, he became the bread winner but I still did bits and pieces. I delivered leaflets, I bought a knitting machine and I did knitting at home and sold that.

[09:23]

*Wanda, we're now going to ask you a little bit about your health and how you became deafened so would you like to describe how you first noticed the deterioration of your hearing and how you felt and about any related problems like tinnitus or your balance or your confidence and how it affected you and your husband, if you like.*

Okay, right. It's got there deterioration. It wasn't deterioration. I had meningitis so I lost it all at once. Can I just describe a little bit? Right. I wasn't feeling well. I went to the hospital and they said that I had a virus. I came home. An hour later I was very bad, terrible headaches, violently sick, rang the hospital again and they said painkillers, take painkillers. I went to sleep after taking these painkillers I thought but it wasn't a sleep. I was in a coma and I'd got meningitis. When they managed to revive me, I was deaf in both ears. I've got absolutely nothing at all -- no hearing at all. Since then, I've suffered with chronic tinnitus due to the implant that I've had for my hearing to help my hearing, balance problems, memory problems due to my meningitis, concentration problems that I can't concentrate for very long.

*Would you like to tell us when this happened to you and how did you feel when you couldn't hear? Did it affect you? Were you angry or did Nick get frustrated because of communicating to you?*

To start off with, because I was so ill at the time I didn't sort of understand about the meningitis. I couldn't hear, I was -- I just took it day-to-day. I didn't really or I couldn't hear but I didn't how can I say -- I didn't understand it because I was ill. It wasn't until as I was getting better and I was told -- I was always told that it may come back but they were just -- I think they were just humouring me at the time. They just said it might come back and I believed that it would. You always hope that it would come back, which it didn't. Nick was very, very good. The family were very good, very supportive. In fact it was my daughter that got me all the information about meningitis. I didn't understand anything about it. When I came out of hospital, the Meningitis Trust suggested that I had a hearing test because with meningitis, the hearing or the cochlea deteriorates and the only way that there's a chance of my hearing was to have an implant, but we have to do it quickly. So we went to the audiology at South Mead which -- well, they are absolutely fantastic.. They've helped me right the way through this and if it wasn't for them I'm sure I wouldn't be where I am today. Yes, I did get frustrated not because of my hearing so much but the communication part of it, trying to communicate to people that look at me and say well, you look -- "you don't look deaf" and I still get this now, "you don't look deaf", how does a deaf person look? Have you got a big nose, do your ears stick out? That was the frustrating bit for me. If Nick gets or got frustrated, he never showed it. He did occasionally walk away, as I did when I get frustrated.

*Okay, are you ready?*

Three months after I lost my hearing, my Mum died. She was in hospital and I knew that she wouldn't come home. She was so ill that she wouldn't come home but because she was Polish and the accents and everything I couldn't understand her, I couldn't communicate with her. I can't -- I can speak Polish, I can't write very good Polish. She couldn't see so if I wrote anything down she couldn't see it. So I couldn't -- the last three weeks of her life I couldn't communicate with her, which got me very frustrated, very unhappy. I was very sad. Then three months after that I was put in for a cochlear implant. So I had this done in the November after I'd lost my hearing in the April. So I had to have obviously another operation and that's when my tinnitus took over. I've always had it but it's never been as bad as it is now. Because I had to work hard at this with this implant, I didn't have time to mourn for my Mum, I didn't have time to mourn for my hearing loss.

*Can you tell me --*

Can I just have a minute?

[17:19]

The meningitis I had 2006, three days before our wedding anniversary actually. So I always remember when I had it. The implant that I had -- no, sorry, my Mum died in the April 2006 - - no, sorry, July 2006 she died. The cochlear implant I had in the November of 2006 and they turned it on about a week before Christmas so it was a lovely Christmas present for me.

*So were you able to hear, again for the first time since the meningitis and do you think any of this was hereditary through your family, through your Mum and Dad or probably maybe your grandparents.*

What the hearing loss or the?

*Yes.*

My mother was slightly deaf and my father were but I think it was through old age. There was no hearing loss in the family; it was just through old age.

*What was the reaction from your friends and was you working at that time?*

Yes I was.

[19:17]

*What were you doing?*

I was an HCS a healthcare assistant at the hospital where I was treated for meningitis at the time. They all came to see me, they were very concerned, very thoughtful. I was out sick for 18 months I was out and I tried -- I went in one day with my sick note and sort of said that I think I would like to try and come back to work again. So my boss said well, you've got to go

to occupational health so that they can sort out whether you can come back or not. I can't remember dates or when I went but it was soon after that that I went to the Occy Health and the Occy Health doctor said, to be honest how do you think you would cope being deaf? I said I don't know. Until I try I don't know. They said I don't think in all honesty that you can hear enough to do it. So I said well, how do you know before you've assessed me if I can do it or not? So they were going to arrange for an assessment for me. This was arranged in -- I went to see them in June of 2007 and I heard nothing, July, August, September until November. I went in to see my boss and said have you heard anything about my assessment? She said she hadn't, she hasn't been able to contact anybody. She's tried various times and she hasn't been able to get in contact. I said well, I'm in contact with him. I didn't tell her that he was deaf. I said if you ring or leave a message he will contact you. I spoke to him this week and he hasn't heard anything from the Health Authority. She said "well, I've tried, okay". I left it at that. So I then asked her about coming back to work and she said about the hours that I wanted to come back. I worked 7 and a half hours before and I said I physically and mentally cannot do 7 and a half. I can do 5. She said I can't give you 5, it's not fair on the people that you work with because they have to do 2 and a half hours of your work. So then I said okay. I was always when I went in to visit; I always had these little remarks about "you can't hear the buzzer if a patient rings". The ward that I worked on was an orthopaedic rehab ward that elderly people that break a hip or a hip replacement or an arm and you get them ready to go into their own homes so they are -- they can look after themselves. They just need that little bit of help to walk them to the bathroom or to help them put their cardigan or jumper on so that they can get themselves prepared to go home. She also said that if a patient talks to you, you don't understand what they are saying. One to one I'm fine and I feel old people, they like the closeness of, you know, if you kneel down in front of somebody, they like the closeness. They like to be touched and to be -- as long as people touch me and say attract my attention I'm fine. So it's all these little remarks. She then said about the assessment. "How can this man assess you when he's deaf himself"? So I said well actually it's his job and also he knows more about how I would cope on a working ward than you do because he's in my situation. So I left it then thinking she's not going to help me here. So all I said to her was could you let me know when you get an assessment for me. I went to the Audiology at South Mead before Christmas about my implant and Polly there said to me "have you heard anything about your assessment"? "No, I haven't". Well, you need to do something. It was beginning to get me down now because I was trying, I wanted to go back to work. After Christmas, we rang Occy Health or my husband did because I can't use the

phone and they couldn't understand why I hadn't heard. They said I should have heard months ago. They would take over and pass it on to human resources that would do it, which they did. Two weeks later I had an appointment for an assessment. In the meantime, I decided I couldn't do my assessment on that ward because I felt that my boss would be looking over my shoulder waiting for me to make a mistake which I've since found out she would have done. So I got in touch with the man that does the assessments and said "I can't do this, I can't do my assessment". So he then at the time said to me "do it, don't do it there, do it somewhere else, do it for yourself because it will make you feel better if you know you can do that job". So after a lot of consideration, I did decide to do it and yes, I did it not on a working ward, I did it on Oncology at South Mead where they know me, they understand me and I feel comfortable with them. I did this assessment which wasn't -- it was a general assessment for me being, not an assessment for how I would cope on the ward. He had to get me back to work. He had to do the assessment that the Health Authority were paying him to do, which is fine. I said to him fine, you do the assessment, I'll do the rest. So he did the assessment on me and said that with a little bit of help, he does not understand why I cannot do my job.

[28:15]

April 1, I had a meeting with HR, Occy Health, my boss in work. I go into this room, they all know that I'm profoundly deaf. So I said to them have you got me a note taker or somebody that can explain to me what's happening? They all looked at each other and "oh no, sorry. We didn't think". Exactly. They don't think. So I said okay my husband's with me. Taking this into mind, this is probably two years since I've lost my hearing overnight completely. So I said "okay, can I sit at the head of the table, please. I have to see what people are saying. I have to -- I lipread". Fine. So they said to me at the time could you tell me, if anything, you don't understand and, you know, we will help you. Of course I will. This is important to me. I have to know. My boss looked up and she said you have to talk slowly to her. No: clearly. No different: clearly. The first question to me was "why did you have the assessment on another ward and not here"? So I'm very upset about all this at the time and angry but more upset. So I looked at my boss and I said "I'm really sorry for what I'm about to say but this is how you have made me feel" and I said what she said about the hours. I didn't say that, she said, you misunderstood me. I said "I'm sorry", I didn't -- no I didn't apologise, I said "I didn't misunderstand you". No, I'm sorry, "I didn't misunderstood you that is what you said". So

she said “no I didn't say that. I'm not a horrible person”. “I didn't say you were a horrible person just repeating what you said”. So I said “okay, benefit of the doubt, you didn't say that, I misunderstood you. What about the time that you said I couldn't do if we had a cardiac arrest then people are shouting things at you you can't hear what they are saying”. I know my job, I don't need people to shout at me and I gave her four examples. She denied all four of them. So I said “I'm not lying to you, this is what you said”. I've got no reason to lie. By which time I just felt like curling up and I thought no, I can't do this. I have to let them know what she's doing. So Occy Health said to me at the time, I think we have an issue here. “Yes, we do”. So he said, “I think I need to see you some time on your own one to one”. Fine, happy with that. So they then said to me about my job, about the hours, what hours do I want to work? And I've got three options, I can go back to my ward, I can go where I want, do what hours I want or I can resign. So I said “going back on my ward isn't an option any more. I can't work there. I can't work with her”. What are my two options even so they repeated that I could go somewhere else or I could hand in my resignation. So I said “why have I got to hand in my resignation? I've been trying to get back to work for the last 18 months”. So I said no. Well, how would you like to work somewhere else? Anywhere. Where would you like to work? What hours would you like to do? I said “well, to be honest with you now it's taken me 18 months to get my confidence to even to consider to come back to work. At the moment I couldn't even sit at an interview. This has knocked me back to what I was just after I lost my hearing. If you can imagine what it's like to lose your hearing overnight”. So I said no. So they decided then that perhaps it was the best thing for me to have early retirement through ill-health. This was 18 months ago. I am still waiting for that to be sorted out.

*Do you think, Wanda, that getting meningitis you may have got it through work or was it something that developed you know just as an illness?*

The meningitis, I think -- I don't think I got it through work -- well, not directly through work. I'd had -- my daughter and son in law had split up the November before 2005 so I was stressed about that, I'd had a virus, a throat virus in work that I wasn't well with and because I was run down, I think I picked the virus up somewhere. But it wasn't directly through work but I think it was the actual going to work, not feeling well, feeling run-down that contributed.

[35:41]

*How is your family now and your friends? Are they able to communicate with you looking face-to-face and talking slowly?*

Family are brilliant -- always have been right from the word go. I taught them all finger spelling to start off with. It was writing down for a long time before and then sorry, it was the finger spelling. Christmas I gave all my close friends tea towels with finger spelling on it so they could all learn how to finger spell. In the beginning, that was very good but then after a while it wasn't so good because they say they forget because I look so well and because I cope so well they forget and they still do this now at times. I just sort of wave at them and say when you're talking give me a clue just a clue so I've got a gist of what you're saying. "Oh I'm sorry, we forget because you communicate well". It doesn't help me. So I keep telling them. But close friends, very close friends, are very good. I've recently had a phone is it a TalkType that you do through an operator. When I first had it, I phoned everybody. I can use the phone, I can speak to you again. Nobody, after a year, phones me on it. "Sorry, we don't like it. It's impersonal; it's like talking to an answering machine". Well, sorry, you can hear the operator. I hear nobody. I talk to myself on this phone. Meet me halfway. So I've stopped phoning a lot of friends. I can't do one-way friendships. I feel as if I'm working all the time. Please meet me halfway, this is hard for me. So in a way I've shut myself off or what I do is I use my mobile phone and I phone them. I know when they are speaking but I can't understand what they are saying and it's easier for me to speak than to text so I phone them and then they if they want to will text me back. But they say to me it's hard work texting, I'd rather phone. Well, yes, it is for me. Meet me halfway. But that's what I do. It's easy for me so I phone them.

[End of Track 2]

**[Track 3]**

*Wanda, would you like to describe the treatment you got. You have told us you got it in Southfields which I understand is a major hospital in Bristol dealing in audiology.*

The oncology -- as soon as we realised that or Nick realised that I was deaf, he demanded a hearing test. This isn't at the hearing hospital this is the other one, but he demanded because they said I didn't need a hearing test and he said well, "I'm sorry, I want her to have a hearing test". He took me himself to have this hearing test. They said at the time that my only option was to have an implant. They did a hearing test and they said it was nothing, nothing at all. They didn't think hearing aids would help, which they tried and it didn't help at all. So Nick said about this implant, "how do we go about getting an implant"? "Oh well, it's very expensive and we don't know if it's going to work". So he then the hospital then referred me to South Mead the audiology. We also got in touch with the Meningitis Trust at the same time that said you have to push and you have to do it quickly because if you leave it the cochlea will fur up and it will damage and you won't be able to have an implant. So we went to audiology at South Mead and right from that word go the first time I went there they did everything. They sorted out my balance problem, they gave me hearing tests, they said about the cochlear implant and they pushed and they pushed. I did all the things that you go through and, yes, I was granted this implant, November I had it. When I had the implant, the lady from the audiology that I was seeing came to see me just before I went in for my operation. She has become a very good friend to me and if I've got a problem, if I feel depressed, if I feel down I can just ring her up and go and see her. When they did my implant, they put 12 electrodes in but because of my damage that I had through meningitis in that short space of time they could only insert 10 and only 8 of those 10 are working I then went for treatment to help me adjust to my implant. I'm one of the fortunate ones that lives in Bristol so I haven't got very far to go, but with my vertigo they've taught Nick what to do if I get vertigo which he does and it works virtually every time. So that's a good thing because I can sort that out myself.

*Did anybody recommend you to go to lipreading?*

Yes and I went to lipreading it must have been – I came out of hospital at the end of April and I was dragged along to lipreading at the end of May by my husband. I wasn't feeling very

well because of my meningitis, but I went and I have been every single week since and I thoroughly enjoy it.

[05:06]

*How did you become to know about LINK?*

LINK. That was recommended through the audiology at South Mead and they pushed for me to get that because you get the finance, isn't there and it's very hard to get that but they did manage to get me on the LINK which I think is absolutely fantastic and I feel that everybody that is deaf should have the chance to go on it.

*So you and Nick really believe that the LINK course has helped you in many ways to get through this very difficult period and probably helped Nick as well to understand your predicament of what many call the blind disability of not hearing at all.*

Yes. But it's -- as you say it's enlightened Nick but it also helped him that week that we were away.

*Are you able to have any social life now or hobbies since you were deafened?*

Yes, I do have a social life. I consider it a very good social life. I didn't to start off with but then my social life changed. I used to be quite a social person. I liked going out for a drink in a crowd. I'm quite a shy person but if I know like you're crowd of people I was quite -- I was quite good. When I first became deaf, I decided that I had to do these things. You either sit in a corner and shut yourself away or you get on with it and I consider, I hope, that I've still got -- I don't know -- 20/30 years left of my life and I want to enjoy it. I don't want to sit in a corner. But since I've had all these setbacks, I have got into a shell a bit and I do tend to sort of not do the things I wanted to do. I go to lipreading every week which I enjoy. I do socialise but it's not in a group, it's mainly two people, four people at the very most because I find it hard.. I try and go out every single day somewhere even if it's just a drive in the car. I might go five or six miles to get a pint of milk but it gets me out.

*Have you ever considered joining a deaf club or hard of hearing club?*

I did. It wasn't a deaf club, it was when I first got tinnitus ten years ago I decided to go and when I went, I don't know how to say this ... there was lots of old people there and I was 40. I was in my 40s and I did go to one of the sessions and it was going out with trips everywhere and I thought at the time it's not me, it's not me. But saying that, now I go to lipreading and I am the baby, I'm the youngest and it's just lovely. All the different things. But I haven't recently.

[09:52]

*You mentioned getting a Typetalk phone. I wondered if Social Services had been any help to you either before you went to LINK or after LINK because they obviously teach you where to get things like alarms and smoke alarms and various pieces of equipment..*

Social Services actually were very, very good right from the beginning. LINK -- I didn't go to LINK until ... it was nearly a year after I had my deafness. So most of the things that's LINK sort of said about the equipment I had. I had the smoke detector, I had the doorbell, I had the alarm clock because I always intended to go back to work. So I had all that. It was just the phone that I had after I went to LINK.

*You mentioned travelling. I wondered whether you had ventured on to buses or railways and if you had do you find it a real problem in communicating?*

I don't use the buses and I don't use the trains because I feel that I couldn't cope with a bus or trains. I always feel that -- I don't think that I could go that far on my own. I rely or I like Nick to be with me on anything like that. I don't drive very far in the car because I always feel that if ever I should break down, it has happen to me actually just after I lost my hearing. I tended to forget that I couldn't hear and I used to just do things like I used to before. I jumped in the car, had a puncture. I was in a little lane miles from anywhere.

[12:29]

*Wanda, have you had difficulties with the benefit agencies in getting access or the right sort of help financially?*

Yes. The benefit -- when I got meningitis and I was ill, I lost my hearing sorry, it wasn't until I came home -- no, sorry. Can I scrub that? It wasn't until a year later that when I went to LINK that I realised that I could get any sort of benefit. Nobody told me about disability allowance. Nobody said anything. We didn't know. So we applied for it and we were told it's not backdated. So a year I missed out on a year of it through the not knowing about it. Then when I did apply for it, it took -- I'm not sure whether it's three or four attempts to get it and somebody said to me you must keep pushing. They always refuse the first one. It seems to be a done thing because they think if they refuse it you might not try again so they don't have to pay it. So I did get it after the third or fourth attempt. When I meant for my assessment to try and go back to work, the man from the RNID that assessed me is profoundly deaf and he signs and he said to me at the time about my benefits and I told him what I was getting and he said you shouldn't be getting that one, you should be getting the next one, apply for it. So I did apply for it and they've turned me down because they say that nothing's changed since when I applied for it. But I'm going to reapply. I did like a little portfolio of everything that I go through on a daily basis. I listed 27 items on there of what a normal -- sorry, what a hearing person would do that I can't do and I wrote about myself and I wrote about my tinnitus, my concentration, my vertigo, and I kept putting on there I am profoundly deaf, I have a cochlear implant but it's not a hearing aid, it's an aid to lipreading and they still turned me down.

*Did anyone advise you that you may be entitled to other benefits because you had to retire from work?*

I get an incapacity allowance because I couldn't work, but now I'm due for a pension from work and my incapacity allowance review has come up which I have to fill out now. So I have to declare my pension on it, which is nothing, it's a pittance but I have to declare it. But other than that, no, I don't know of anything else that -- nobody has said anything.

*Can I just ask you does Nick still work?*

Yes.

*What does Nick do?*

He's a health and safety consultant.

[End of Track 3]

**[Track 4]**

*Wanda, do you believe that you have achieved everything to give you a better way of life since you've become disabled?*

I'd like to say yes, but if you say yes there's never any room for improvement and I think there's always things that you can improve in, improve with. I think I have achieved a lot when I think that I couldn't hear anything, going from hearing to hearing nothing I feel isolated but I don't feel so isolated. If I sort of say to somebody "I can't hear you, could you look at me"? I can hold quite a good conversation. I can't obviously -- obviously I can't if I go out I can't hear everything or whatever but, yes, I think I have.

*Do you feel a little bit more confident over the last few months since visiting LINK with Nick?*

Yes, definitely. Definitely. I mean, I've had my ups and my downs since then but each time I've gone up and as I've gone up I've got stronger. But yes, I definitely think I have and I think Nick has as well.

*Would you consider taking a more active role to support the disability charities like Hearing Concern LINK either to fundraise or volunteering when you go out and talk to other people that become deafened and their families or giving talks to deaf or deafened clubs about your experiences?*

Yes. We already have actually considered doing it. We've been in contact with Cathy that's got our name down on a list to help. So we are in contact with her. But yes, we would, we would. I've been to LINK last October and sat in on a few of the talks that they had and just spoke to people that were there and it's been very interesting for them and for me.

*Now this is a question that we like to ask people. If somebody either where you used to formerly work or one of your family or one of your friends walked up to you one day and started pointing at their ears and saying I've lost my hearing completely, and broke down in front of you, how would you tell them about the experience of life of being deafened and recommend what they do?*

The first thing I'd like to do was give them a big hug but you can't do that. You're not allowed to do that I don't think. I'm sorry but I've got to read it I can't remember what.

*So okay we get over the emotional bit, sit down and have a cup of tea so what would be the next moves that you would recommend somebody to do?*

To actually to go and see somebody, whether it's --

*Audiologist.*

Audiology yes. To see somebody to speak to somebody about it.

*To get assessed you mean?*

Yes to get assessed so that they know exactly what is wrong and from going to audiology they can put you through to all sorts of people that can help.

*Social services.*

And Social Services.

*Would you recommend them to contact LINK Hearing Concern LINK.*

Yes, definitely.

*Well, Wanda, I want to thank you very much for a most interesting story. It has been really interesting interviewing you and I also want to thank Georgina Ford, our Palantypist from Wolverhampton for helping us today. Thank you very much both of you.*

[End of Track 4]

[End of recording]