



Between Two Cultures



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With Adrian Bailey
& Marie Dimond

The CODA conference this year was well attended - we doubled the number of participants from last year! It was a tiring experience and I had plenty of sleepless nights leading up to the event but everyone enjoyed themselves and were able to take something valuable away from it, so it was definitely worth it! The audience was a mixture of Deaf, hearing and CODAs/HMFDs. Travelling from as far north as Newcastle and as far south as Kent.

We had two volunteer interpreters, Verity Samal and Mark Hetherington, who did a fantastic job, especially considering I was talking so fast due to nerves! I appreciate their support and encouragement and value their friendship and wish them all the best for the future.

We had two guest speakers: Susan Adams, who spoke about her research into the characteristics of 21st Century CODAs and Linda Linnett, who gave a personal account of her experience and her part in CODA activity in the past 20 years. Both were very interesting and informative. I was still in nappies when the first CODA meetings were taking place! My thanks to them both for giving up their time and effort to come along to the conference- much appreciated.

I also did a short presentation on my own experiences and my aspirations for a brighter future for the next generation of CODAs. I am glad my stories initiated laughter and my family tree caused a stir (9 CODAs on my mother's side).

It was a long day and the discussions could easily have stretched over two days. There were lots of stories and ideas thrown around. It was so sunny in Manchester that I encouraged everyone to take the discussions outside and enjoy the sun. I got slightly sunburnt on the Friday so I tried to take cover for most of the day. The hostel was next to a canal so it was calming to watch the boats go by and see the sunshine reflecting off the water.

The theme was CODA Identity and I think the overall consensus after Group Discussion 1 was that there were no definitive characteristics that make a CODA but there are varying factors that some CODAs experience more than others. It was agreed that the next step would be to create a website that could be a place for Deaf parents, the hearing community and CODAs themselves to find out information and become a member in order to be kept informed of upcoming events and developments as well as the growing CODA community. *(I can confirm that funding has been approved for this to go ahead!)*

On Saturday evening a group of us dressed up and went out on Canal Street for a few hours to boogie and the next morning we were all exhausted and there were one or two with hangovers. After driving home I took a 4 hour nap and spent the rest of the day collecting my thoughts and catching up with my flatmate who had just spent two weeks in Peru and had just as much sunburn as I had *(although he likes to consider his to be a tan)*.

We are looking to organise the next conference in Brighton in recognition of the start of CODA activity there 20 years ago at the BDA 100th Anniversary. The aim of the conference will be to meet other CODAs, share stories and be creative in celebrating our heritage and the achievements of CODAs to date. There will hopefully be some workshops including Deaf Parenting and CODAs as Interpreters as well as activities for the younger ones. Everyone including Deaf Parents and their CODA/HMFD children, hearing, Deaf and of course adult CODAs/HMFDs are welcome to attend!

To find out more information or send in suggestions for the website please email: codaukandeire@hotmail.com