With Marie Dimond

Between Two Cultures

In September 2010, I travelled to Brighton Deaf Club, for the gathering of Codas, as well as Deaf parents and friends of Codas, to mark the launch of their new website.

The site has been developed to enable contact and the sharing of information for all interested in the work of this growing organisation.

We met together the evening prior to the launch where Marie Dimond, her Coda cousins and extended family, effectively lulled by Marie ....into a vegan feast! ....Not my usual choice of food but I have to say I did enjoy it. Not to mention the walk after dinner, after Marie lost her handbag!! Lost or left in the taxi?! Later we went to the Brighton boardwalk and the pier and then after lots of laughing and dancing near the Groynes!! (Apparently! this is the name given to the concrete wall that separates the sea from the path???) and playing more ...we met more Codas. Thanks must go to Kate and Emma as well for a great night in Brighton... go visit, it's a fun place!

The day of the launch began with registration where I met old friends and some very long lost ones too. Codas from England and Ireland were present and a very happy day was had by all. There were a number of speakers: Marie Dimond began with the ideas behind developing and establishing the organisation, her own journey and Coda achievements.

Kate Boddy then followed with her Coda journey and had us all smiling, and thinking deeply about the impact of meeting others from similar backgrounds and the fun to be together after waiting so long for understanding.

Sabina Iqbal from Deaf Parenting UK then spoke about her support for Coda UK and Ireland, and extended her great regard for Codas and the desire for development and ongoing support for Deaf parents and their families. It was wonderful to hear her speak and a great highlight for me.

I then spoke about the establishment of CODA International, about the people present at the beginning and the fact we are 25 years old this year. I shared the names of those people present at that awakening to all things CODA and asked Catherine to stand as she has been an integral part of the formation and ongoing support for the birth of this organisation. I spoke about the meeting of minds in Barcelona and the great work that has been ongoing in the UK. It was then, with great delight, that Marie launched the website and we all cheered and smiled.

After lunch we moved into group discussions facilitated by Catherine White, where she challenged us all to share stories. That sharing ....about experiences ranging from Codas as Interpreters , Coda experiences of advocacy while growing up, and sharing experiences with other Codas, Deaf people and friends was then gathered in point form.
This material is being collated and we anticipate a forthcoming book! It was an exciting idea and a great dream for this organisation and participants were encouraged to be part of it all. Everyone became heartily involved and i suspect we could have gone on for days...

As usual getting people together for a photo took ages but eventually we managed it out the front of the club; the whole experience was very much like the meeting of deaf families all over the world but this was a coda focused event and very much about family.

I am always impressed by the amount of love and support for CODA as an organisation and as an idea. The CODA journey has not always been as warm and welcoming for some and I congratulate the UK and Ireland Coda group for demonstrating that love is the only journey and that fear can cripple the growth of any idea. If we do not think big we stay where our thinking keeps us. I am honoured to be a part of this memory of a beginning and a new way forward. Technology allows so much more access to the world and our CODA family grows daily.

Thanks for the opportunity to expand! Wishing us all more smiling laughter, joy and sharing in our ever expanding family of the world! Hoping to see and hug all the UK and Irish Codas in Berlin in 2011.

Always yours in CODA Carmel Batson
CODA International