

ORAL HISTORY RECORDING SUMMARY

'Fighting for our Rights' project

Surname	Gaff
Given name	Brian
Date of birth	1950
Place of birth	Wandsworth, London
Date of interview	26 May 2017
Length of interview	01:17:04
Number of tracks	1
Name of interviewers	Uloma Paris, Callistus Dywili, Jen Kavanagh

Track 1 of 1 [01:17:04]

Brian Gaff (BG) was born in 1950 in Wandsworth, London to parents Frank and Muriel. Father worked as TV engineer, mother telephonist and secretary. Attended Moor Lane Junior then Southborough School in Chessington. Learned to read at home with grandmother. Visual impairment discovered when at junior school. Retinitis pigmentosa not understood. Describes deterioration of sight. Poor support when at school [00:05:25]. Left school age 16. Started work with father. Talks about going to Moorfields, finding out condition was degenerative. Describes early work. Talks about loss of sight and nature of condition [00:10:10]. Mentions work with Rediffusion. Describes access to disability services, referral to Social Services. Needed support with computers, introduced to Access to Work in 1980s. Went self-employed. Assessed by RNIB. Also accessed Enterprise Allowance Scheme, attended a course on running a business [00:15:40]. BG's mother died in 1993, so required help but struggled to get support. Had to give up work, received Disability Living Allowance. Social Services intervened, provided mobility training. Mentions KADP (Kingston Association for Disabled People) and KAB (Kingston Association for the Blind). Talks about Joint Commissioning Group [00:21:15]. Talks about campaigns including Taxi Card scheme that replaced Capital Call. Mentions moving of pedestrian crossings, campaigning to Council [00:27:20]. References recent street changes that cause problems for blind people. Talks about Eye Contact. Mentions lack of disability awareness when out in the community, including shops. Frustration with services [00:32:50]. Talks about Talking Newspaper. Started by doing audio description for a blind uncle. Previously managed by couple called the Hancocks. Describes early content. Jennifer Carpenter volunteered BG to take over. Mentions technical challenges [00:37:00]. Need for young volunteers. Describes how content of Talking Newspaper is generated. Demonstrates how player and RAM stick of content works, plays sample audio [00:43:30]. Mentions website and podcast. Talks about players going missing. Around 78 active listeners, mainly elderly. Younger blind community access content online [00:48:30]. Challenges for blind users to learn new computer software, including Bluetooth. Also challenge of accessing information online. Accessible formats needed. Talks about various roles BG has had at Talking Newspaper, including co-ordinator. Mentions VI (Visually Impaired) Parliament [00:54:50]. Describes challenge of receiving press releases from Council that are inaccessible. BG involved with Talking Newspaper since circa 2000. Newspaper funded by Kingston Association for the Blind and Greater London Fund for the Blind (Geranium charity shops). Also fund Tandem Scheme. Talks about health and safety of riders and pilots [00:59:50]. Talks about clubs that KAB run. Bowling, lunch clubs, Social Eyes. RACAT transport paid for by KAB. Greater London Fund also support young people with equipment for university. Mentions having a Personal Assistant (PA). Talks about being

assessed for funding and challenge of how to communicate extent of blind disability to assessors [01:04:20]. Explains role of staff at KAB office. Talks about proudest achievement being helping to progress KAB, including getting a paid employee. Talks about Greater London Fund needing to progress like KAB. Mentioning project with Achieving for Children and challenges encountered [01:08:15]. Ends with playing further sample content from Talking Newspaper.

End of recording [01:17:04]