



## STORIES FOR LIPREADING

# the next chapter

Have you ever wanted some lipreading practice but felt you needed something more 'real life' than drills and exercises? Or have you wished there was something to lipread that would grab your attention and keep you concentrating to the last line?

If so, perhaps you've spent the past year enjoying a new website, *Stories for Lipreading*. Not used it yet? You may find it's just what you've been waiting for. *Stories for Lipreading* is the brainchild of lipreading student Annabel Hervey-Bathurst and three lipreading tutors: Sandy Marlow, Barrie Wickens and Meg Finlayson.

"We have one simple aim," says Sandy, "which is to provide a free resource where people with hearing loss can practise their lipreading skills. We're

thrilled the website is proving so popular – users from all over the world have emailed some wonderful comments and thoughts."

*Stories for Lipreading* launched in May last year. Responding to users' feedback, all stories are now available to view on YouTube via the website, so they flow smoothly without any buffering. One year on, the founders look back with delight at what they've achieved.

"We started with nine stories," says Barrie, who has himself

written for the project.

"We're thrilled that, by the end of this year, more than 60 stories will be available."

Thanks to our previous article on the project (Autumn 2017), and support from *Writers' Forum* magazine, the team now receive a steady stream of story submissions. The authors, including professional writers, give their work for free, knowing that it's helping so many people. "Without their generosity, we wouldn't have a website," says Barrie. "We'd love to hear from



any other budding authors out there! All our guidelines are on the site, so do have a look."

All stories are read to camera by readers specifically chosen for their 'lipreadability'. There is a range of delivery, from very clear and steady, through to more animated and challenging.

"Lipreading students often say they want practice which reflects real life," explains Meg. "We hope the variety, including some very short stories and some factual pieces, means there is something for everyone."

One happy student, Joy Wallis, comments, "I find Stories for Lipreading a wonderful idea. I recently had to have a few weeks away from my lipreading class and have been able to practise my lipreading skills with its very good stories, jokes and mystery objects. You can always go back over what you watched previously, to see if your memory and lipreading are up to scratch."

Navigating the site is easy, explains Annabel: "As the Story Store grew, we organised it under headings such as 'Tales of the Unexpected', 'Affairs of the

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Heart', or 'Autobiographical', so our users could browse much more easily."

#### Exciting journey

Christiane Lieberman appreciates the layout and concept: "As a new visitor to the website, I've found the introductory page - about how to navigate it, plus useful links - extremely clear and useful. I'm a long-term hearing-aid user, and yes, a sometimes-exhausted spontaneous lipreader who's looking forward to practice that I can rewind if I need to!"

Her comments are typical of those streaming into the Stories for Lipreading inbox, and sometimes appearing on its Facebook page; yet another innovation this year, which lets

followers know whenever new stories are added.

"Facebook enables us to interact with our users," says Annabel. "We're grateful to our Facebook supporters for sharing our posts, so as many people as possible know about, and can enjoy using, this resource."

Stories for Lipreading isn't designed for complete beginners, but, as Meg points out, "Many people who've had hearing loss for some time develop lipreading skills without realising it, and can often lipread more than they expect when they give our website a try."

However, the team stress that it's not intended to replace a lipreading class, if you're lucky enough to have one nearby (see [www.atlailipreading.org.uk](http://www.atlailipreading.org.uk) for a list of classes nationwide).

So, one year on, this particular success story looks set to grow and develop to meet lipreaders' needs. "It's a very exciting journey for us," says Sandy.

"Who knows what changes the next year will bring?"

Have a good read at: [www.storiesforlipreading.org.uk](http://www.storiesforlipreading.org.uk)