DeafHear Matters

Summer Camps 2013

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Cost of production €3
The Big Jump in Aid of DeafHear Mid-West

Dave Browne, Marian Hayes and Aaron Cooney
by Dave Browne

On the morning of 3rd August Dave Browne, Marian Hayes and Aaron Cooney pulled on their blue jumpsuits and got strapped in to take the plunge from 13,000 feet. They raised €500 which will go towards community services for adults and children in the mid-west region. Dave tells the story...

Waiting on weather to improve we got our instructions for the day. Soon we were called and headed to the plane.

Attached in front of our Tandem Masters we sat into the plane and got hooked up and harnessed in preparation for the leap of our lives. When we arrived at 13,000 feet we made our way in single file to the door. Holding onto our harness we tucked up our legs until we were suspended in front of the professional like a baby in a sling.

The Tandem Master then leaped forward sending us out of the plane tumbling forward above the clouds until we were free-falling with the cold air whizzing by our faces. Looking down on the countryside and noticing all the parachutes of the jumpers who went before us we could feel the adrenaline pump through our bodies. Then our Tandem Master pulled the cord and our chute opened up and we had a slight jolt upward until we were softly gliding mid-air. We pulled on cords each side of the chute and it turned us giving a panoramic view of the amazing countryside... so amazing, beautiful and free.

Gliding over the fields of Offaly was so peaceful and the feeling of wanting to stay in mid-air was overwhelming. Slowly we glided towards the ground where our Tandem Master instructed us to lift our legs out in front of us, as rehearsed. The landing was so soft we could not believe we had actually hit ground.

We then rushed to each other and high fived and hugged in triumph of our amazing achievement. The experience was so breathtaking and overwhelming we could only suggest that everyone should take the plunge and jump sometime in their lives.

Thank You!

We would like to say a big thank you to all those who who took part in the Women’s Mini Marathon in June to raise funds for DeafHear, and of course to everyone who supported them. The money raised will help us to provide activities such as day centres for the elderly, development support for pre-school children, summer camps for teenagers and respite breaks for vulnerable adults.

Pre-School For Deaf Children Opens

A new specialist pre-school for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children opened on 2nd September 2013. It is located in the Marian Campus, Dominican Convent, Ratoath Road, Cabra, Dublin 7.

It caters for children aged from two to six years, five mornings per week from 9.30am to 12.30pm. The pre-school has two full-time staff and already 10 children have enrolled on a full or part-time basis. A limited number of additional part-time places are available, and the free pre-school education grant (ECCE) is also offered to eligible pupils.

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DeafHear Matters welcomes all contributions and the views expressed are not necessarily those of DeafHear. While every effort has been made to ensure that all information contained in this publication is factual and correct at time of going to press, DeafHear Matters can not be held responsible for any errors or omissions herein.

Noticeboard

ITA Autumn Meeting
The Irish Tinnitus Association’s autumn meeting is on Saturday, 23rd November 2013, 10am until 2pm. Ashling Hotel, Parkgate St, Dublin 8.
Guest Speakers: Ross O’Neill PhD (a researcher and inventor of ‘mutebutton’) and Helen Byrne from mindfulness.ie.
All welcome
For more information, tel: 01-875700 or email ita@deafhear.ie

Our New Ears
DeafHear and ‘Our New Ears’ Group are holding a seminar ‘Connect, Learn, Share’ - for pre-school children with a cochlear implant on 2nd and 3rd of November in the Heritage Hotel Portlaoise.

Autumn Classes
Contact your local DeafHear Resource Centre for details of classes and events in your area this autumn.

Theatres

Abbey Theatre:
Audio-described and captioned performances
Major Barbara – Saturday 14th Sep
The Hanging Gardens – Saturday 9th Nov
Sign language interpreted performances
Major Barbara – Thursday 12th Sep
Maeve’s House – Thursday 10th Oct
The Hanging Gardens – Thursday 7th Nov
Call the Box Office 01 87 87 222

Mill Theatre: Solpadeine is My Boyfriend
Wednesday 20th November @ 8pm
Audio described, captioned and ISL interpreted performance. Book seats and headsets in advance www.milltheatre.ie
The 22nd Deaflympic Summer Games were held in Bulgaria, from 25th July to 4th August, based in Sofia and Pravets.

The tournament was a huge success with record breaking numbers of athletes attending. The Deaflympics has grown exponentially since its formation in 1924 when 128 athletes from nine European nations attended the Games. Four years ago in Chinese Taipei, a staggering 4,081 athletes attended from 77 nations worldwide and these figures were surpassed this year, with more than 5,000 athletes competing.

Ireland was represented in two sports this year - badminton and men’s football. All of the players in both disciplines trained exceptionally hard in the run up to the competition and performed admirably.

The three badminton players: Aidan Connor, Johnny Corcoran and Shane Keogh played really well despite being in a tough draw and competing in difficult conditions (outside temperatures averaged in the mid 30s and it was even hotter in the sports hall, with the AC turned off so as not to affect the movement of shuttlecocks). Johnny Corcoran and Shane Keogh competed in the Doubles event as well as the Singles and played strong games against Hong Kong and Slovakia. Joined by their Coach, Mark Topping and Technical Director, Ivan Gryzlov, these three players pushed their opponents and made them work hard for any victories.

Ireland’s men’s football team secured a place in the quarter finals after drawing 0-0 with European champions Russia, but had an unlucky loss against Egypt who secured a 4-3 victory. After this however, the team entered the knockout rounds where they beat world champions Turkey 2-0. The team finished 6th out of 16 competing countries after a tough, but very well played, match which Iran won 2-1 to take 5th place. The fact that the Irish team beat both Russia and Turkey is a true testament to the overall strength of the team and the hard work of all of the players as well as Manager, Thomas Coyle; Assistant Manager, Geoffrey Foy; Football Liaison, Rino Giglione; Physio, Jonathon Acheson and Coaches Reggie Dornan and Jamie Wilson.

The 2013 Deaflympic Games was well attended by supporters, with Irish supporters travelling the 60km between Sofia and Pravets to cheer on Team Ireland. Beautiful, visual ceremonies marked the opening and closing of the Games. Team Russia performed exceedingly well throughout the competition, returning home with 67 gold, 52 silver and 58 bronze medals!

Whilst in Bulgaria, members of Team Ireland were invited to visit the Irish Embassy in Sofia and meet with the Irish Ambassador, His Excellency, John Rowan. This provided a wonderful opportunity for the Ambassador to get better acquainted with the Irish team and with Deaflympics as a sporting event. The team were given a very warm and welcoming reception at the embassy.

The team has now returned home and begun to settle back into their regular routine, but it will soon be time for athletes to start thinking about training for the 2017 Deaflympics in Ankara, Turkey.
Keep the Sound - a nationwide campaign launched by DeafHear.

In the US, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has calculated that 60% of MP3 users are facing premature hearing damage, as they listen to their MP3 players at dangerously high volumes (above 85db) for up to two hours a day. This is a serious issue – the EU predicts that by 2020 it could be commonplace to see one in ten 30 year olds wearing a hearing device as a result of listening to personal music players too loudly. The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that half of all cases of hearing loss are avoidable through primary prevention.

Taking all of this into consideration, DeafHear is beginning a nationwide awareness campaign aimed at 16-30 year olds highlighting the potential damage caused by MP3 players used at high volumes. Adolescents and adults who are daily users of portable music players need to be made aware of what a healthy listening level is. By promoting this, the campaign aims to raise awareness about the long term risks of listening to music on these devices at damaging levels.

Sound Heads:
One way to raise awareness about the risks of listening to music at damaging levels is through a sound head, which tests the volume of MP3 or portable music players. As part of our Keep the Sound campaign, we are asking people to let us test the volume of their music player and record the results.

How does it work?
Just connect your player to the sound head and 20 seconds later you’ll get a result:
- **Green Zone**: It’s fine – enjoy the music!
- **Orange Zone**: Could be a little too loud – reduce the volume to be on the safe side.
- **Red Zone**: Definitely too loud – you are damaging your ears.
- **Danger Zone**: Warning – turn down now!

By participating in the testing, you are helping us to create awareness and bring a warning message to more young people before it’s too late. We will be visiting secondary schools in Dublin in September and October.

We are asking schools, youth groups, businesses and communities to get involved!

If you would like us to visit you with our ‘Sound Heads’, please email us at ciara.bermingham@deafhear.ie or call us on 01 8175713.
ComReg Consultation
This edition of Access All Areas will focus on a significant consultation taking place as we go to print. ComReg is conducting a consultation on ‘proposed measures to ensure equivalence in access and choice’ to electronic communications for people with disabilities. Under an EU Directive, ComReg is responsible for ensuring that Deaf and Hard of Hearing people have equivalent access to electronic communications, except where it is impractical or extremely expensive to do so. Electronic communications include not just telephones and mobile phones, but also broadband services, and cable and satellite TV services*. This is an important consultation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people as access to electronic communications is a critical factor in supporting independence and social participation in society.

ComReg Recommendations
As part of the consultation process, ComReg published a 95 page document in which it outlined some recommendations which it is considering implementing. The various recommendations cover issues such as accessible billing, directory enquiries and complaints. Of particular interest to Deaf and Hard of Hearing people are recommendations in relation to text top-ups for pre-pay mobile phones and facilities to test ‘terminal equipment’.

**Text Top-ups**
ComReg is proposing that every phone company providing pre-pay mobile phones must provide a facility for the customer to top-up via SMS. Being able to top-up using SMS would mean that Deaf and Hard of Hearing people (and hearing people!) would be able to apply vouchers via text message, rather than via a voice call. No longer would a Deaf person have to ask a family member (or shop assistant) to apply credit to their phone!

**Buying Phones**
It has always been a major problem for people who are hearing aid or cochlear implant users to buy a new phone. Most shops that sell phones do not allow customers to try out the phone before buying it. Some phones may not be compatible with the person’s particular aids or implants. However, the person will only discover this when they bring the phone home and try it out! To make matters worse, most retailers have a returns policy that will not allow the customer to return the phone once it has been opened!

In order to address this problem ComReg is proposing that all retailers selling phones and other terminal equipment must allow customers who use hearing aids or cochlear implants to try out the equipment in the shop. This is a welcome proposal that, if implemented, would be helpful to many Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.

**Text Relay Services (TRS)**
Electronic communications also include Text Relay Services (TRS), but regrettably, ComReg says that they are ‘not minded’ at this time to propose measures to extend TRS. ComReg says that their view is that this should be considered at a later date. However, DeafHear is of the view that this should be considered as a matter of urgency!

Text Relay Services are a vital social lifeline for people who cannot make voice calls, which includes many people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and also people with speech difficulties. TRS services are available in most developed countries, and were introduced to Ireland about 20 years ago. In Ireland, the TRS is provided by Eircom as part of the Universal Service Obligations regulated by ComReg. TRS enables a person using a minicom phone to contact another person via a relay operator, who converts voice to text and vice versa (see Figure 1). A key aspect of TRS is that it provides access to live interaction/conversation, which text, email or fax do not do.

*ComReg is only responsible for ensuring access to TV cable and satellite networks. It is not responsible for programme content or the accessibility of TV programmes: this is the responsibility of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.*
many people stopped using it because there were long delays, minicomms were expensive to buy, and the introduction of mobile phones and text provided a cheaper and more mobile alternative.

However, text messaging is not the same as TRS. Firstly, many services do not provide a text number to contact them, and even if they do, the response is seldom immediate, as it would be for a voice call. So, if you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and you need to make an appointment with your GP, or you want to cancel an appointment with your bank manager, access to a TRS would enable you to book or reschedule an appointment in real-time.

The evidence suggests that there is a real need for this service. Table 1 compares the level of usage of TRS in Ireland and the UK. In the UK the TRS handles 33,000 calls per week, and has 11,000 regular users (source Ofcom 2012). In Ireland, the present TRS handles less than 20 calls a week, and has only a handful of regular users. If an equivalent TRS was available in Ireland, it could expect to handle over 2,000 calls per week and have 700-800 regular users. In other words, the Irish TRS operates at a usage level less than 1% of its UK counterpart. As a result, Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Ireland experience thousands of lost opportunities for equivalent social inclusion every week. Over a one year period, Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Ireland lose out on over 100,000 opportunities for social contact and inclusion due to the absence of a modern TRS!

The introduction of a modernised Text Relay Service in Ireland as soon as possible is a top priority for DeafHear. It has the potential to significantly enhance individuals’ independence and increase the social participation of many Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. There are over 100,000 reasons every year as to why this needs to happen.

### Disability Implementation Plan

At the end of July the Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People, Ms. Kathleen Lynch, T.D., launched the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan, which is the Government’s plan for implementing the provisions of the Disability Act (2005). This new Plan is the outcome of a review of the National Disability Strategy, and was much awaited by disability organisations. However, the Plan is largely disappointing and it is very short on detail and specifics. John Dolan, CEO of DFI said that “overall it lacks ambition, and does not include many of the priority actions which DFI have suggested since the start of the drafting process for the Plan”. However, DFI also noted that the Plan gave a “re-commitment to the high level goals of people with disabilities being treated as equal citizens, independence and choice, participation, and maximising potential”. The real challenge for DeafHear will be in working with Government Departments and other service providers to make these goals a reality in the lives of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.

### IRIS

Finally, on a more positive note, the Irish Remote Interpreting Service (IRIS) has grown considerably in 2013, with bookings up by 300%. A number of Citizen Information Centres now provide access to the service from their centres, including Dundalk, Tullamore, and Finglas and O’Connell St. in Dublin. If you are a sign language user and would like to use IRIS to access a service, why not contact SLIS who operate the service, or ask your service provider to contact them. Or you can pick up one of the IRIS Communication Cards at any DeafHear Resource Centre which has all the details needed to book an IRIS appointment.

### BAI Launches Public Consultation on Draft Strategy Statement

Relevant Irish content for Irish audiences must have a central place in any view of the future of broadcasting. That’s according to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI), which has launched a public consultation on its strategy for the next three years.

The new strategy will cover the period 2014 to 2016. In it, the BAI sets out its objectives for the next three years, and the manner in which it wants to engage with the public and with the broadcasting sector more generally.

Broadcasters, members of the viewing and listening public, and other interested individuals and organisations have until 22nd October to respond to the draft statement.

The draft Strategy Statement – along with supporting information – is available to view now at: www.baifuture.ie. During the consultation period, anyone wishing to make a submission on the draft statement can do so through this website, by email to info@bai.ie, or by post to: Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, 2-5 Warrington Place, Dublin 2.
Dublin North
This year’s summer camp was broken into two age groups. 19 children aged 4-9 joined us over 3 days for activities in N-Zone Activity Centre followed by a tasty ice-cream party, fun and bouncy castles at Rathbeggan Lakes, and a Sports Day in Deaf Village Ireland. 13 children attended the 10-15 years age group for a fun Sports Day in Deaf Village Ireland and the Sea Safari in Dublin Bay. There were a few splashes here and there but all in good fun. A great time was had by all on this year’s camp. We look forward to seeing you again for our Halloween activities.

Mid-West
We had a wonderful summer camp and were blessed with the weather. Thanks to Deaf Sports Ireland, who organised sporting activities, a treasure hunt and team games to start our week off. We then travelled to the ‘Galway Community Circus’ where the children learnt balancing, juggling, rope-climbing, tumbling and tight-rope walking. On the last day we stayed local and went to ‘Free Range Kids’ in Croom, Co. Limerick for trampolining, tennis, tree and rope climbing, treasure hunt, assault course, tie-dye t-shirts and baking. The children had a brilliant time and can’t wait for next year’s camp!

Dublin South
Galway, Mayo & Roscommon
Members of the Galway Deaf Community and their families had a lovely day out in St. Bridget’s Garden, and a group of 18 adults had a lovely day out at the Museum of Country Life in Castlebar, including a nice lunch in Horkans and a chat over a pint in Breaffy House. A group of fun-loving families headed to Lough Key Forest Park in Roscommon. The day began with a tour of the beautiful grounds after which those who dared climbed the tower and walked Ireland’s only tree canopy walk. The children then had time to play in the playground before heading off on a boat trip around Lough Key. Everyone, young and old, had a fantastic day.

Kerry Family Days
We had a fantastic day at Dingle Climbing Wall and High Ropes Adventure. Great fun was had by all and we saw some real daring from all who took part – children and parents alike. Some were even braver and ventured outside to complete the high ropes course! We also went to the Bowling Alley in Tralee. We had two teams of bowlers and we saw a number of high scores and even a few full strikes! The younger children were able to enjoy the indoor play area, giving the parents a chance to sit and chat together. Another lovely day and a great chance for our families to spend time together.

Kerry Goes to Dublin
Thanks to the generosity of CIDP we were able to have free accommodation at Deaf Village Ireland for our group visits to Dublin. Killarney Women’s Group took a trip to Dublin for a few days, to take in the sights of the city and enjoy a break. First stop on landing was to visit the Leprechaun Museum and then on to do some shopping. When Killarney Men’s Group headed for the city one of the highlights was the visit to Dublin Zoo – a great day! Both groups really enjoyed spending time in the Deaf Village, swimming, meeting friends and having lunch in Café Harmony. Staying in CIDP house together meant that we could cook and eat dinner together in the evenings, something we all really cherished.
Deaf Education Technology Update

Phonak Digimaster
Phonak has developed a digital and dynamic system that broadcasts on a much higher frequency, insuring a much clearer signal with dynamic properties which include the ability to higher and lower the output from the speakers, depending on the environmental noise. This system also works side by side with their digital receivers without the use of a secondary transmitter. As Phonak is primarily a manufacturer of hearing aids and Deaf Education equipment, they are constantly looking at integrating these products to allow ease of use.

Phonic Ear Juno System
Phonic Ear has been supplying Soundfields to classrooms for about 10 years now and are by some way the largest supplier in Ireland. While Phonak has utilised their hearing aid technology with their Soundfields, Phonic Ear has come up with an ingenious package that not only brings the advantages of Soundfield but also offers lesson capture. Simply put, this system offers the ability to record both the audio and video content of the lesson and create a file that can be either posted on the school website or emailed to any number of students. The audio content is the teacher’s voice and the video content is the white board information. This system has only been launched but has huge potential for future education.

Personal Communication Devices
Unlike the Soundfield Systems the development of the PCDs has been far less complicated. The two leading manufacturers are launching their fully digital products this autumn. Up to now the systems were divided into two:

1. Comfort Audio supplied the body worn microphone and receiver and while this was a fully digital product, the transmission of the signal from the receiver to the hearing aids was not. They are now launching their DT-20 Digital Micro Receiver which will attach to the hearing aid and so create a full digital signal. This combined with their very sleek range of microphones will make them a very popular choice.

2. Phonak supplied a Dynamic System which broadcast on an FM signal. They are launching their fully Digital System this autumn which, when combined with their dynamic advantages, should lead to much better listening capabilities for the student.

Lightspeed Flexcat System
Lightspeed is the fastest growing supplier of Soundfield in Ireland, and like the other leading suppliers, they too are showing great innovation when it comes to technological advancements. They have just launched the Flexcat Soundfield System which allows the teacher to divide the classroom in up to six different sections and broadcast to each area individually. The teacher can also broadcast to the whole classroom by use of a main speaker located at the far end of the room. While this system allows separate communication with different areas of the classroom, it also allows the teacher to listen in to those different areas and so assess the social and team skills of individual students. The potential for this system in schools where there are separate teaching areas and where there are children with special needs is far reaching.

Eoin can be contacted at eoin.roche@deafhear.ie or phone (01) 8175733
On 18th May there was a celebration of long service by staff in DeafHear. Staff who have been working with the organisation for 10 years or more, and their families, were invited to attend an event in Head Office, hosted by the Board and Senior Management of DeafHear. Staff were thanked for their commitment and dedication to the organisation and presented with a commemorative plaque and certificate in recognition of their long service.

While not all those invited were able to attend, there was a good representation of staff from all over the country. The award ceremony was followed by lunch and it was a chance for staff from the various regional centres and their guests to socialise on the day. All agreed it was a very positive and successful event.

The following staff were acknowledged on the day:

- **Over 20 years**
  - Niall Keane (25 years), Sandra O’Brien (22 years)

- **Over 15 years**
  - Brendan Lennon, Bridie Lee, Jenny Healy, Mello Bleahen, Neil Maguire, Paula Donohoe and Tony Dolan (all 17 years), Emma McAuley and Kathy Hefferman (15 years).

- **Over 10 years**
  - Brigid Mac Sweeney and Joan O’Toole (14 years), Angela Mitchell, Marian Hayes, Seamus Moore and Valerie Downes (13 years), Barry O’Neill, Damien Owens, Geraldine Colleran, Mary Murphy, Pat Ryan and Shane Keogh (all 12 years)
  - Aileen Curtayne, Annie Murphy, Brian McCormack, Edel Killarney, Gerard Holmes, Maria Taylor and Maura O’Leary (all 11 years), Mary McConnell-Byron (10 years).

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### Cochlear Implant Dublin Gathering

On 22nd and 23rd July DeafHear held workshops in North Frederick Street for people who have a cochlear implant. They were invited to bring a family member or partner to attend with them. The main aims of the two days were to provide an opportunity for people to come together, to share their CI experiences, to build a support network within the group as well as with DeafHear. For the CI family members, attending the workshops meant that they were able to gain a greater understanding of the rehabilitation process as well as identify their key role in the rehabilitation process. Everyone who attended was able to share with other members of the group some of the difficulties they experienced and some of the solutions that worked for them.

Guest speakers were Jaclyn Smith, Senior Audiological Scientist / Coordinator Adult CI Programme Beaumont Hospital, who gave an interesting talk on the T Switch facility of hearing aids. We also heard from Lesley Flood, Speech and Language Therapist from Beaumont Hospital, who covered some of the aspects of the Rehabilitation Process. We also held a short evening session for people who were unable to attend during the day. Overall we had 20 people attending the two days.

As the CI Gatherings grow, more and more people from all over Ireland are having the opportunity to meet and share experiences and wisdom, get support from other CI users and learn how to get the most from their CI. Plans are underway for the next event which will be held in Portlaoise from 30th September – 2nd October. For anyone interested in attending or finding out more about CI Gatherings please contact us:

Sally Harvest: 086 246 2640, sally.harvest@deafhear.ie

Jo Lambe: 087 272 3862, josephine.lambe@deafhear.ie or DeafHear Killarney Office 064 66 29952.
A Personal Story of Tinnitus

My name is Antoinette Barry, I am 47 years old, the mother of two children. I live in Limerick, and work as an administrator in the Park Retirement Village.

I became a member of the Irish Tinnitus Association last year. I was diagnosed with tinnitus in 2010 following a road traffic accident which also left me with a hearing loss in my left ear. Initially I had no idea what the ringing in my ears was and the doctor in the hospital told me I had post concussion syndrome and head trauma.

For months after the accident I experienced terrible headaches, balance problems, noise in my ear and horrific nightmares about the accident. My GP, who is excellent, prescribed medication for my headaches and balance problems. I was advised to see a psychiatrist about my nightmares but there seemed to be no one who could help me with my tinnitus.

The general consensus seemed to be that once you experience tinnitus it never leaves you and there is no cure.

Initially I found it very difficult to cope with my tinnitus, especially at night time when it just seemed to get louder and never go away. I had started to cut myself off socially, had become withdrawn in myself and felt lonely and isolated as I could not come to terms with what was happening to me or how I was feeling.

Tinnitus Support Helpline

It was only when I was in Galway visiting an audiologist that I saw a poster on the notice board of the waiting room with the contact details for a Tinnitus Support Helpline. I immediately made contact and was so happy to speak to a gentleman in the North Frederick St, Dublin office that listened and understood me when I said I thought I was going mad with the noises in my head. He explained to me that tinnitus was not going to take over my life and that while there is no magic tablet to take it away, with help and support you can learn to live with it.

He gave me the contact details for DeafHear in Limerick and my GP referred me to Geraldine Colleran, Hearing Therapist. Geraldine was marvellous and has been and continues to be so understanding and supportive as she helps me to habituate to my tinnitus.

I find it challenging, and in particular at night time, I listen to the CDs that Geraldine recommended and I wear an in-the-ear sound generator eight hours a day.

On-going Treatment

I was also fitted with a hearing aid last year which has addressed my hearing loss and to some extent my balance issues. To this day I remain on medication for headaches and still have nightmares about the accident. However, without the support of Geraldine and the facilities of DeafHear I would still be in that lonely place of anxiety and isolation that I felt when I was first diagnosed with tinnitus. I have recently started Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with Geraldine as part of my on-going treatment for tinnitus and find that this type of treatment is working for me.

Happy Ending?

This is my story and like all stories you read you wish for a happy ending which should probably read like I no longer have tinnitus and lived happily ever after. But as anyone who has tinnitus knows that is not the case, so the ending to my story is this, yes, I still have tinnitus but with the help and support I have received, in particular from DeafHear, I am learning to live with it. Tinnitus is now part of my life, part of my being, and while if I am 100% honest I would say I don’t like having it, I will never again feel the way I did about my tinnitus the day before I made the call to the Irish Tinnitus Association because now I know there is help out there, there are people who listen and understand. And at the end of the day no matter what problem/concern a person has, if you are listened to and understood and have professionally trained people to help you you are certainly in a better place than when you started. And that’s where I am.

The Melody in My Brain

Buzzing, Whistling, Whirring, Hissing

Have you heard my tinnitus?

High pitch, low pitch
Where’s the control switch?
You cannot be serious!

You are with me night and day
I want to sleep, you want to play
Buzzing, Whistling, Whirring, Hissing
Have you heard my tinnitus?

Humming, drumming never stops
But no one else can hear it
For sure the noise is really there
Yes, you better believe it!

Buzzing, Whistling, Whirring, Hissing
Have you heard my tinnitus?

By Antoinette Barry
Watch and Care Baby Alarm with Vibrating Pad

This baby monitor has a built in vibration alert that makes it an ideal solution if you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. There are two monitors: the baby monitor with built-in camera which sends sounds and images of your baby to the parent monitor, which is a digital, audio and visual monitor that vibrates and displays coloured lights to alert you if your baby wakes up or cries. You can plug in an under pillow vibrating pad (supplied) for night-time cover.

### Features
- Vibration alert on parent’s monitor
- Under-pillow vibrating pad for night time cover (included)
- Baby monitor with built-in camera to monitor movement as well as sound
- Parent’s monitor has a screen
- Range up to 150m
- Out of range message and audible bleep
- Battery/mains powered baby unit
- Parent monitor supplied with rechargeable battery and charging pod

### Baby monitor
- Camera (with night vision) to monitor baby movement
- Night-light
- Low battery warning light (if operated using batteries)

### Parent’s monitor
- Built-in vibration alert
- Vibrating pad for overnight cover
- Adjustable volume control (five settings)
- Sound level indication (five leds)
- Sensitivity control
- Intercom
- Selection of five lullabies with option to play on both baby monitor and parent monitor
- Night-light option
- Temperature display (for baby’s room)
- Low battery led
- Belt-clip

€166 available from www.deafhear.ie

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Hyperacusis Training Event for DeafHear Staff

A number of staff members from DeafHear resource centres around the country attended the three day course which was co-hosted by the Irish Tinnitus Association and DeafHear in May 2013.

The guest presenters were Geraldine Colleran, Hearing and Communication Therapist, and Jenny Healy, Community Resource Officer, DeafHear, Galway.

The course was based on the Jastreboff Neurophysiology Model which is used to assess clients who present with tinnitus and hyperacusis. Geraldine and Jenny demonstrated how to conduct an interview with a client and then implement a programme of support for the client using the various techniques available, such as directive counselling, sound therapy and relaxation.

The feedback from the delegates was very positive and it highlighted the need for additional tinnitus support and qualified Tinnitus Retraining Therapists (TRT) across Ireland.

The Irish Tinnitus Association wishes to acknowledge the sponsorship it received from The Hospital Saturday Fund and Easy Does It! Accounting.
A series of six workshops were run from November 2012 to June 2013 for parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing teenagers.

The venue was DeafHear’s new Resource Centre on the campus of Deaf Village Ireland. The workshops were run on Saturdays to facilitate parents. The workshops were based on the Parents Plus Adolescents Programme which builds on parents’ strengths and resources, focusing on what parents are doing right and enhancing these skills.

The programme uses DVD footage which is subtitled. Real footage of actual families is used to illustrate parenting experiences and the interviews with parents are from all walks of life. As the programme is a versatile intervention it enabled us to design, plan and set up the programme so that it was tailored to the needs of parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teenagers.

**Workshops**

The themes of the workshops included:

- Positive parenting
- Communicating effectively and positively
- Staying connected to your teenager
- Listening to and encouraging your teenager
- Communicating rules assertively
- Parental self care

Based on requests and in consultation with parents, additional workshops were delivered. These workshops included:

- The internet and cyberbullying
- Self-esteem and confidence

Overall feedback from the Parents Workshop Evaluation was very positive, an example of these comments are as follows:

> Really enjoyed the days and got some tips with problems in different areas; ‘There is a great deal of in-depth learning to be uncovered through group discussion; ‘Thank you for the opportunity, I found it very beneficial as there is not much available for parents of adolescent children with hearing difficulties; ‘The programme was very informative and the parents participating were great.’

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the parents who participated in the programme, for their commitment, ideas, tips and sharing their experiences with other parents. A special thanks to our colleagues in DeafHear Resource Centre, Cabra for their support and to Edward Shortt, Office of Internet Safety, Department of Justice and Equality, for the booklets supplied.

**Future Plans**

Further workshops based on Parents Plus Adolescent Programme for Deaf Parents are planned for late autumn. Dates will be advertised in the Parents Corner section of our website www.deafhear.ie.

**Further Information**

If you have any queries or would like more information contact the facilitators:

Valerie Downes: 01 8175721  
valerie.downes@deafhear.ie

Julie Bunworth: 01 8175714  
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The DeafHear website has had an overhaul, with a fresh new design making it easier to find what you are looking for. See for yourself at www.deafhear.ie
It has been a busy summer with lots of local events for families and children! We hope you got a chance to take part - see pages 8-9 for some photos and reports from around the country.

**Universal Newborn Hearing Screening**
Since our last edition, the HSE has completed the rollout of the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening programme. We have already started to see the benefits of this programme, with children being diagnosed by three months of age, much earlier than previously. Families are getting support and information at an earlier point in their children’s lives, and international research has shown this will have lifelong benefits for the children and their families.

The impact of the newborn screening is also evident in our residential weekends for families with newly diagnosed children, as a number of the children are under six months of age – something that would not have been possible in previous years. In fact, more families are looking to attend these weekends, so this year a second event has been organised for October (see page 3 or Parents Corner on our website for details).

**Our New Ears**
In our last edition we mentioned that the ‘Our New Ears’ group has been campaigning hard for a change of policy to introduce the fitting of bilateral cochlear implants for children. Until now, the practice has been to fit only one cochlear implant, but research has shown that bilateral implants have significant benefits for children in terms of sound location and speech discrimination. Our New Ears have successfully lobbied the HSE and the Minister for Health and Children, and a programme for the fitting of bilateral implants is due to begin in 2014. One issue which has yet to be fully agreed is the process by which children who have previously been fitted with one implant will be offered the opportunity to have a second implant fitted. This is another important step forward in the support and services being provided to children and families.

DeafHear, in partnership with the Our New Ears group, is also planning to hold a workshop for parents of pre-school children with cochlear implants on 2nd and 3rd November in the Heritage Hotel, Portlaoise.

**Parenting Courses and Workshops**
During 2013 we had a number of parenting courses and workshops in various locations around the country, and we hope you had a chance to participate. One such course focused on parenting teenagers and you can read more about this course on page 14.

We have recently posted videos on our website of the keynote presentations from our parents’ conference last November, ‘Connect Learn Share’. If you were not able to attend the conference at the time, we think the videos are well worth viewing by both parents and professionals alike! The presentations from world experts focus on how services for families should be delivered with the involvement of parents and through a teamwork approach. Visit Parents Corner or DH-VT on the DeafHear website to see the videos, and if you have time, please tell us what you think of them!

**Cutbacks**
On a less positive note it appears that there will be cutbacks in the level of support provided to children with special educational needs in schools from September. Classroom support from Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) is critical for some Deaf and Hard of Hearing children to be able to access information from the class teacher. However, it appears that there will be less SNA support available to some children in schools next year. If you are concerned, please contact your local DeafHear Resource Centre.

Finally, DeafHear is now providing the assistive technology service to support children with hearing loss in schools. There was a danger that this service, which was previously provided by a private company called Bonavox, could have been lost and would have placed the education of many Deaf and Hard of Hearing children at risk. Without daily access to technology such as Soundfield or Personal Communication Systems, many children simply would not be able to hear what their teacher was saying! You can read more about DeafHear’s Schooltech Service on the DeafHear website at www.deafhear.ie
DeafHear.ie Resource Centres

Our services are delivered through a national network of Resource Centres

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