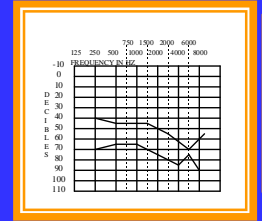




Hearsay



Irish Hard of Hearing Association Vol 14 No.1 Spring 2011



Folks, it's here, and time to celebrate !
See insert page for full details

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS



Hi all,

Thank God this winter is over and we can move on towards some much needed sunshine and springtime. We have a wonderful host of things to suit all tastes over the next few months. The most important event is the celebration of 25 years of the Irish Hard of Hearing Association with a great function on May 21st.

Please read all about how we are going to celebrate this on page 8 and be sure and join us for this event. Do remember to check out our website for all the latest news! www.ihha.ie

Put the date of our AGM in your diary now.

It will take place in DeafHear, 35 North Frederick Street, Dublin 1 @ 11.00 am on **Saturday, April 9th 2011** and we hope to have a demonstration of the latest hearing technology from Deaftech afterwards. Please come and if you have any secretarial or PR skills and can spare a morning (or afternoon a week) we would love to hear from you. Our Council is made up of volunteers and we are always looking for new ones!

Let's all look forward to the good times to come and keep smiling.

Maggie

EDITORIAL

Hello again everyone, and a happy new year to you all. Welcome to our latest edition of the new Hearsay magazine!

I'm delighted to tell you that our first year has gone very well. We have received very encouraging feedback about the new format and the content, and we've had lots of fun producing the magazine for you.

This will be the last edition of Hearsay which I will direct. In the summer it will be time for me to pass the editorship on to another pair of capable hands.

Among other activities with which I am currently involved is as a member of the Steering Group of the UNESCO City of Literature project. This designation is a very prestigious one for Dublin and Ireland; we are only the fourth city in the world, along with Edinburgh, Melbourne and Iowa City to be awarded such status. If you are a reader do have a look at our website.

So I would like to say thank you to all our readers for giving us the chance to try something new and to the Hearsay Committee for all their hard work, their time, their commitment and their talent, not to mention their good humour.

Do contact us via the IHHA office with your ideas, suggestions and contributions for future editions of Hearsay.

Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy this season's magazine and find lots in it to entertain and inform you.

Carol



The origins of the IHHA - how it all began

Over twenty-five years ago about 14 of us met once a month to support one another. We all had a hearing loss and we found great comfort in being able to talk to others with similar challenges. Eventually more people wanted to join our group but we felt that if there were too many of us, hearing would be even more difficult and instead we encouraged them to form their own groups.

How those first pioneers made life better for us all, we owe them a debt

Several groups did start up but they did not last very long and after a year or so they folded up. This suggested to us that perhaps our own group would flounder soon as well.

Some of us felt that something more permanent was necessary, something that would incorporate everyone and not just 14 people. It set us thinking and eventually the idea of a national association emerged.

After many months we found a formula, debated and selected a constitution. After much discussion the name **THE IRISH HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION** was born.

Of course there were still only 14 of us and the time had arrived for expansion. We set up our first annual general meeting to launch the Association and invited all those people we knew who might be interested and put a notice in 'What's On' in the Irish Times. I think there were about thirty at the first meeting and all the proposals we came up with were approved and adopted. I was honoured to be elected its first President.

All praise must go to that first small group of people who, through sheer hard work, took an idea and made it into a reality. They, and those who followed, developed the fabric of the association, evolving over time.

They launched the Hearsay magazine, pioneered the setting up of lip-reading classes and coping strategy courses, held information days in many parts of the country and lobbied for better subtitling services on television and loop systems in public places.

Of course, these are all things in the past but the Association must stride into the future. A great burden is on the shoulders of the present Council. More pro-active people are necessary to inspire and develop new ideas. There is much yet to do.

Ken

Success with Sounds in the Senate and the Dail

In our last two editions I reported on my efforts to have loop systems installed in the Houses of the Oireachtas. I am pleased to report that, thanks to the intervention of Senator David Norris, I have received notification from the Seanad Committee of Procedure and Privileges saying that hearing loops will be installed within the next few months.

Carol

Quiet Kettle

Have you ever noticed how noisy kettles can be?
Have you put up with the noise so that you can have a cup of tea?
Well no need to anymore.
I got a new 'Kenwood Stealth' kettle recently.
Pure bliss and the tea tastes as good!

Catherine



The Dancer

(25th Anniversary IHHA)

You shyly follow

Daring and brave

Into the circle

Music fills the room

Five years olds flutter

In ballet shoes, tights, skirts,

Wrap-overs and hair bands

All in pink, a Degas scene

A Deaf child's dream

Like then, no sound, just eyes

To copy the rhythm

Each step a counterfeit movement

A passionate quest

To hide a handicap

Moving to blend in

Reaching out to match every step

Stretch and hold

The fight to survive

Dancing to come alive

A dream to blend in and merge

In a circle just like you

Time moves on

A circle of laughter

Loving eyes, you and you and you

Mouthing words

Building friendships

Awake now to

Life changing vibrations

Access and inclusion

An outsider no more!

Diana.

The IHHA saved my life. This poem is dedicated to all its future members and friends.

Note from Maura:

This poem of Diana's moved me to tears. As a former dancer and teacher, I could not count the number of times when I said to the younger students 'you're not listening to the music'. If I were still teaching I would think again before speaking. Diana's courage and determination show her strength of character, the beauty of language show extraordinary ability to engage with the subject. Thank you Diana.



Gina's brave step



Did You Ever Think of Returning to College as a Mature Student ?

When I gave up working due to my hearing loss, I felt I needed to challenge myself. Freda Keenan told me about Roslyn Park College. Roslyn Park provides FETAC level courses for people with disabilities and I decided to further my education there. The Art link course appealed to me so I applied for this. After attending a course which Roslyn Park calls College Start my application for the Art link course was successful.

The Art link course awards a level five FETAC certificate but can also be used as a portfolio preparation course for applications into degree level courses. I never had any intention of attending a degree course; however, I was looking forward to achieving my FETAC award. As I progressed on the course my tutor encouraged me to apply for a degree. I was a bit apprehensive at first but took her advice and applied through the CAO for a degree level course. I never thought I had a chance of getting into my desired courses as the area I had chosen to study can be extremely competitive for places.

I was offered a place in the first round of offers in IADT Dun Laoghaire and am now in my second year of an Honours Degree in Visual Arts Practice (Fine Art). Unfortunately I have discovered that there isn't a high level of support for hearing impaired people. However support is improving for me so don't let lack of support put you off, the only way for support to improve is if we push for it.

Gina

Gina is a valued member of our IHHA committee and has been a champion of access for hard of hearing people for many years. She champions our cause at RTE (amongst others); to make sure we have as much subtitling as possible. Good luck, Gina in the exams this year, which we know will be passed with flying colours as usual!

Maggie

A Modest Appraisal

I saw a fabulous rhyming poem in Hearsay magazine
And I thought it was magnificent, the best I've ever seen
I think it should, without a doubt, be in the Hall of Fame
And if it's not, I have to say, then that's a crying shame

It was all about Christmas and hearing aids and such
Thanks a lot for publishing it, I enjoyed it very much
It was wonderful and marvellous, and far beyond compare
If you haven't guessed who's writing this, your mind must be elsewhere

Wordsworth, Yeats and Tennyson could never hope to compete
With that splendid piece of poetry, so concise and very neat
If you still can't guess who's writing this, you're really very slow
It's the fella who wrote the original poem, as if you didn't know!

Never one to praise myself, I'm really far too shy
And bashful and reticent, this no-one can deny
So I think this under-appraisal will really have to do
Cos I can't think of adequate words to add, can you?

But wait; there are some other words, to describe that brilliant poem
Classic and masterpiece spring to mind, but I better leave it alone
For I think I've said enough for now, I've been so humble and meek
It's not often that I'm so modest, but my tongue is stuck in my cheek.

Peter

**Adjudicator:
Anne
Fitzgerald,
Poet**



POETRY COMPETITION

Do you have an urge to write some poetry? Why not enter our poetry competition. We are offering a prize of €100 for the best effort. Entries to be sent to Poetry Competition, IHHA, 35 Nth Frederick St. Dublin 1, by June 1st.



"I'm the assistant judge" Harold

Where's Our Loop?

Introduction

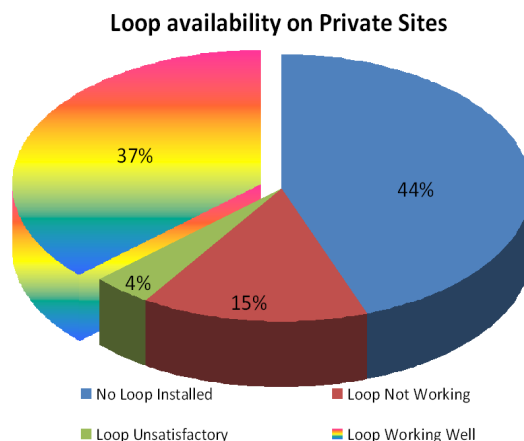
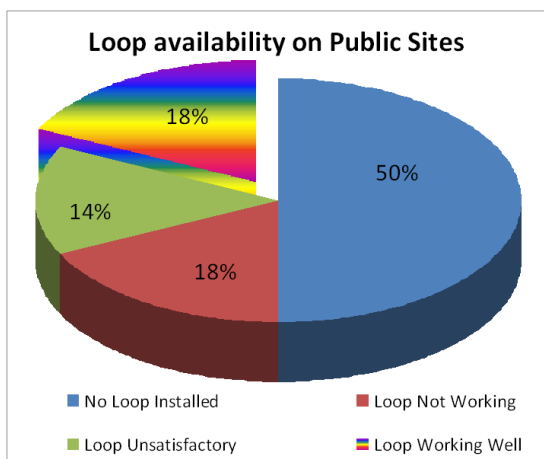
Deaf and Hard of Hearing people face many challenges in their daily lives. Induction loop systems are invaluable in assisting hearing aid users to understand spoken language, particularly in situations where there is background noise or where there is distance between the speaker and the listener.

Loop Survey

IHHA and DeafHear decided to investigate the availability and quality of loop systems in the wider environment. It was a small survey. When selecting private service sites, businesses with a track record of installing loop systems were targeted. The results therefore are likely to indicate a higher prevalence of loop systems in private sites than is actually the case. Here are some preliminary findings:

Working Loops:

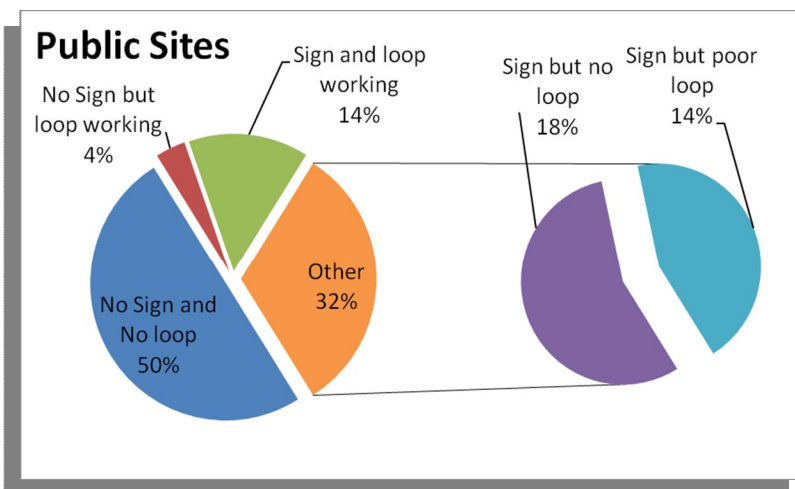
Only 18% of the public sites had working loops with a satisfactory level of sound quality, while 37% of private locations had a loop that was performing satisfactorily



Can we rely on the loop sign in Dublin? - NO

Loop Signs

The internationally recognised symbol indicates that a loop system has been installed.



Staff Awareness

Where there was no loop or the loop was not working, there was very little or no awareness of the issue on private sites (6.5%) but most researchers felt they were treated respectfully (93.8%). By contrast there was greater awareness on public sites (23.7%) but 26.3% of surveyors felt they were shown a lack of respect.

Some Observations/Ideas

1. Despite legal requirements in the public sector, implementation has been appalling.
2. Very few Deaf or Hard of Hearing people complain when there is no loop or compliment staff if a loop is working well. We need to do this more.
3. It would really help the cause if we had a good explanatory note about what loops are, legal obligations, how they work, different options available, who installs them, costs etc.
4. Where there is a lot of background noise or when privacy is important, loops can be a tremendous help. Maybe we should focus on these sites from a practical point of view.

Newsflash !



Arts & Disability Ireland are delighted that for the first time captioned performances will be available around Ireland as part of Fishamble's 8-venue national tour of *The Pride of Parnell Street*. The tour will take in Tralee, Portlaoise, Dun Laoghaire, Letterkenny, Ennis, Longford, Galway and Dublin. So if you live in or near any of these cities or towns put one of the following dates in your diary.

Siamsa Tire Tralee: Thursday 28th April

Dunamais Arts Centre, Portlaoise: Saturday 30th April

Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire: Saturday 7th May

An Grianan, Letterkenny: Tuesday 10th May

Glor Irish Music Centre, Ennis: Friday 13th May

Backstage Theatre, Longford: Tuesday 17th May

Town Hall Theatre, Galway: Friday 20th May

Helix DCU, Dublin: Thursday 27th May

Check locally with theatres for further details.

Freda Keenan.

**Arts & Disability
Ireland**

Promoting Cultural Equality

Superlative Service at Dublin Tourism

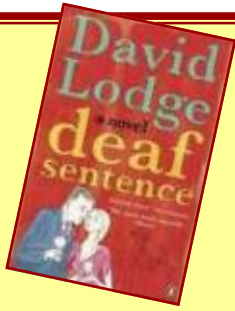
Those of us with appreciable hearing loss are well used to being frustrated in our endeavours to engage with the public and commercial world, so it is lovely to be able to report on the excellent service I received at the Dublin Tourism office in Suffolk Street in Dublin.

I tried to book tickets for a show online, but while the website allowed me to choose the price of the tickets it didn't let me select specific seats. As you know well, where we sit, our proximity to the stage and our ability to use lip-reading to enhance our understanding makes a huge difference to our enjoyment of any event.

So I went in to the ticket office in Dublin Tourism, where the staff could not have been more helpful, particularly a lady called Sue. Sue listened properly to what I was saying and spoke slowly and clearly. When she was unable to provide tickets to suit me from the allocation they had been given, she rang head office and negotiated appropriate seats and she did the credit card booking on the phone for me. Then she phoned me at home to ensure that I had received the tickets. At all times she was friendly and courteous.

Credit where credit is due! Well done, Dublin Tourism.

Carol.



For anyone in any way touched by deafness David Lodge's novel "Deaf Sentence" is a truly painfully penetrating and perceptive look at that disability.

This story is written as an ongoing journal and since both the author and the main character, Desmond (Des) Bates are both deaf, retired professors, it is very much a personal insight .

In the opening paragraph Des is at a crowded noisy art exhibition and he is pretending to hear what the young lady in the red blouse is saying. This gives him a very advantageous view of her cleavage. Like mine, his wife Fred (Winifred) has the belief that she is more affected by the deafness than he is. When he fails to give the correct response she has many ridiculing tones to

inquire of him "are you wearing your aids, darling". She, like many others, has the mistaken idea that hearing aids give perfect hearing in all circumstances.

His father, Harry, a retired musician is deaf, frugal, very independent and lives alone. How they relate to each other is very touching. We get an insight into the problems of ageing. Des took early retirement largely because of his deafness. If there is shopping to be done he is lost.

He finally learns that the young lady in the red blouse at the noisy reception really wanted him to supervise her PhD. He quickly is over involved and he is lucky to extricate himself with his good name and his marriage intact. Copious whiskeys increase his amorous intentions but negate any real progress. Overall he is depressed by his deafness. It is very sad when he tells how Beethoven was almost driven to suicide by it.

I would really recommend this book. Someone understands our predicament.

Aidan



A Listening Exercise

We often classify hearing loss, as being conductive (related to outer or middle ear) or sensorineural (related to inner ear/cochlea or auditory nerve). There is a third part of the hearing process where the brain processes the sound signals from your ears to give you understanding and comprehension. We commonly know this processing as listening.

This processing takes a micro second normally and you are able to spend all your time & energy, thinking & talking, enjoying the chat etc. However listening is not simply a question of turning it on or off. The process can be faulty or inefficient in the case of some people. However all people with hearing loss do not get clear sound signals coming into the brain for processing into understanding and comprehension. This complicates the process. You are forever trying to catch up and often failing. This causes a lot of stress and frustration. There are varying levels of listening difficulty and aetiologies. Many people are

assessed by an audiologist and/or speech and language therapist before embarking on a rehabilitation program. Therapeutic input for people with a severe/profound loss often needs to be devised on an individual basis and tailored to their specific needs/situation.

That said, I want to share one general self-help listening exercise with you, which I believe it to be good for all of us.

You simply need a daily paper or magazine (ideally something of interest) and a person who will do the exercise with you. The basic exercise is that your partner reads an article; you listen with your eyes closed and repeat what you heard. If you get it wrong you can read the article or repeat it a few times until you get it right. A person with a very severe / profound loss may find it best to read the script simultaneously with their partner in the exercise.

You need to find out where you are in terms of difficulty. You can make the test more challenging by having your hearing partner speak

more quickly or quietly; choose a more complicated article; you can turn on the radio in the background or go to a noisy café.

You can change hearing partner. Individual speakers vary in effectiveness, from the listener's point of view. The task of listening to weak voices and unclear articulation may be enough to discourage many home-based HOH listeners who don't have access to a 'helper' outside the family / friends circle.

There is also another benefit in this exercise as it allows you to involve others. Often we keep the hearing problem to ourselves except when we are complaining.

I believe the brain's listening ability may slip when deprived of meaningful sound over time. Listening exercises help maintain the link between poorly heard sounds and our memory bank of clear spoken communication.

I invite comment by experts or people suffering hearing loss.

Michael

**Wow folks,
it's here.**

Our 25th anniversary

**Wine reception, dinner and entertainment
in the beautiful National Yacht Club in
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.**

**Only €40 per head, see insert page for booking
form and full details.**

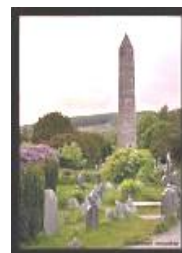
Out and About - Social Events with the IHHA



Sat 26th March: Chester Beatty Library, 'Heroes and Kings of the Shahnama' at 11.30am.
Come early for coffee or have coffee later. €2 tip per head for the guide.

Sat 2nd April: 'East Pier' Paul Mercier captioned performance, Abbey Theatre, 2.00pm.
(this play is interconnected with 'The Passing' on 9th April so it would be advisable to attend both)

Sat 9th April: 11am-1pm IHHA Annual General Meeting in DeafHear, 35 North Frederick Street, Dublin 1. Please forward your name if you would like to be voted onto Council.



Sat 9th April; 'The Passing' Paul Mercier captioned performance, Abbey Theatre, 2.00pm.
(this play is interconnected with 'East Pier' on 2nd April so it would be advisable to attend both).
Many of us attend 'Sheries' afterwards for a bit to eat!



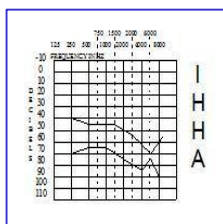
Thur 5th May: National Gallery guided tour. Meet at 6pm, reception desk in Millennium Wing.

Sun 15th May: A walk from Laragh to Glendalough and back by a different route.
Meet at 11.45am outside Anne's tea shop to start at 12.00pm. If you want to Have coffee there beforehand be there by 11.00am. Non-walkers are welcome to join us for a picnic at the upper lake car park at 2.15pm, bring flask, sandwiches. This event is part of our 25th celebrations.



Fri 20th May: 25th Anniversary dinner in the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire (see insert for booking form and details).

Late June: Annual outing to Shelbourne Park Greyhound Racing, date to be advised.
Watch the IHHA website for updates. €30 includes dinner.



Sat 6th August: Brian Friel's 'Translations' captioned performance Abbey Theatre, 2.00pm.

The Irish Hard of Hearing Association, 35 North Frederick Street, Dublin 1.

Tel: 01-8175700

Email: ihha@deafhear.ie Website: www.ihha.ie

Edited by Hearsay Committee.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the IHHA