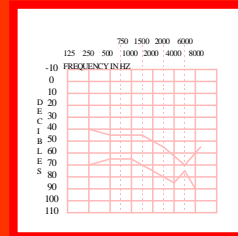




# Hearsay



I  
H  
H  
A

Irish Hard of Hearing Association - Vol 14 Winter 2010



## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Hi all,

We have had a wonderful three months since we were last in touch.

The EGM went off without a hitch, ably chaired by our own Joan Tully (Treasurer) on October 12<sup>th</sup>. All motions were carried and the one I want to shout about is the one on hearing members now being most welcome into our clan. So, if you have a spouse, relation or friend, who would like to join, do encourage them!!

Also, we had an exciting backstage tour of the Abbey and plays will never again be seen through the same eyes or even heard through the same ears!! We had a wonderful turnout which included people with no hearing loss. We now know the confines of the wardrobe ladies and how the Abbey itself is built on a cement base so it doesn't float away with the shifting tides of the Liffey!! And we saw the trap door all the sets must pass through to get onto the stage area. (And yes, it is small!).

Do let us know of outings that you would like to include and if the committee can be of assistance to you.

*Maggie*



Peace on  
Earth



Goodwill  
Toward  
All



## EDITORIAL

Hello everyone, and welcome to our second edition of the new Hearsay magazine!

I'm delighted to tell you that our first issue was very positively received. The new colourful layout, the informative articles, the personal stories, the crossword and the little bit of humour all proved popular.

Offers of help with producing the magazine have been warmly welcomed. We have a super team this year, with great rapport, talent and enthusiasm, but we are only volunteers and it is good to know that others are willing to step in when we have to move on, so if you think you would like to try some unpaid journalism in the future, keep us informed.

We've been very pleased to receive new suggestions for future articles and will follow up on these where possible during the next year. Remember, you can send me your written contributions (max 350 words each) via the DeafHear office, so please get writing. We will use as many as possible, though some may be edited and some saved for future editions.

Meanwhile, enjoy this season's magazine and do have a lovely Christmas,



*Carol*

## Do the Scales of Justice Balance in Favour of All our Citizens ?

This is the question Paddy asked when he received the news that the request for his attendance at the Criminal Courts was withdrawn because of his hearing loss.

Paddy goes on to explain that he received this summons to do his civic duty "pursuant to the provisions of Juries Act 1976". He was requested to present himself as a juror on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at 10.15 am.

Paddy's first reaction was "Oh God, how can I get out of this?". He had already done his jury service on a pretty gruesome assault trial and had got a ten year exemption. But Paddy is retired now because of his hearing loss and other medical issues and was ready to do his bit for the community. Besides, he thought that it might even turn out to be a nice juicy trial - maybe even one of the rogue bankers being brought to justice!



So Paddy went ahead and filled out the form.

The first section proved no problem and he found he fulfilled all the necessary criteria. The second part gave a list of all those not qualified for jury service. This section provided three lists of ineligible people but he found that nothing mentioned applied to him. However, to be on the safe side he included the

fact that he had a hearing problem, stating that if a T-switch system was available, he would have no problems. Paddy was very disappointed when he received a pink J7 form thanking him for information requested and stating that "on the basis of the information provided, the summons had been withdrawn".

Paddy states that he was "a little put out by the curt response and also indignant as to why such a negative response was given." He promptly sent off a letter to the County Registrar asking for verification of the reason for the withdrawal of Jury Summons. Was it:

- a: the courts did not have an induction loop system.
- b: there could be legal problems with a person serving on a jury with a Hearing disability.

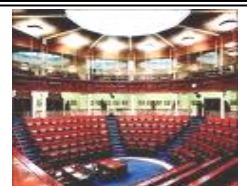
Paddy has not had a reply to his request even though a number of months have since passed. He concludes stating that "The silence from the courts is deafening!"

Maggie

*The editor would love to hear your views on this subject. Does a hearing loss at any level omit you from participating fully in your society? Should Paddy have been allowed to perform his civic duty?*



### Sounds in the Senate - Update



In our autumn edition of Hearsay, I reported on Senator David Norris's support for us. I am pleased to report that Senator Norris has taken the matter of hearing loops in parliament on another step, to the Committee on Procedure and Privileges, and he hopes eventually to have some positive news from them, though he advises that they can take a long time. Senator Norris's support is much appreciated.

In the same article, I quoted an exchange in the Seanad involving Senator Ronan Mullen. Senator Mullen has written to me saying that he read my article in Hearsay - this is good news as it seems we have a bigger readership than we thought! Senator Mullen assures me that he did not intend to joke about deaf people and that he does take the matter seriously. He writes that he would have raised the matter of hearing loops, had I asked him, and he has offered his future support in the Seanad.

Carol

# Television Access Scene



As you all know Deaf and Hard of Hearing people have benefited from increased subtitles on TV driven by International trends and Irish broadcasting legislation. The IHHA played a significant role in the early days when Pat McKenna was very assertive in articulating our views. The scene has changed and this article is designed to inform you what is going on.

## Broadcasting Authority (BAI)

The recent Broadcasting Act created a new regulatory authority. The aims of the Broadcasting Authority are to ensure that the number and categories of broadcasting services made available in the State best serve the needs of the people of the island of Ireland, bearing in mind their languages and traditions and their religious, ethical and cultural diversity. Disappointingly, neither the Minister nor the BAI itself saw the need to have a disability representative on its 12-man board. The Communications Regulator and Dept of Communications still have a role to play so it is difficult for us to influence policies.

## Digital Terrestrial Television

All of Europe is going digital. Traditional (aerial) television or analogue TV will be turned off by the end of 2012. After that, you will need a set top box (decoder). Access, including subtitles, will depend on the set top box and remote control functionality. To date, RTÉ have

the only license. We are discussing several issues with them. Note - people who use relay companies UPC or SKY will not be affected unless they change provider.

## TV Access Coalition

At the suggestion of the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI), a number of disability groups have come together. The IHHA, DeafHear, NCBI, IDS, Enable Ireland, Age Ireland, SVDP, PWDI and many more are all members. Our aim is to create one effective advocacy body, share the work and keep up with all that is going on. Have a look at [ww.tvaccess.ie](http://ww.tvaccess.ie)

## Non- Regulated Relay companies

It is worth noting that existing Irish broadcasting legislation places a disability access responsibility on broadcasting companies i.e. RTE, TV3, TG4 etc. BBC/ITV are regulated by Ofcom in the UK. Relay companies (Currently UPC and SKY) are not regulated in Ireland. In the digital world, a broadcaster can broadcast subtitles but you might not receive them through a fault of the relay company. We have had many instances where subtitles have failed and the problem relates to UPC or SKY. In many instances, it is unclear who is responsible for the problem. Things are getting more complicated technically. We are working on the issue via the TV Access coalition and representatives have met the Dept of Communications, BAI, UCP and RTE recently.

## Report Problems

If people have subtitle problems with

RTÉ, they should report them. It is best to spell everything out in detail.

Email [subtitle@rte.ie](mailto:subtitle@rte.ie)

Write to RTÉ Subtitling, RTÉ, Donnybrook, Dublin 4.

Phone 01 208 3111 (main number)

Text 087 798 9128

Information you MUST include -

1. What Channel is having problems (RTÉ One or RTÉ Two)?
2. What problem you've had
3. What was the date?
4. What time did the problem start?
5. What was the name of the programme?
6. What area you live in?
7. What carrier you use (Satellite/Cable)?

Example of what your text message should look like:

***RTE One, Subtitles were not on screen, 4th May 2010, 2.09pm, The Afternoon show, I live in Dublin 24 and use Sky.***

TV3 do not have a dedicated email so people should report problems either by emailing

[info@tv3.ie](mailto:info@tv3.ie),

or you can:

**Phone 01-419 3333**

Write to TV3, Westgate Business Park, Ballymount, Dublin 24.

Michael Tighe



Hello

It's Hard of Hearing Harold here.

Those two, Maggie and Maura, stuck me in a corner, yet again, and put in all this gobbledy-gook about RTE, what cheek!.

If I don't get my column in the next issue there'll be wigs on the green !!

## Dublin's Deaf Village



*What is a 'Deaf Village' and what relevance could such an entity have for those of us who are Hard of Hearing?*

It was with these questions in mind that I set off to interview Liam O'Dwyer in Drumcondra recently. Liam is CEO of the Catholic Institute for Deaf People (CIDP) and he is overseeing the Village Project. The Deaf Village Project aims to bring together on a 30 acre site in Cabra a range of facilities and amenities to serve primarily Deaf people but also the local Cabra community. Modern educational and advice services, residential accommodation for those needing care, a sports and recreational complex, social amenities, meeting rooms, administrative facilities and a place of worship will be brought together on one campus specifically designed to meet the particular communication needs of Deaf people. Plans include schools, a life-long learning centre, a primary health care

centre, a chapel and a cafe/bar. A multi-purpose hall will facilitate drama, dancing and lectures. There will be a 25 metre swimming pool, four seven-a-side football pitches, two-full sized football pitches, a basketball court and a gym.

The project is a collaborative initiative promoted by the CIDP in partnership with the main Deaf organisations in Ireland. DeafHear is represented on various committees and our own Michael Tighe represents the IHHA on the Administration and Services Committee.

Talking to Liam O'Dwyer, I suggested that the main objective of the Deaf Village is to provide for profoundly Deaf people, with sign language needs, rather than for people like us, who are hard of hearing. He told me that DeafHear will have an office and storage space in the Village, whilst retaining its current city centre offices. We hard of hearing people would benefit from all rooms being fitted with loops. We would have privileged access to all facilities.

I also asked Liam about the name of his organisation and he assured me that, though his organisation was linked to one religious denomination, the Deaf Village would serve

everyone, of every denomination and of none. Though the one place of worship on the campus would be a Roman Catholic Church, religious iconography would not be visible around the other buildings in the village.

Planning permission for the village has been obtained and, following the usual tendering process, a contractor will be appointed in December and building work will begin in early 2011. Building will be in three phases and is expected to be completed by 2015. Funding is coming from the CIDP and the sale of some of their property, as well as from the Government. It is anticipated that, on completion, the Deaf community will set up a management committee to run the complex.

The Deaf Village looks like a fantastic project, giving hugely improved and centralised services to Deaf people. It will cater primarily for Deaf people, but membership of its fine sports and leisure amenities will be open to local residents and to IHHA members. It should be a real asset for Dublin.

Carol Robinson Tweed

### STOCKING FILLER



Once again it's Christmas Time, and Santa's very busy  
Some folk think he's not really there, and I often wonder, is he  
My stocking I hang up each year, and hope he's going to fill it  
But on Christmas Morn I'm so forlorn when I find there's nothing in it

I never ask for very much, just to win the lotto  
Moderation in all things, has always been my motto  
Just a million euro or two, to help to pay the bills  
And I think it would, miraculously, help cure all my ills

I'd buy lots and lots of hearing aids, until I find the best one  
The only affordable aid just now, is one that begins with lemon

Hopefully, my turn will come, and when I've loads of money  
I'd be living in the place they call the land of milk and honey

The bills I have to pay each month wouldn't matter at all  
Because I've won the lotto and life is just a ball  
If the banks go bust again, I'd be right back where I started  
Instead of living the Life of Reilly, I'd end up broken hearted

But even if we end up broke it's still a happy time  
With parties, presents and laughter, that's hardly a crime  
So I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year  
Just a word of caution, go easy with the beer.

Peter



# Neurofibromatosis

## An Extraordinary Story of Courage and Inspiration

To be honest, neither I nor my family knew when I was diagnosed with Neurofibromatosis at the age of 6, that one day my hearing would be severely damaged. I was initially diagnosed after my mother spotted a small tumour on my brow bone and had a biopsy taken. She was told that I had the genetic condition called Neurofibromatosis type 1. I was the first person in my family to have the NF gene, meaning that, unlike many NF patients, I did not inherit it from my parents. Being a child I never really knew what it meant - I think ignorance was bliss for me!

Over the years I've had different operations for tumour removal but when I was 13 my hearing in my right ear faded. After an MRI scan, it was discovered that I had a large tumour on my right acoustic nerve putting pressure on it causing damage. It was then I was told my NF had progressed into type 2 - meaning that my tumours were growing internally on nerve paths (compared to NF1 tumours which grow on the skin).

After my tumour was removed, I lost all hearing in my right ear. Only having one useful ear didn't hinder me in school and the only assistance I had in my Leaving Cert was written transcripts of aural exams.



Soon enough, a tumour was found on my left acoustic nerve and, although my hearing was still good in my left ear, I had yearly MRI scans to monitor its progress as it couldn't be removed without damage to my hearing and my doctor felt it didn't need to be removed immediately.

During this time, I attended college and gained a HND in Theatre and Media production. After graduating, I took a position teaching drama to children in my hometown in Cavan. I worked there for three years until a couple of months ago, when my remaining hearing began to deteriorate. Luckily, my doctor had warned me about this, so it didn't come as too much of a shock - I had started taking lipreading classes to prepare myself.

Eventually, when my hearing goes entirely, my tumour will be removed

and an Auditory Brainstem Implant will be fitted in the hope that I can have some level of hearing.

Unfortunately, as it works using brain electrodes to stimulate nerves, the results vary from person to person. In the meantime, I am preparing myself for what's ahead.

My social life has been affected a bit by my hearing problems - being in nightclubs to the wee hours doesn't appeal to me now as much as when I was a teenager. When I'm tired, I find it harder to concentrate on conversations but my friends and family have all been very supportive.

In the case of my drama, I have begun writing for theatre - something which I had never considered before but it's something I find challenging and enjoyable and a way to remain involved in an industry I love.

I never thought I'd lose my hearing at 24 but I figure God doesn't throw anything at you that you can't handle!

Louise

### A Stressful Task

Recently I have had a very stressful day because of (as always) my impaired hearing. I had to take my car to the NCT test centre to have its road worthiness checked.



On top of the worry about the car itself, wondering if it would pass the very strict test, there was the usual worry of whether I would be able to understand any questions that might be asked with the background noise going on around me and, of course, that's exactly what happened. The lady behind the counter had to keep repeating a question over and over and louder and louder so that everyone in the office was staring at her and me. It turned out she had to see my driving licence and that's what she had been asking for. I felt physically sick by the time I finally managed to understand what she was saying.

all

Here are some tips for anyone who has to go to the NCT test centre to have their car tested. Have all the necessary documents together, these are;

1. Your Vehicle Registration Book or Vehicle Registration Certificate.
2. Your Driving Licence.
3. Your Confirmation of Appointment Letter.  
Test Fee Charge (€50 at present).

If you hand these documents over the counter, all at the same time, there should not be any need for questions to be asked, the lady will simply give them back to you when she has checked everything (minus the €50 of course!) She will also give you a receipt. Then you go and join the queue of cars waiting to be tested. You should plan to arrive at the test centre about 15 minutes before the appointed time. If you are either too early or too late this could add to your problems (more questions).

Be sure to have your car serviced and prepared for the test a few days beforehand. If you don't and the car should fail the test, everything will be explained to you as to why your car failed and that means trying to understand what is being said all over again.

Peter

# My Cochlear Implant

6

I have been under the threshold for Cochlear Implant consideration for many years. I decided against implementation. I saw risk and I felt I have coped well. I was happy with my decision but not happy with my situation. More has become known about my condition which removed some of the perceived risk and my attitude changed. Very simply I saw that a successful implant offers me great hope of fuller participation and a more fulfilling life. There are many benefits to my family and friends also. In the end, this far outweighed the risk.



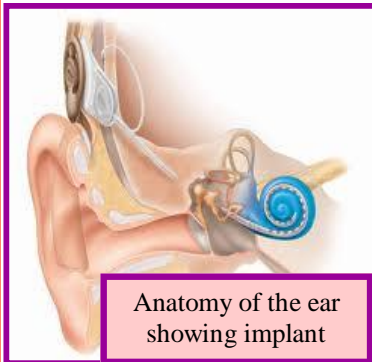
Michael on regaining consciousness

Self Portrait

## Operation & immediate aftermath

The operation is a fairly simple one. I was not interested in the details. I simply trusted the doctors. The operation took about three hours and I was very alert shortly afterwards. Over the next few days there was some pain, some tinnitus but the main issue was that I was very dizzy for three or four days.

It was eerily quiet! Over the years I often wondered what total deafness would be like. It was not nearly as bad as I expected, mainly because it was only temporary. I could lip-read a bit and used a white board and marker. Simple exchanges were easy but conversations were difficult.



Anatomy of the ear showing implant

## Switch on

I expected an explosion of sound. Instead, I got a bleep like in a hearing test after about 20 seconds. A succession of bleeps meant it was at least working. I had not anticipated total failure but relief was what I felt.

The bleeps became noise, then a wall of noise and a little later I heard maybe a whisper. After maybe 20 minutes Bart Simpson arrived. He had a squeaky whisper instead of a voice. I was able to lipread well again.

You spend years giving out about not hearing and suddenly in the first week you are giving out about noises you hear ó opening crisps, turning pages in books, chocolate wrappers, high heels, cutlery, etc.

## Rehabilitation

I have been lucky in that I made a good start. A lot of rehabilitation is needed to get used to and make use of the new sounds you are hearing

Three weeks on, three tuning sessions and some rehabilitation work later, I am already much better than before in quiet situations and beginning to follow a little without lip-reading. I am containing my excitement as there is a long way to go.

I have set ambitious targets in terms of hearing without needing to lip read, using the telephone and greater participation in group sessions. I can see many hours of rehabilitation work ahead and some more magic from my audiologist.

My plan for the next few months is to be patient but put in the hours of work. Then I have to decide what to do with my newly recovered skills.

Michael Tighe

*Wishing Michael good hearing over the Christmas period, from your Hearsay colleagues*



## Christmas Fruit Cake Recipe



large fluffy bowl. Add 1 tsp. sugar and beat again. To be sure the whiskey is okay, pour 1 level cup and drink. Repeat. Turn on the electric mixer. Add 2 tsp. sugar and beat again. To be sure the whiskey is still okay cry another tup, hic.

Murn off the tixer. Break 2 legs and add to the bowl and chuck in the dried fruit. Mix on the turner. If the fried druit gets stuck in the beaters pry it loose with a drewscriver, hic. Sample whiskey to check for siscontincy, Next, sift 2 cups of salt, or something, who cares. Check the whiskey. Now sift the lemon juice and squeeze your nuts (ouch). Add 1 tablespoon of sugar or something, whatever you can find. Grease the oven. Turn the cake tin to 350 degrees. Don't forget to beat off the turner. Check the whiksey again, hic. Throw the whole mess out the window. Have a little drink of whiksey and go to bed. Who the heck likes frucake anyway?

Hic, Happy Crizmiz

You'll need the following:

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 cup of water        | 1 tsp. baking soda                      |
| 1 cup of sugar        | lemon juice                             |
| 2 cups of dried fruit | Nuts                                    |
| 1 cup of brown sugar  | 1 full bottle of your favourite whiskey |
| 4 large eggs          |   |
| 1 tsp. salt           |   |

Taste the whiskey to check for quality. Take a large bowl. Check the whiskey again to be sure that it is of the highest quality. Pour one level cup and drink. Repeat. Turn on the electric mixer. Beat 1 cup of butter in a

# Passengers on Trial (Our visit to Terminal 2)

On 26<sup>th</sup> August, Freda, Carol and I were invited, along with some physically disabled, deaf, and hard of hearing people to act as trial passengers in Dublin Airport's state of the art new terminal.

We were greeted on arrival by Helen, DAA's charming PRO. As the induction loop had not yet been fitted, Helen had organised two excellent speed-text operators to help us along our way. We met up with the other passengers (a number of them in wheelchairs), given coffee while awaiting a busload of ordinary people, before being given our briefing.

I was immediately impressed with the layout of the check-in area, which is on the ground floor. Having worked for many years with the chaos that is Terminal 1, this was a pleasant surprise. The desks ran the whole length of the ground floor in a line and there was a great feeling of space and light.

Armed with large pin-on labels Trial Volunteer we were all given a ticket and a bag to check in. Our destination was Boston! We were checked in by charming Aer Lingus staff, who kindly spoke loud and very clear when advised of our hearing loss.

The first hurdle came at this point. The escalators going up to the boarding level were extremely high and steep. A number of hard of hearing people also suffer with vertigo and as Carol was among these, one of the many DAA staff looking after us took her off to a lift.

Meanwhile, Freda and I proceeded to the security check. I have to say the female security officer was, to put it very mildly, an overly stern woman who bodily frisked me with great enthusiasm, making me remove my shoes twice, as they had small buckles on. She was so unpleasant, this wasn't a trial for her, she was either up for an Oscar, or I had been marked as the potential hijacker of the illusionary aircraft!!

We were then processed by US immigration control, an extremely nice man, a genuine American, who wished me a nice holiday! From there we were shown to the boarding gates, and told where to go for our freebie lunch (I was hoping for a nice buffet), sandwiches and coffee/tea. Carol was still missing, but joined us quite soon at the boarding gate. We were called by seat number to board and went to the entrance of an air bridge, where our boarding cards were



taken. Then, after the imaginary flight, we went to collect our baggage. Mine appeared to be missing, and it was at this stage the reality clicked in! For a minute I felt this horrific feeling, that I was once again, a real passenger as I've lost luggage on two occasions.

It will be very interesting to see the Terminal in full swing. I can see the escalators being a problem, not only for those with vertigo, but for elderly passengers also. The DAA staff will have their hands full operating the lifts.

We left Terminal 2 at about 4pm, having arrived at 9.30am. We really would have had time to get to Boston!

Maura

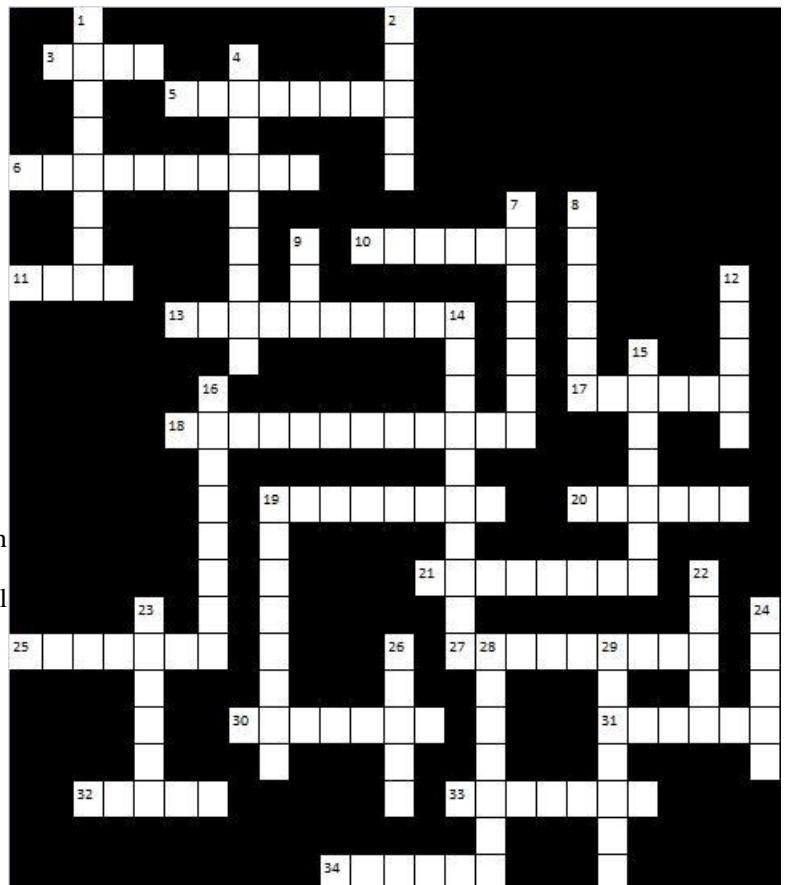
## Christmas Crossword (answers on web [ihha.ie/hearsay](http://ihha.ie/hearsay))

### Across

3. The Christmas version is rich and fruity.
5. Rudolf is the foremost of these.
6. Traditional Christmas plant
10. Jesus's cot.
11. Drink to have with dinner.
13. Pretty collections of snow crystals.
17. Santa's call.
18. A sweet addition to dessert.
19. Winter one is when the Sun is furthest south of the Equator.
20. One of Santa's animals, German for Thunder
21. Birth of Christ.
25. Dessert.
27. Fun to throw, cold to receive.
30. This fellow is jolly but cold
31. A sparkly decoration.
32. Santa travels from here.
33. The deer's name is the German word for lightning
34. These illuminate the tree.

### Down

1. Almond topping, goes under the icing.
2. Cheery
4. An aid to romance?
7. A noisy item, contains a small gift and a terrible joke.
8. Transport for the red-coated man.
9. Santa's helper.
12. A Christmas song.
14. A plump generous chap.
15. How Santa gets into the house.
16. It's fun to do this with presents.
19. Is it big enough for all the presents?
22. Founder of ancient religion.
23. Christmas. Season.
24. Pretty but prickly.
26. Serenity.
28. Leave of fir tree.
29. Branched horns.





1986



2011



# The IHHA Celebrates

The IHHA will be 25 years old in 2011

To celebrate this occasion, we hope to have an anniversary dinner, open to all our members throughout Ireland. Details have yet to be finalised, but the event is likely to take place in May. We are aiming for an easily accessible venue, good quality meal and perhaps even some hearing-loss-compatible entertainment!

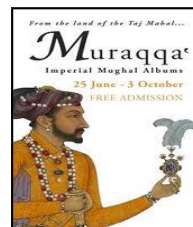
If you are interested in coming, on your own, or with a spouse, partner or friend, do let us know by writing, emailing, texting or phoning the DeafHear office at 8175700.

Hope you can come, the more the merrier! We will also be aiming for reasonable accommodation rates adjacent to venue for anyone wishing to stay overnight.




## Out and About

### Social Events with the IHHA

I think most of us who were there, would agree that the Muraqqa Exhibition in the Chester Beatty Library was something very special, Learning about this amazing dynasty and seeing all the artefacts on display left memories of a golden age in history, Our guide, Mrs Nataghe Moane made the whole occasion one to be remembered and thanks to Ainé O'Rourke for organising the visit.



**National Gallery of Ireland**  
**Thursday 6th Jan 2011 at 6.30pm.**  
**Thursday 3rd May 2011 at 6.30pm.**  
 (Meet at Reception Desk, Clare St. entrance)



Mrs Nateghe Moane, and Ainé at the Muraqqa exhibition in the Chester Beatty Library



**Captioned Performances at Abbey**  
**Sat 29th Jan at 2pm** **ARRAH NA POGUE** by Dion Boucicault, 'A Rip-roaring Romantic Adventure'.  
**Sat 2nd April at 2pm** **THE EAST PIER** by Paul Mercier.  
**Sat 9th April at 2pm** **THE PASSING** by Paul Mercier (this is a companion piece to THE EAST PIER.)



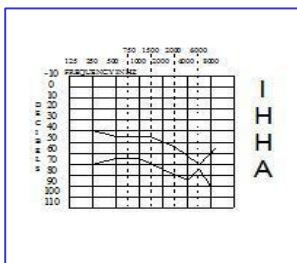
Some of our group backstage at the Abbey. All agreed it was a wonderful tour.



**Calling Old Scrabblers**  
 A Scrabble evening will be held on Friday 4th February at 7.30pm, at 45 Upper Leeson St, Dublin 4. New Scrabblers also welcome. Please text 087 216 8078, or write a note, if you are able to come. Space is limited so early reply appreciated. Park on road after 7pm.



The IHHA group at the Chester Beatty Library Muraqqa Exhibition



*If you would like further information on any social event, see below for contact details:*

**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**