



The
Irish
Hard of
Hearing
Association

HEARSAY!

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Newsletter for the Hard of Hearing

CHRISTMAS 'C'HEAR'

Christmas is upon us.
With crackers and good fare
Just be sure you end up
With batteries to spare

With Christmas dinner over
And everyone is pissed
The jokes are not so funny
When the ending has been missed

Relations have departed.
With a final wine or beer
And when everyone is snoring
Turned off, you will not hear

We hope you have a lovely time
And that you have a ball
All of us at "Hearsay" say
"Merry Christmas to you all"

HILL WALKING

Diana and I recently went on a hill walking holiday in the Yorkshire Dales. Yes, you guessed it; it was during the rainy month of June. It did rain but we were fortunate, there was only one day when it poured all day and it was cold and miserable.

When you are well toggled out for weather like that, you have everything you can to keep warm and dry. A large hood on your raincoat is an essential. This, of course creates problems because when I have my hood up, my hearing aid whistles. It is interesting to see how both Diana and I solved our problems in different ways.

The real advantage is that in weather like that nobody wants to talk to you anyway so that hearing is not a problem. Diana just switched off, put her hood up as tightly as possible and just enjoyed her hibernation. I had a different approach. I am fortunate to have a Tilley hat. This is a kind of safari hat with a large brim and straps both front and back so that the hat does not blow off even in a gale. With this secure, the large brim kept the rain out of my aids and I was able to remain switched on all the time and it still didn't whistle, it was magic, although nobody talked to me anyway because they were too wet and cold.

Ken

PRESIDENTS LETTER

I am writing this a few day's after the Budget. It is scary when the government favours cut back's on Pensioner's medical cards, Children's allowances and Disability Budgets rather than deal with the real issues facing the economy (that means all of us). However I won't go on. You can't escape the news these days

We have many problems due to our lost hearing and almost all of you could tell me a thing or two I don't know. What is important is

that we make the most of what we have and not dwell too much on what we can't do. Be positive as much as possible. Do something small to cheer somebody else up. If we all support each other we can only benefit

I want to apologise for the fact that we are not keeping Aertel page 494 up to date. We have had a very frustrating time. Some computers seem to be deaf!

Finally and on a positive note I can tell you work has recommenced on the IHHA website.

Michael

RELAX WITH MULLED WINE

Tension makes your hearing even worse and there can be a lot of it about around Christmas time. Children can be very noisy and indeed deafening at this time of the year. To help you relax over Christmas why not try making mulled wine. It is very easy to make.

Pour bottle of sweet red wine into saucepan. Add rind of lemon; piece bruised root ginger; 10 whole cloves; 1 small stick cinnamon and 2 tablespoons sugar. Slowly warm up but do NOT bring to the boil. When warm mix in juice of the lemon and serve warm.

When you pour into glasses, make sure the glasses are not on a cold surface otherwise they can crack.

Just sit back and enjoy it and never mind what people are saying. It is amazing just how calming and relaxing the warm mulled wine can be. Happy Christmas.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

There is a Japanese Proverb that says "one kind word can warm the winter months".

Our wish for each one of you is that you will receive many kind words and much warmth during the Christmas Season and beyond. To all our hard-of-hearing friends we say be kind to yourselves. Plan ahead so as you will not feel overwhelmed by the noise of the streets and the shops and the extra-loud sounds that are an inevitable part of the Season.

Enjoy any social occasion at your own pace, never being afraid to disconnect those hearing aids if the din gets too much - you will not miss anything of great importance. And how about making a resolution to get in touch with the Hearsay Magazine at least once during the Coming Year. Let us know how you are getting on.

Meantime Christmas Blessings and Good Wishes to you all from the Hearsay Team

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

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JEANIE JOHNSTON - JULY 2008

Jeanie Johnston carried us both. She held us in her bosom. We felt safe. She fed our souls and our bellies. Sailing on the Jeanie Johnston was akin to meeting the Mother of All Mothers. There was a quietness more beautiful than on any other vessel we have ever been on. Her sails billowing in the wind. There were no engine noises as we silently sailed out of the harbour. Everything was peaceful on board. Not even a loudspeaker bombarded the airwaves.

We had no need for any sound and quite often switched off our hearing aids altogether - we have three between us! However, some sounds really enhanced exquisite moments like the sound of creaking timber resonating times from long, long ago. I discovered an empty cabin down below & bagged the top bunk. I must have dozed off hypnotised by the gentle movement of the boat each time she climbed another wave, dipping down and climbing again over and over again. The smell of ropes and the fresh salt sea air pervaded every crevice of the empty galley. No porthole so everything semi dark, ancient ways, surreal so soothing.

Both of us watched the landscape aft fade into the mist and rain. Our hearts uplifted by the waves so buoyant and beautiful and on the portside Howth Head and Lighthouse and starboard the lonely Irish Sea. No need for sound or words here; the sea a healing balm for all broken winged birds!! The only way I can remember Portside is because my Mum hated Port and Starboard because my Dad adored stars!!

Jeanie Johnston is a replica of the three-masted square-rigger barque built in 1847 by John Mtnn of Quebec. The replica was built at Blennerville, Tralee, Co Kerry between 1998 and 2002 to commemorate the Great Famine in which the original ship played an important part. Over 2,500 famine victims were taken to America in 13 crossings over six years without a single loss to the sea or to disease. Email: infor@jeaniejohnston.ie or www.jeaniejohnston.ie

Diana

GET UP AND GET OUT

Have you ever thought about doing something that gets you out of the house, at least some of the time, and it doesn't matter that you can't hear very well. It's really just a matter of finding something that interests you, something you enjoy doing.

Some time ago, my friend Ken wrote a piece in Hearsay asking if there was any-one out there interested in playing snooker. The next time I saw him I told him I would like to play. That was about five years back, and we still meet every week or two to have a game. We

are both hopeless at the game and Ronnie O'Sullivan has nothing to worry about. But that's not the point. What matters, is that we really enjoy playing snooker. In this kind of activity hearing loss doesn't matter at all, in fact it might even be helpful because it's easier to concentrate on the game without having to try to hear what people are saying. Sometimes Ken wins and sometimes I win, but who cares about the score.

Snooker and subtitled films have both helped a little to fill a blank spot in my life. I was spending far too much time alone in my house thinking - if I go here, or go there, or whatever - I won't be able to hear what people are saying.

You can do the same, all it takes is to find someone, or better still, a group of people, with similar interests as yourself. My own special interest is in professional boxing, but I'm just a tiny bit too old to take an active part in that.

Joe

HEAR HEAR

I read an article in the paper recently saying that research suggests that no two people listen to the world in the same way. It seems every individual's brain is tuned differently to the sound environment scientists believe. If you could borrow someone else's ears you would have great difficulty in locating the source of sounds until your brain re-learned how to do it.

I cannot help wondering if it is the same when you first get a hearing aid. It certainly takes a while to get use to it and the sounds you hear. Then as well there is the Cochlear Implant operation, I believe one has to re-learn sounds if your hearing has been deteriorating for some time.

Also it appears that according to scientists teenagers who smoke or whose mother smoked during pregnancy are at a higher risk of hearing problems. A study found that those who had been exposed to smoke had trouble focusing and interpreting sounds when there was a distraction. Scientists from Yale University said nicotine causes the teenage brain to develop abnormally resulting in changes through to the structure of white matter - the neural tissue through which signals are relayed.

People affected would have problems in noisy settings such as classrooms where there may be other people talking and lots going on.

Makes one think doesn't it?

Jacqueline

Some lightweight quips from Anne O'Rouke:

"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends"

(Oscar Wilde)

"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend...if you have one"

(George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill)

"Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second...if there is one."

(Winston Churchill)

"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it."

(Mark Twain)

"He is not only dull himself; he is the cause of dullness in others."

(Samuel Johnson)

"I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure."

(Clarence Darrow)

"He had delusions of adequacy."

(Walter Kerr)

MY SILENCE OF DEAFNESS

My silence of deafness with words of a hollow sound.
That's my corner of darkness, where words cannot be found.

An isolation of loneliness, where walls have no doors.
Yet I hear people speaking, but I can't hear them of course.

Alone in my thoughts where there's nothing to hear,
Yet, I hear voices and that is my fear.

As I huddle in this corner where my thoughts are so deep,
These are lonely Empty places, but my hopes I must keep.

There is light in this corner It's bright I can see of course,
As I walk down that lonely Passage into those open doors.

by Vincent Gaffney

ORLA O'SULLIVAN

'Being hearing and visually impaired does not stop me from doing what I want'!

Orla has been profoundly deaf and visually impaired since shortly after birth. She was a premature baby who contracted an infection in hospital.

She was given oxygen and streptomycin which damaged both her eyes and ears. Her mother (retired teacher) taught her nursery rhymes and songs and so stimulated her musical ear from an early age. She helped her play the piano by holding her fingers on the keys, so that she could feel the vibrations and hear the sounds.

She went to piano lessons in 1976 at the age of six and through her school years she got the highest scores in her music Inter and Leaving Cert exam ear tests. She also learned several instruments including recorder, violin, guitar, piano accordion, electronics keyboard and organ in St Finbarrs Cathedral Cork. She went to U.C.C. and studied performance, music management and sound and a teacher's Diploma VCM. She is at present studying for a Diploma in Recital ATCL in the Cork City College of Music where she has been a student for many years.

"Performances" - She accompanies on piano for primary school Christmas concerts, Holy Communion, Cor Fheile in Cork city hall, played organ for local church choirs, and performed in the Triskel Arts Centre, Cork Opera House and accompanied the I.C.A. group in many venues and won many prizes. She also accompanied for the Deaf International Festival in Cyprus, Santander, Vienna and Dublin. She has been on R.T.E. 'Hands On' twice. She has been teaching for the past 17 years - both children and adults and also taught Deaf children in St Columbus N.S. Douglas with Faculty for the Deaf. Orla is very determined to continue to achieve her ambitions in music. She feels that music has given her great enjoyment and pleasure and helped her disability.

To quote Socrates: "Thus education by the means of music is most excellent, as rhythm and harmony may reach the centre of the soul most deeply and lend it grace and dignity."

Marie



TEENAGERS TURN DEAF EAR TO HEARING DAMAGE

According to a recent study, teenagers know that their hearing can be damaged by loud music and yet most of them will not lower the volume on their iPods. In group discussions with students in the Netherlands, researchers concluded that young people generally were aware that the excessive sound from a 1VIP3 player could harm their hearing. However, most of the students said they usually played their own devices at maximum volume and were reluctant to reduce it. On the whole, most denied they were personally at risk.

Although most of them knew the hazards of such loud music, they believed that on the whole they were not vulnerable to hearing loss.

Researchers recommended that parent should inform their children more fully and make them more aware of the personal damage that it can cause. Parents should also look out for signs of any problems when, for example their child complains of ringing in the ear or of sounds being muffled.

Unfortunately, according to group discussions it seems that many parents are actually unaware of or at least ignoring the risks involved with MP3 players. It was concluded that perhaps the volumes available with these players is too great and that manufacturers should make the changes necessary. The volume of sound is measured in decibels (dB) and those of 90 dB are believed to be hazardous. When the sound reaches 120dB to 140dB, it becomes uncomfortable or even painful. As a general rule of thumb for teenagers it is recommended that existing players are set at a maximum of 60% of its full capacity when using ear bud style headphones. iPod usually supply these types of earphones. With over the ear headphones, the recommended volume should be no more than 70% of the maximum volume available.

The main problem with hearing is that once it is damaged, there is no way of bringing it back again. It is prudent to protect what hearing we have because having to live with a hearing loss is not a situation to be recommended.

Ken

A GOOD DAY OUT

A week or two before the monsoon weather hit us in August; we had a few days of beautiful summer weather [if you can remember] and the Thursday Club Group made the best of this. We went on a trip to Wexford and had a very nice day out. On the train journey we played scrabble and got so lost in this, before we knew what was happening, we had arrived Wexford.

Our chief organiser for the day, Jack Quinn, who lives in Wexford, met us at the railway station. We started out with a visit to a very nice café for tea / coffee and scones. We then went walkabout, losing each other, and finding each other again several times. The ladies, of course, spent most of the time visiting the shops. After this we went to a restaurant - where Jack had booked a table - for the main meal of the day. It never ceases to amaze me the amount of food some of the gang can put away.

After we had finished our meal, Jack said he had booked a boat trip around the bay for us. We thought he meant a large boat, but we got a big surprise when we discovered we were going on a speedboat! Actually, this proved to be very exciting and we really enjoyed it. After this it was time to head for the railway station and back home.

On the way home one of our group had a mobile phone text message to let her know there was a new addition to her extended family and she was a granny once again, this of course, made her very happy. A few minutes later she got another message and we all thought; another one!! But it was just a message to say all was well with mother and baby. It was a most enjoyable day out for all of us.

The reason for writing this piece is to show you that no matter about you hearing loss; you can still get out there and enjoy yourself instead of locking yourself away in isolation. Every one of us in the Thursday Club is hard of hearing, some (including myself) seriously so.

Peter

HAVE YOU HEARD

Came across a few interesting items recently...

- 1) The Doro HearPlus 317c is an amplified corded telephone, Hearing Aid compatible with enhanced sound amplification, and easy to use.
Price €147.00. For information contact Deafhear, 35 North Frederick St. Dublin.
- 2) A Donegal based company has set up a taxi service for Hearing or speech impaired people. This service has proved so popular that it has now extended to nearly every town in Ireland. It is so simple all you have to do:#
 - (a) Create a text message starting with the word "Taxi"
 - (b) Add your town, where you are, your destination and when you want to go.
 - (c) Send your text to 57000.
- 3) From the 1st July 2008 the maximum grant for the supply of a Hearing Aid under the Medical Appliance Benefit Scheme has been increased to €830. The department pays half the cost of a Hearing Aid subject to a fixed maximum per aid. It also pays half the cost of repairs to aids. For more details log on to www.welfare.ie/foi/treatmentben.html

- 4) Deafhear.ie can provide hard of hearing parents with Baby Alarms free of charge. For more information contact Deafhear. If you wish to apply for a free Baby Alarm contact your local Deafhear Centre or 35 North Great Georges St. Dublin.
- 5) And finally a 24 hour hearing aid has been launched in the U.S. It is a new type of aid called the Lyric and can be worn for 24 hours and for up to 4 months at a time. The tiny aid is invisible when worn and can be used when asleep or in the shower.

Jacqueline

NEWGRANGE AT CHRISTMASTIME

Earlier this year I enjoyed a wonderful visit to the pre-historic site at Newgrange, Co. Meath. While there I put my name into a draw for one of the sought-after places to witness Sunrise during the Winter Solstice on December 21st in the Passage Tomb at Newgrange, built by our ancestors five thousand years ago. Because of the small space in the Passage Tomb only a half-dozen visitors can be accommodated at this very special event. Maybe I will be lucky and my name will be drawn from the drum. I could not imagine a more impressive or appropriate pre-Christmas treat full of silence and wonder and waiting. Newgrange, or Bru na Boinne (the Palace of the Boyne) is one of the finest examples, not only in Ireland but in Europe, of the type of tomb known as a Passage Grave.

It is one of the World's important archaeological landscapes, dominated by the spectacular tombs of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth. In recognition of this importance, Bru na Boinne has been designated a World Heritage Site. Another designated site in Ireland is at the Giant's Causeway in Co. Antrim, and worldwide the list includes Stonehenge, the Pyramids at Giza and the Acropolis at Athens. If the weather is pleasant one could spend most of the day at Newgrange (a word of warning – when travelling by car look for the signpost "Visitor Centre, Bru na Boinne" and not the sign for Newgrange – strange I know – but your trip begins at the impressive Centre on the south side of the Boyne). This Centre contains superb exhibitions that describe the Society that created the Neolithic tombs, their homes, dress, food, tools and weapons. The shuttle-bus service then takes us north of the Boyne to meet our guide for the Passage Tombs. Newgrange is the best known, a large mound with an impressive and highly decorated Entrance Stone. The mound covers a single tomb consisting of a long passage and a cross-shaped chamber.

Newgrange was excavated between 1962 and 1975 by Professor M.J. O'Kelly who discovered the Roof Box (over the Entrance Stone) through which the mid-winter Sun penetrates into the chamber. The guide explains the extraordinary feat of engineering that results in the first rays of the rising Sun at the time of the Winter Solstice hitting the Roof Box and gradually extending the full length of the Passage to the site of three burial chambers, each of which contain beautifully smooth stone basins and some wonderfully decorative art. One can only marvel at the patience and ingenuity that went into this achievement all of five thousand years ago, and all accomplished with the simplest of stone tools. These ancestors of ours relied on the return of the Sun to begin another year of planting and reaping. They were very much in tune with the Rhythm of the Seasons.

Marie

Please note. Anyone who wants further information, contact the address below.

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

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Edited by Hearsay Committee.

