

The
Irish
Hard of
Hearing
Association

HEARSAJ!

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. CHY. 10529



Sponsored by

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Newsletter for the Hard of Hearing

AGM

The time of the AGM has come around once again. Did you miss last years? This is your time to tell us what you want. What do you think the Association should be doing? We can't guess you know and unless you tell us, how are we to know? The Association has a committed programme of progress with television captions, loops in churches and other public places and in getting the problems of the hard of hearing more fully appreciated and accepted. A great deal of work is being done on your behalf and unless you come along to the AGM you may never know about it. Do make a note of the date and venue and be sure to be there. It is important to both us and to you yourself. The AGM will take place on Sunday April 23rd at 2.45pm sharp in the Royal Dublin Hotel, O'Connell Street, Dublin 1. We hope to have a loop system working and speed text available so that you will be able to follow what is going on. You have no excuse.

What Was That Again

I thought I heard a songbird singing in a garden bush.
OH, what beautiful singing, I was sure it was a thrush.
My friend, her eyes rolled up to heaven,
threw her arms in the air,

And said God give me patience, what have I got here.
That's not a songbird you can hear singing in the bush.
That sound comes from behind you, it's a double-decker bus.
And then I heard a tiny sound, so strange, I was excited.
But my friend was so upset, she really seemed quite frightened.
Then a brilliant lightening flash rent the sky asunder.
'Twas then, of course, I realised, I'd heard a clap of thunder.
What's that quiet throbbing noise accompanied by vibration.
My friend was getting quite annoyed - she's not very patient.
That's not a quite throbbing noise, you half-wit, cant you see.
It's a workman digging up the road with a JCB.
And now a prolonged whispering sound, so hard to hear,
and yet.

My friend has covered up her ears and shouted it's a jumbo jet.
Now the weather's changing and it has started raining.
My poor frustrated cranky friend is getting soaking wet.
My grumpy friend said that's the end, you're really such a pain.
I'm going home I need a rest; you're driving me insane.
I don't know when we'll meet again, no decision have I made.
But when we do I beg of you please wear your hearing aid.
I think our beautiful friendship will end in sorrow and tears.
Because of what I laughingly call, my woolly soundproof ears.
Deafness can, at times, I think, really be a hidden blessing.
All those gentle calming sounds my friend found so distressing.

Peter

Beat That

Did you miss the great show in the National Concert Hall in February? What show was that then? Of course, the one that was particularly good for the hard of hearing. You still don't know what I am talking about, do you?

The Japanese group of Kodo drummers gave a wonderful concert of drumming. They used drums of all sizes and shapes and there was no talking whatsoever, it was wonderful. Now I'm not a drum fanatic, but to see people with so much energy and action was just something special. There were ladies in the group as well with the same energy.

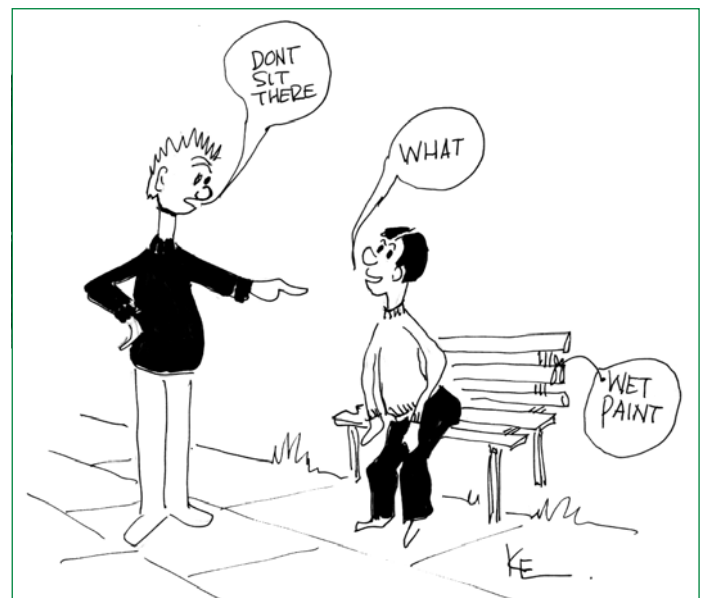
One of the special things about the evening was that there were no announcements or interruptions. It was very special and perfect for anyone with poor hearing. Even if it was not possible to hear the drumming, the vibrations went right through you and motivated and thrilled you.

Watch out for evenings like this. It is one way of having a good and different night out without the frustrations of trying to hear. On the way home from the performance, I just wondered to myself if any of the Kodo drummers had hearing problems. They were all so close to the constant noise that I wondered if it would affect their hearing. They seemed happy enough.

iPods

Do you or any member of your family own an I Pod? If so be careful, they may damage your hearing. According to the Evening Herald I Pods can produce sounds of more than 115 decibels, a volume that can damage the hearing of a person exposed to the sound for more than 28 seconds per day. Apple pulled their players from the French shops and limited the sound to 100 decibels recently, but it has not done so in the U.S.

Mary



THE FLICK OF A SWITCH

How did you enjoy your holiday? I asked my friend Maud, just back from an exotic Mediterranean holiday. Well, she said, the weather was fabulous and the hotel great. I really enjoyed it, except for one thing. My friend and I were sharing a room and she snored loudly all night long. I never got a wink of sleep. Her reply made me think how lucky I am to be able to turn off my hearing should I so wish. When I go to bed at night with my hearing aid safely nestling in its little box on my bedside table, I hear nothing. No noises, no late night merrymakers with a drink too many making their way home, no family members coming in late and nobody snoring. I sleep peacefully straight through it all. In fact I think most hard of hearing people are good sleepers because they do not hear distracting noises that waken people with normal hearing.

I live in Dun Laoghaire, a busy area at any time, day or night and it is quite common for an alarm to go off and ring for hours before it is turned off. This happened recently and believe me it was sheer bliss just to be able to switch off my hearing at will and cut out its squealing.

Then, of course, there are the funnier moments too, when you mishear a word and everyone goes off into fits of laughter. Or indeed, if you are good enough at lip reading, believe me, you can read some funny conversations across a room that it would be impossible to hear. My lip reading is not that good yet, but it is getting there.

One of the hardest things I find to cope with are noisy places, like restaurants, parties etc. On these occasions I would normally be with friends and therefore cannot turn off my hearing aid, turn it down yes, still it is great practice for my lip reading and body language speaks for itself. The more I think about it, the luckier I think I am. I can turn down, adjust, or turn off my hearing. Normal hearing people cannot do that. Peace and quiet at the flick of a switch.

Jacque

A NUMBER OF MOBILES!

Sore thumbs for 4 million texters in UK who suffer from text-related injuries every year. With 93.5 million text messages sent every day, texting has become the preferred method of communication. All this finger and thumb action is causing a health problem, with a significant growth in reported cases of repetitive strain injury."

This report in the Dublin Metro newspaper 21.2.06 made me smile and like so many Hearsay readers I imagined how difficult life would be without texting facilities. Today playing back a telephone message many times to catch a missing digit in the 8 digit telephone number was so frustrating. Eventually working it out by noticing a slight pause between 2 digits. Then realising there was an extra noise like "ih" finally I copped that it was either "8" or "0". The actual sound was meant to be (0) if only the caller had spoken the word zero instead! Compare then simply receiving a text message with a telephone number to read with ease and a precise message. No comparison whatsoever really. Mobile phone texting the best option possible.

Diana



ESWEEDEN CALLING

I have just started using a hearing aid. Suddenly the world seems dreadfully noisy although being able to hear birdsong alleviates this. My wife approves of not having to say everything twice at increased volume.



I am still startled when reading in our living room by what sound like pistol shots. These, I have discovered, are simply the on/off clicking of the thermostats on the electric radiators and not, as I feared, armed robbers intent on taking such goodies as are to be found in the house.

The process of urination produces a series of crystalline cracking sounds that sound as if I am busily smashing all the walls of a glass encased loo. Additionally, flushing the loo makes me think that I am standing by the Niagara Falls. My splendid grand piano sounds like a honky-tonk that has long seen better days, luckily I still hear well enough without the apparatus to be able to play. Things may be better when I have experimented with the 18 gradations of volume that are possible, and a special channel for music. Driving offers both a negative and a positive experience depending on whether I do or do not use the hearing aid. If I use it, our car - which we bought because it is inter alia a quiet car - ceases to be so. Heater fan, road noise, engine noise - all become so loud that an hour's driving leaves me exhausted. The good news is that without the hearing aid everything is so silent that one could think that our Renault Scenic had been exchanged for a Rolls. Both aspects mean, however, that I must give more attention to not being a menace on the road. And, still looking on the bright side, I find that the frequency of puzzled faces among my interlocutors has diminished greatly as my contribution to our conversations is now more rational and no longer consists of a series of dazzling non sequiturs.

TAKE SEVEN

N. T. Z. Q. I. B. E. There now I had seven letters - how on earth was I going to make a word from those!

It was Scrabble Night and we had been greeted with mulled wine, scrumptious savouries and a lovely warm, blazing fire. We sat back enjoying it all as more people arrived. At last everyone was there and out came the Scrabble Boards. The buzz of conversation died as we all got down to the serious business of trying to find sensible homes for all our letters. Not at all easy as it sounds, silence descended at all the tables and concentration took over, broken occasionally by a voice, "Where's the Dictionary"?

Each table finished off, scores counted and to a great round of applause the winner was announced and presented with a prize. Exhaustion from all the mental activity was quickly dispelled with tea, coffee and biscuits and chat took over once more. Many words of thanks are due to Penel, and Emma and Tim as well for opening up their house for this Scrabble Evening and indeed many other Scrabble Evenings too. I cannot even begin to imagine the work involved in setting it all up; clearing it away, to say nothing about refreshments and tasty morsels we all enjoyed so much.

Thanks Penel for a great evening.

Mary

SPONSORED WALK

Marley Park, a warm sunny autumn afternoon and a large gathering of people – what more could we ask on our Annual Sponsored Walk. . Old friends, new friends and even our canine pals made the afternoon a lovely occasion, apart from the financial end of things at all.

A round of the Park, and it is a fairly large Park beautifully laid out, was duly terminated in the tea rooms for some well earned refreshment and a chance to relax and have a chat.

As this is our only fund raising event during the year and our hopes were high, we were not disappointed either as the total to date runs at approximately €4300.

A large round of thanks is due to all the walkers, sponsors and of course, to the organizers for making it a great day.

Jacqueline

IRELANDS EYE

Who's on for a picnic on Ireland's Eye, off Howth? Last year, we held a special outing to Dalkey Island. The weather was great, the trip over smashing and we had a lovely day wandering over the Island. A good group turned up and it was a great family type day out.

This year, we are going to Irelands Eye, off Howth harbour, on the North side. Are you coming? We will meet in Howth and take a boat across to the island and have lunch there. Bring refreshments for yourself and plenty of rain gear. If you missed out on Dalkey Island, don't miss out on this one. There is a wonderful Gannett colony just off the island so you may like to bring binoculars.

The outing will be held sometime in late May or early June, depending on the weather at the time. If you intend to go, please contact Ken Edwards at 32 Cross Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin as soon as possible. I will let people know of the final arrangements nearer the time. Only those who's names are on the list will be notified so be sure to be there.

Ken



A SENSE OF RHYTHM

Niamh so daring and brave she joined the circle. Hop, skip, hop to the left and now to the right droned the teacher. Music filled the room. The five year olds stunning in pink ballet shoes, tights, skirts, wrap-overs and hair bands. A Degas scene a deaf child's dream. Only then no sound just eyes to copy the rhythm. Each step a counterfeit movement. A passionate quest to hide a handicap. The fight to survive.

Dancing to come alive, a dream to blend in merging as one in a circle just like Niamh, effortless, graceful and so so pretty.

TRACKING BY NIGHT!

They walked in silence. The pressure to get ahead and reach the top more rewarding than chatting and slowing the pace. The moon never showed up. Head torches full on they picked their way over stones, rocks, holes, gorse bushes hour after hour. As they approached the top of the mountain temperatures dropped to freezing with high winds and heavy rain lashing across the open space from the Bay down below. The fast walkers stopped to wait for the slow walkers to catch up. Nothing was visible just a vast black space and then someone yelled out, "look there they are" all stared into the void as if hypnotised. Collectively they eyed the tiny specks of light slowly moving up the hillside growing bigger all the time. A ribbon of movement advancing until all at once the group merged once more. Head torches blazing away, "when are we going to see Dublin again?" one walker quipped up, "oh in about ten minutes" another replied. The group stopped to eat while the rain held off sandwiches stayed dry. Everyone chattered away, hearing the words by watching lips via head torches gave lip shapes acuity in preciseness rarely seen before. The leaders did another body count and soon 18 walkers set off once more through the woods. Fragrant pine trees pervading the silent darkness, the crunching sound of boots and bellies warmed by a drop of mulled wine gave an ethereal quality to the walk. Then it happened. Through the conifers a sacred moment. Like trespassers sneaking a glimpse of another world. Beyond the now a sparkling veil of light Dublin dazzling awesomely.

National Concert Hall

A visit to the Concert Hall is always a pleasant experience. The acoustics are good, having been overseen by Dr. V.L. Jordan of Copenhagen, an expert in his field, and known for his work at the Sydney Opera House, the New York Met, the New York State Theatre and concert halls in Stockholm and Oslo. And if one misses some of the action because of a hearing difficulty, so what! The overall performance is bound to please.

President Patrick Hillery opened the National Concert Hall on 9.9.81. The main auditorium, originally called the Great Hall was used. Throughout its days as a University for exams and conferring ceremonies but was also frequently let out to music and other arts organisations for concerts, assemblies and exhibitions. During the Second World War it was used as a storage area for turf. The refurbished auditorium now has a capacity of 1,200.

The John Field Room on the gallery floor, where concerts regularly take place has a capacity audience of 250. The chandelier which dominates this space is the largest ever designed and produced by Waterford Crystal. It is 20 feet high and 10 feet in width. It has 32 crystal arms and 68 internal lights. The whole piece weighs 1,000 pounds. It was presented to the National Concert Hall in May 1985 as a gift from Waterford Crystal.

During the summer months there is a weekly lunchtime concert (1pm-2pm). These are available on a first-come, first-served basis for a nominal charge of five or six Euro. What could be better on a nice summer afternoon than to enjoy an hour of uplifting music, preceded perhaps by soup or snack at the lovely Terrace Cafe on the round floor, and followed by a stroll through St Stephen's Green, just two minutes walk away. There you have nourishment for Mind, Body and Spirit!

Marie

USE IT OR LOSE IT

If you have a "T" switch on your hearing aid then you will know what I am on about, if you don't have one then maybe I can convince you to ask for one next time you change your aid.

These hearing aids have an induction coil inside. You can switch from your normal setting in order to hear better on the telephone (that's what the T stands for). Most land line telephones are hearing aid compatible. When the "T" setting is on other sounds are eliminated and you only hear sound from the telephone and the added bonus is that your aid won't whistle because the microphone is off. The major benefit of the system is that the "T" setting can also be used in theatres, cinemas, churches, shops and banks that have induction loops installed. Where you sit in a church or theatre can make a difference. The IHHA have been campaigning to have more systems installed. You will even find them in airports, where it can be very hard to filter the announcement that you're about to miss your flight, in the midst of all the noise that's about you!

The symbol for the loop system is usually a yellow sign, showing a big ear in outline, with the letter T at the bottom. If you see that big ear with a T, then you are – or should be - in business. The problem is that although many businesses now have the systems, some don't work, while in other places the staff don't know how to use them. We need some people power. Those of us who have these clever devices must stand up and be counted. We need to heighten awareness by using the devices at every possible opportunity. It is not easy, I know - as I do try and it is not for the fainthearted. Those of us with hearing loss cope with many adverse situations so I know we can hack this one too.

Sometimes the loop just isn't working and I make a point of thanking them for having it, explaining what it does and asking if they would have it checked out. Many churches have them but they are not always turned on. When they work, it's great – and you can always "tune out" again if the sermon is too long!

The portable systems which are favoured by shops and supermarkets are even more problematic. The piece of equipment looks like a laptop computer and needs to be switched on by a member of staff and placed between the two of you. Because they are portable they need to be charged. Staff often tell me that nobody ever asks for them, so they don't understand how they work. If nobody has charged them up, they don't work! Where you stand in relation to the loop is important and repositioning yourself or the system even slightly may make a big difference. Believe me, when they do work it is magic. This is where the people power comes in. If we all use the loop and report when it isn't working we will achieve results, otherwise I fear that the portable one will be consigned to the shelf. It's YOUR loop – so use it, or lose it!

HILL WALKING

Do you ever get disheartened? I have been organising walks now for so many years and sometimes I wonder why I bother. Occasionally, only a few turn up, sometimes the weather puts them off or they have other things to do or even other walks they can do. Sometimes, there are ten or even up to fifteen there.

In January we held one of our monthly walks. I got advance notice that four or five would not be coming and I thought that there might be just three or maybe four at the most. Nine people turned up,

bright and cheery. Not only that, Freda arrived even though she had a bad hip and was in some pain and only survived by taking pain killers during the walk. I thought that was wonderful. Jean Coleman also appeared. She decided to try hill walking although she felt she wouldn't be fit enough. She has been at the last few walks and has managed well although they were mostly on the flat. She has no transport so she had to get to Enniskerry long before the due time by bus. (There's keenness for you Jean walked up her first mountain and managed very well. She never complained but just put her head down and kept going. She was a credit to us all.



I now know why I keep on running walks like this. It is because of those special people like Freda and Jean who are keen and want to go walking and enjoy it, even if they are in pain or out of condition. Of course, I enjoy them myself as well.

KEN

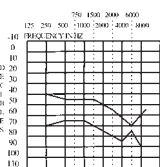
CAN YOU HEAR AT CHURCH

When you go to church, can you hear what is going on? Do you just stand up and sit down when everyone else does? Does your church have a loop system? Have you asked? It may well be that a loop system has already been installed and you were never told or you were told but didn't hear.



Sometimes, the loop system is so poor that you don't use it. Remember, you must have a T switch on your hearing aid before you can use a loop system. If there is no loop system in your church or it is not functioning properly, it is best to have a word with the parish priest. Before you do, it helps to know what you are talking about yourself. A little guidance can help you understand and explain it to the parish priest in a better way. He may not know what a loop system is, or the best way of installing one.

If you want any information about loop systems, do contact Ms Marie Carroll, Cedar Programme Coordinator, Crosscare, The Red House, Clonliffe College, Dublin 3. She may well be able to help you and give some information that you can pass on. Don't just sit there, not being able to hear. Do something about it. No one else will if you don't.



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

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