

The  
Irish  
Hard of  
Hearing  
Association

# HEARSAJ!

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. CHY. 10529



Sponsored by

Vol. 8 No. 3 Winter 2005

Newsletter for the Hard of Hearing

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

It's that time of the year once again and we will all be thinking of Christmas and of all the parties and how we are going to cope. Does it really matter? What does matter is that you should get out and enjoy yourselves and never mind what other people think. Relax as much as you can but don't miss out by turning down invitations just because you won't be able to hear. You can still enjoy yourself. You'll find that many others won't be able to hear with all the noise either.



Have a happy Christmas and a wonderfully fulfilling New Year.

**The President**

## ISLAND OUTING

It is just a little speck on the map off the East Dublin coast - so small one could walk around its coastline in 15 or 20 minutes. Its only inhabitants are a dozen or so strong healthy goats. It is, of course, Dalkey Island and it is there a large Hard of Hearing group landed one nice warm day in August.

We "set sail" from Colimore Harbour just after noon clutching our picnic lunches and "waterproofs" (just in case). Our transport, a large motor boat, pulled into the jetty and we were all ushered aboard, safely seated and issued with large orange coloured life jackets, which we hoped would not be put to use, but which I believe is the law of the land, or should I say sea. Our voyage was calm and pleasant and took less than 10 minutes.

Dalkey Island is small with among other things a Martello Tower at one end and it was decided that we would all take our own pace and meet there for lunch. It is a small island steeped in history, with its ruined monastery, gun battery as well as the Martello Tower. Even to-day one can feel the atmosphere and peace surrounding it. It is wild and rugged, an extraordinary peaceful place well worth a visit. Looking back one can see the coast of Dalkey and Dun Laoghaire from an entirely different point of view.

We spent the day exploring, the time went so fast that it seemed only a few minutes before it was time to get into the boat for our return trip.

To visit Dalkey Island was something many of us had been meaning to do, but somehow never got around to it. So a big vote of thanks is due to Ken for organizing a lovely day enjoyed by everyone. In fact it was so popular that Ken suggested next summer we all take another sea trip, on the north side this time to Ireland's Eye. See you there!

**Jacqueline**

## CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Scrooge was visited by the second ghost. The eerie shape faced him and said "I am the ghost of Christmas present". Scrooge was terrified and stammered out "what?" "I am the ghost of Christmas present" he said again. "What...what was that I can't hear you?" Scrooge said again. "Oh never mind, I'll be the ghost of Christmas past by now", he said.

## SEMINAR



Dr. Lorraine Gailey

Our Communication and Relaxation Seminar took place on the 17th September last in the Elm Park Golf Club - a lovely venue and it proved very popular indeed. In fact it was fully booked out long before the 17th.

Our President, Pat McKenna opened the proceedings and welcomed everyone. He then introduced Dr. Lorraine Gailey, an expert on assertive communication and Chief Executive of the Link Centre for Deafened people in the U.K. Dr. Gailey explained how many people with normal hearing do not understand how a hard of hearing or deafened person feels, depressed, confused, isolated, anxious and frustrated. When you lose your hearing you have lost a lot more besides, but you have not lost your ability to communicate, and we should take time to explain our needs to people. Following her talk Dr. Gailey threw the meeting open for questions from the floor.

After a short coffee break we split into two groups for a selection of Relaxation Therapies by Maura Parkhill and Mieke Scholte. Maura took us through relaxation by touch and massage, while after an excellent lunch; Mieke brought us relaxation through silence. Excellent and interesting can only describe these two so different therapies.

A really wonderful day, thoroughly enjoyed by all. I feel a word - indeed many words - of thanks are due to all involved in organizing, presenting and helping us to experience, learn and enjoy a great day.

**Margaret**

## SAYING YES

Saying yes when saying no would have been a wiser move is a regular faux pas but two in one day seemed a lot! The chap handing out change made a comment that was quite indistinct so I just nodded and thanked him. Water drenched the car seat the culprit a leaking bottle of water - he must have been telling me to get another bottle in the shop! Over dinner a Chinese waiter's lips were moving and I, too weary to check again, nodded smilingly thinking no more. Already rather stuffed I was mortified when another dish of prawn crackers appeared on the table. Maybe other readers might track and tell us about your illuminating moments.

## TINNITUS

Recently we have published articles about the misery brought on by tinnitus. I have suffered from this very distressing condition for many years. When I have an attack it sounds exactly like I'm receiving messages in Morse code signals. In fact, if I could decipher Morse code I think I would find that my tinnitus is trying to tell me something. The gremlins in my head keep sending these signals to my ears, or the part of my brain that recognises sound.



I'm not as young as I used to be, (though I prefer to think I'm not as old as I'm going to be) and have had this problem for so long that it has become part of my life, part of me, so that it seems quite normal and I can tolerate it or almost ignore it. Hopefully those who wrote the articles for Hearsay will reach this stage where it isn't quite so upsetting. I wish I could tell you of some magic cure but unfortunately I can't. I've been told that some medications or your diet can aggravate or even cause tinnitus and, of course, even mild hearing loss can be the cause. All we can do is hope that the medical profession will come up with something, and the sooner the better.

Peter

## WATCH THAT FILM



Every week the UGC cinema in Parnell Street has a film with sub titles. One Showing is on Saturday morning and a second showing is on Monday evening. This is great but of course not everyone wants to go to the cinema early on Saturday morning or on a Monday. Recently there have been a few foreign films on general circulation.

One I know about was Downfall which was in German while another was Chorus which I believe was in French. They were both sub-titled and it was possible to go to any cinema at any time to see them. Not only that, they were both great films. Do keep an eye out for any foreign films on general circulation.

## COINCIDENCE

A few years ago, my hearing just disappeared over-night. I was left with hardly any hearing at all. I was devastated. It was suggested that I should go to a homeopathic doctor to see if he could help. I really didn't think he could do anything but anyway he prescribed some homeopathic remedies and after four of five days, my hearing came back. Now I don't really know if it was a coincidence or if it was the remedies.

Just before Christmas, my hearing went right down again. Suddenly I remembered my homeopathic doctor and went along to see him. Once again he prescribed some remedies and once again after four of five days my hearing returned. Was it a coincidence? What do you think? Have any of you had a similar experience.

## DOOR TO DOOR

I have a friend who is a door to door salesman. I asked him what did he sell. He said he was selling hearing aids. I said "that sounds interesting, how is business". "Terrible" he replied "none of my customers can hear the door bell"

## HELPFUL HINTS

If you go to a party or someone's house, don't stand in front of a mirror. All the sound in the room will reflect back to you and make it even more difficult to for you to hear. Try standing in front of a curtain or something soft. This will absorb all the noise. It won't make your hearing any better, but it may help to make it easier. Every little helps.

## ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

A loop system has been installed in St Patrick's Cathedral. The music has always been wonderful but poor acoustics made any service hard to follow. The sound via the loop is brilliant. No matter what religion one is remember St Patrick's is one of Ireland's treasures. To attend a service there is an unforgettable experience.

Penel

## WHERE WERE YOU?

Were you at the Seminar we held in September? About a hundred people came along from all over the country. They came from Kerry, Limerick, Sligo, you name it and in the end, we were turning them away we had so many. These were all people who wanted to improve their knowledge of their hearing losses. They didn't just accept the problems they had; they wanted to do something about it. This is what it is all about. Increasing your knowledge, relaxing and meeting others who share the problems you have all helps your own understanding. You missed a great day out and you, who didn't come, were the losers. Do watch out for occasions like this in the future. You never know, you might just learn something that is important for your own future.

## BLOOMER

A friend of mine was changing jobs, in fact he had already handed in his notice and being of a curious nature I asked him where he was going. The reply "To the South Pole" amazed me to say the least. So in case I had heard incorrectly, I asked again. Again I got "South Pole" and I could not help wondering what on earth he was going to do in that cold, bleak region. In fact it intrigued me so much later that week I asked one of his colleagues what our friend was going to do at the South Pole. I gathered from the broad grin I got that this was not the destination. I eventually found out that what he had said was "South Marine". Ah well, can't win 'em all!

## REFLECTION

There is a time for doing – and a time for doing nothing. Don't underestimate the value of Porch – Sitting and Rocking – Chairing. They are simple gifts you can give to yourself. Taken from the 'Keep Life Simple' Booklet that I came across while in hospital.

## PANIC - Episode 2

Duly armed with lip reading, guesswork and a pencil and notebook (for use in dire emergencies) I sallied forth to find out what I could about getting a new hearing aid, what was available in the form of grants etc.

My first step was the Social Welfare office; there I was told I could get grants of €700 on one hearing aid and €1400 on two. However this is not quite as straight forward as it seems as it depends on the price of the hearing aid, but that will all be explained to you.

My next port of call was the Health Board. There I was informed that all Medical Card holders can get free hearing aids, although there maybe a slight delay if it is the first time you have had a hearing aid on your card. In both cases you will be given a form to complete. It is quite straight forward really.

Peruse all the information you get and then decide, but please don't be caught like I was with no back-up aid, it is an experience I do not wish to repeat..

**Jacquie**

---

## OUR OWN TOWN!

A man in the USA [Marvin Miller] has come up with an idea; he wants to build a new town where there is none at present. It would be home to deaf and hard of hearing people who want to live together. They would share a common language: sign language. Police, Politicians, Teachers, Shopkeepers and whatever, would all sign. People with normal hearing would be welcome to live and work in the town but they would have to learn sign language, this would be compulsory. Mr Miller says "people who are deaf (as he is) or hard of hearing are often isolated and frustrated by a hearing world that wields the power that shapes their lives. By forming a town they would have the unity and political clout that they are lacking now" People are divided over whether it would bring prosperity or headaches. But the biggest question about the whole thing is not money, as you might think, but whether this would this be a good idea for deaf and hard of hearing people. So far a large majority of those who have contacted Mr Miller think it's a great idea. Mr Miller has had inquires from all over the USA and quite a lot from other countries.

**Joe**

---

## KEEP THE NOISE DOWN

Almost a third of workers in the EU are exposed to high levels of noise for more than a quarter of their working time. Noise-induced hearing loss has been recognized by the World Health Organisation as the "most prevalent irreversible industrial disease". A Europe-wide campaign to raise awareness of the risks of excessive noise at work was launched in Brussels this month. "Noise goes beyond hearing problems. It can cause accidents at work and increase stress levels. It is a growing concern all over Europe" says Vladimir Spidia, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

A new EU directive, to be implemented by all member states by February 2006, reduces the levels of noise workers can be exposed to and requires employers to eliminate or minimise the risks. A Stop That Noise campaign will be highlighted at

European Week for Safety and Health at Work from October 24th to 28th. See also <http://ew2005.osha.eu.int> From IRISH TIMES 30/4/05

---

## NODDING OFF

I'm not very good with loop systems, I don't know about you. I try them out all over the place and have never found them of much help to me. That is, until the other day. I had to attend a general meeting and I was struggling trying to hear in the ordinary way. Diana was with me, and she touched me and formed a large T with her fingers. I thought to myself "no not again" but anyway I switched over to my T switch and low and behold, the reception was terrific. I couldn't believe it. I could hear everything perfectly. What a difference it made.

I did notice one thing however. When I lowered my head, the sound went dead. I had to keep my head upright. Has anyone else had this experience? Has it happened to you?

Anyway, I'm looking forward to my next experience with a good loop system. Things are looking up. They have to. If you look down, you can't hear a thing.

**Patrick**

---

## OUT AND ABOUT

Visit to the National Museum of Ireland (Collins Barracks, Benburb Street, Dublin) for the Temporary Exhibition 'THE ENDURANCE' – Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition.

This exhibition documents one of the greatest stories of survival in expedition history, the dramatic and near-fatal expedition to Antarctica led by Sir Earnest Shackleton in 1914.



When the ship Endurance became trapped in pack-ice on the Weddell Sea and was eventually crushed, the crew was stranded on the ice and subsequently on Elephant Island (a desolate spot) for eighteen months.

In 1914 Shackleton had set out to cross the Antarctic Continent on foot from Weddell Sea in the North to the Ross Sea in the south. In December of that year he left the island of South Georgia with his hand-picked crew on the ship Endurance. The weather became unusually severe but in those days it was impossible to predict long-term forecasts. The storms in the region brought huge quantities of ice blocking all channels of water and preventing the ship making any progress at all. Eventually the ice built up to overwhelm the vessel. Shackleton gave the order 'abandon ship' and they set up 'Ocean Camp' on the ice with what they managed to salvage from the stricken vessel. Survival on the ice was precarious; they never knew when the 'ground' underneath them was going to shift. Eventually they drifted onto a patch of beach on lonely Elephant Island. No-one in the world knew where they were – there was no Communication System. Shackleton decided to seek help in the only way open to him. He took five men (among them Kerry seaman Tom Crean) in an open boat on a hazardous 800 mile voyage to the whaling station on

the island of South Georgia. Even when they got there they had to cross the uncharted island on foot, without benefit of proper clothing or food to reach the whaling station. It took weeks to organise a rescue vessel but four months to the day after leaving Elephant Island Shackleton returned to rescue his 22 remaining men.

Shackleton is rightly renowned for his courage and extraordinary leadership skills and his contributions to geographical discovery. A permanent exhibition devoted to him is in the Athy Heritage Centre close to his ancestral home, Kilkea House, Athy, Co Kildare.

## WAXING LYRICAL

One of my friends telephoned me other day. I have two friends actually, but one of them went away. My friend, the one that stayed, said he thought he was losing his hearing. He had been to a hearing aid supplier and was horrified at the prices he was quoted. I suggested he went and got a second opinion and gave him some names. I didn't hear from him for a few weeks and then he rang again. Apparently one of the men I suggested gave him a test and wouldn't sell him an aid at all. He was told to go to his doctor and have the wax removed from his ear. When he did this, he found his hearing came back to normal. It just goes to show, get a second opinion and don't just believe the first, you never know. I know who my friend, the one that stayed, will go to if his hearing gets worse.

**Ken**

## STRESS BUSTERS

I am lucky enough to remember how powerful the sound of an African drum seemed to me. It inspired me to buy a drum to play later on. The vibrational quality of a drum being beaten reverberates through the body. If someone else is playing and you are lying on the floor the sound can be felt very strongly throughout the body as well as whatever you happen to hear. Tapping the drum with a single beat can create a beautiful feel & sound just



like a heartbeat. After a stressful day taking time out to do a few playful beats on the drum really shifts the energy and boosts the endorphins! Certainly it sends me pretty high as I nearly always throw in a few chants as well. If I don't want to bother making myself a Black Russian then a few moments spent chanting and drumming sends out a clear message that "anything is possible from now on" no matter how stressed out I was beforehand. Do try it because it is a wonderful treat and you deserve at least one every day!

**Diana**

## EYES AND EARS

The Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital in Dublin is really a lovely old building and I can not help wondering if in its earlier life it was a fabulous mansion belonging to some wealthy family of some standing. Even to-day one can just imagine ladies in Victorian dress strolling around the grounds.



No darling, I said earrings in jade,  
Not a hearing aid.

However, from a hard of hearing person's point of view it is an absolute disaster zone - why? Because in the interests of hygiene walls, floor, ceilings and every stick of furniture inside the building has a hard shiny surface. This reflects every possible sound and flings it right back at you. Therefore you not only hear the voice of the person to whom you are speaking but also several echoes as well. For a person with a hearing impairment this leads to such complications one just gives up and tries to depend on whatever lip reading skills one possesses.

Just to complicate matters further in my ward of 8 or 9 beds there were two television sets, both on full blast! Ah well! Thank goodness for hearing aids. At least I can turn off the noise should I so wish.

**Mary**

## RESTING ON YOUR PALLETTE

Faced with a blank canvas can be quite daunting but once my imagination takes hold and after a few brush strokes, I become totally immersed in my painting. All the stresses and strains of the day just disappear and I step into my landscape or seascape and just totally relax. The end result might not be a Picasso or a Renoir but it is all my own handy work and I am usually proud of what I have produced.

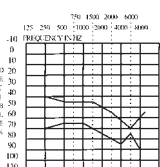
**Ruth**

## MINI MARATHON

This year on 6th June I did the Mini Marathon for the IHHA. Thank God the weather was brilliant. It was a wonderful day out, exciting, and also a great atmosphere. I just love the fabulous sense of fun all the women have, and they make it their very own day. I decided to do it for the IHHA this year as my hearing has deteriorated so much, and I know that they do great work for us all. Also I feel it's good to highlight the problems we face every day, and it may bring us more support. I've been doing the Mini Marathon for approximately 20 years now, and I wouldn't miss it for the world.

The IHHA have done very well for us in achieving subtitles on TV, it's great the way a lot of programmes are subtitled now. I'd be lost without them! I really hope next year to see a lot more members doing this marathon, and doing it for the IHHA, no excuses ladies! I raised 145 euro, thanks to my friends in work, in my golf club and also my family.

**Connie**



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

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

e-mail: [ihha@nadp.ie](mailto:ihha@nadp.ie) Web Page: [www.ihha.ie](http://www.ihha.ie)

Edited by Hearsay Committee

Design and Layout: Susanne Kennedy