

THE JOURNAL of SHHH AUSTRALIA INC.  
Self Help for Hard of Hearing People

# hearing matters

February 2009

SHHH Australia Inc  
1334 Pacific Highway  
Turramurra NSW



**This could be the perfect ear -  
If fitted with a hearing aid!**

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The Perfect Ear –  
*detail of Michelangelo's David*

**DEADLINE FOR  
NEXT ISSUE:  
1st March 2009**



**Remember, hearing  
help is available  
wherever you see this  
symbol.**

## SHHH Mission

SHHH Australia Inc. is a voluntary organisation giving services and support to hearing impaired people throughout Australia who communicate orally.

## SHHH Australia

- Operates two Hearing Information Centres
- Produces **hearing matters** as a quarterly newsletter for members and subscribers
- Supports and encourages local SHHH Groups
- Maintains an extensive information service with a series of Information Sheets on aspects of hearing loss and its management
- Provides speakers as part of its extensive Outreach Program
- Administers a Hearing Aid Bank in conjunction with the Audiology Department of Macquarie University in Sydney and other participating providers
- Acts as an advocate to government, industry and other organisations to make them more aware of issues concerning hearing loss

## CAPTIONED THEATRE IN 2009

### SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE DRAMA THEATRE

#### Travesties

Wednesday, 1 April at 1pm  
AND Friday, 3 April at 8pm.

#### When The Rain Stops

Wednesday, 27 May at  
1pm AND Friday, 29 May at 8pm.

#### The God of Carnage

Wednesday, 18 November  
at 1pm AND Friday, 20  
November at 8pm.

### GLEN STREET THEATRE, SYDNEY

Glen Street Theatre in  
Belrose will be offering two  
GoTheatrical!! captioned  
performances of each of its  
Subscription Shows for  
2009 as follows:

#### Menopause The Musical

Wednesday, 25 February at  
11am AND at 8pm.

#### Travelling North

Wednesday, 25 March at  
11am AND at 8pm.

#### The 39 Steps

Wednesday, 8 April at  
11am AND at 8pm.

#### 6 1 Circus Acts in 6 0 Minutes

Wednesday, 27 May at  
11am AND at 8pm.

#### Walking By Apple Tree Creek

Wednesday, 10 June at  
11am AND at 8pm.

#### Dealers' Choice

Wednesday, 22 July at  
11am AND at 8pm.

#### Elling

Wednesday, 19 August at  
11am AND at 8pm.

#### Embers

Wednesday, 9 September  
at 11am AND at 8pm.

#### Steel Magnolias

Wednesday, 23 September  
at 11am AND at 8pm.

For other theatres, go to:  
[www.theatrecaptioning.com.au](http://www.theatrecaptioning.com.au)

## Order of Australia for - Sister Cecelia Creigh



Congratulations to Sister Mary Cecelia Creigh who was awarded an Order of Australia Medal on Australia Day.

"I am a quiet, work-behind-the-scenes kind of person. This is something I would never have dreamed of" said Cecilia, on receiving her award.

Cecelia, of St Joseph's Convent, Lochinvar, has been working with the hearing-impaired, despite suffering her own hearing loss.

She was 23 and studying to become a teacher when she had a tonsillectomy, developed an infection, and went totally deaf in her right ear. She also suffered headaches, dizziness and tinnitus and couldn't stand the noise of the classroom or understand the children.

Then she found SHHH, which "put me on my feet and enabled me to go out to others", she said.

She volunteered at the SHHH Turrumurra Resource Centre for almost 20 years, and was secretary of the Hunter group for 11 years.

### SHHH AUSTRALIA INC NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 11 a.m. 21st March 2009

Notice is hereby given that the 23rd Annual General Meeting of SHHH Australia Incorporated will be held in the Ballroom at Hillview Community Health Centre at 1334 Pacific Highway, Turrumurra on Saturday March 21st at 11 am.

Parking is available on the grounds with entrance now only at the rear of the buildings off Boyd Street and Kissing Point Road.

Special Guest Speaker: Dr David Hartley, Research Audiologist, National Acoustic Laboratories, will speak on Barriers to Hearing Aid Use.

#### **Business**

- To approve the Minutes of the Twenty First Annual General Meeting.
- To receive and consider the report of the Board of Management of the Association for the year to 31 December 2008 including the "Annual Statement".
- To elect office-bearers of the association and ordinary members of the Board of Management.
- To transact any other business to be transacted at an Annual General Meeting.

*An invitation is extended to all members to attend. Refreshments will be served.*

Election of office bearers and ordinary members of the Board of Management

Office bearers positions are – president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary.

There are, in addition up to five positions of ordinary members.

Nominations of candidates for election as office bearers of the association or as ordinary members of the committee: -

Shall be made in writing, signed by two members of the association

and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate.

Shall be delivered to the secretary of the association not less than 7 days before the date fixed for the meeting.

#### **Proxies**

Each member is entitled to appoint another member as a proxy by notice given to the secretary not later than 24 hours before the time of the meeting.

- No member may hold more than five proxies.
- A proxy may direct the member to vote for or against particular motions.
- Proxy forms are available at the office of the association.

We encourage you to participate in the management of SHHH Australia Inc. If you are interested in a Board position, or would like to join our enthusiastic volunteers, please contact Pauline Reidy at the SHHH office for more information.

# Premium Digital Hearing Aids

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**By Mark Ross, PhD**

This article was published in Hearing Loss magazine, March/April 2008

A "premium" or "top of the line" hearing aid is one that incorporates the most technologically advanced and potentially useful features currently available. One recent trade journal article defines the difference between a premium hearing aid and other models as the inclusion of automatic and innovative features. The more of these that are included in an aid, the greater the likelihood that it would be considered a premium or top of the line model.

The designation also carries with it the explicit promise that the overall benefits that one achieves with a premium hearing aid will exceed those obtained with a more economical hearing aid. However, keep in mind that it is also a hearing aid that invariably comes with a price tag commensurate with the elite label.

According to the article, the determining consideration in moving from an entry level (less expensive) model is the user's lifestyle, that is, whether he or she leads a busy, active life in different listening environments, or whether social time is spent in quiet, less demanding environments.

The ability to hear better with these aids is not mentioned in the article. Convenience is stressed and not hearing. The reason for this, I suspect, is that there is little or no clinical evidence that directly compares the hearing performance of premium aids with other aids.

## **Affordability matters**

The final factor in recommending a premium hearing aid for a particular person is, again according to the above-mentioned article, based on budgetary constraints. No matter what a person's lifestyle, a premium hearing aid should be recommended only for those who can afford to pay the "premium" price.

The intention is to try to meet a person's listening needs within the limits of affordability. A premium hearing aid, therefore, would be reserved for those who have an active life, are socially active, and can afford to pay a "premium" price for the convenience of the special features.

## **Cost versus benefit**

In our society, we are conditioned to believe that "you get what you pay for". We are accustomed to quality differences being reflected in the cost of an object or service. The notion that this also applies to hearing aids does not seem strange to us. If someone has listening needs that require the inclusion of the latest automatic and innovative features, and can afford the premium cost, why shouldn't this person purchase what he or she desires (and presumably needs)?

Whilst perhaps, one can make a social policy argument against this notion, a more telling reason is that the presumed listening benefits of a premium hearing aid have little or no support in the hearing aid literature. In other words, the idea that people are getting extra hearing benefit commensurate with the additional cost is debatable. Evidently, many people who purchase premium hearing aids feel the same way, since industry figures show that fully 26 percent of such aids are returned for credit.

## **The Digital Hearing Aid Race**

In recent years, the sheer number of new features introduced in digital hearing aids has been enormous. The various hearing aid companies are in a constant and intense competitive race to introduce new ones in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Different hearing aid models, incorporating what is presented as some "revolutionary" new development, seem to be introduced every year or so. Capturing or maintaining market share – the economic imperative- is clearly the driving force.

In the ideal world, no new hearing aid feature would be introduced until its presumed listening benefits were evaluated and substantiated with human beings. From what I can see, this does not happen very often. Instead of evidence of the clinical benefit of some newly introduced feature, what we get is promotional material presented as self-evidently positive. (Who can argue with hearing aids that employ "artificial intelligence", nano-technology, or include a 128 channel adaptive noise reduction circuit?)

It is difficult for anyone, consumer or professional, not to be impressed when reading this material- I know that I am. It all sounds so logical- but we do have to keep in mind that a marketing description, no matter how appealing or self-evidently obvious, is not equivalent to a well-controlled clinical (not laboratory) research study.

## **Highlights of Newer Hearing Aid Models**

With the rapid introduction of new models, it seems that the features highlighted in a previous generation of premium hearing aids are now being included in this year's "entry level" or "affordable" models. The features haven't changed; the presumed advantages of last year's model are still as relevant (or irrelevant) as ever.

### **Features of Currently-Labelled "Affordable" Hearing Aids**

We can get some idea of what constituted a previous generation's "premium" hearing aid by looking at a table from the article cited above in which the characteristics of 25 "affordable" hearing aids are briefly described.

Some of the more common features included with these currently-labelled affordable hearing aids are:

#### **Wide Dynamic Range Compression (WDRC)**

This feature automatically varies the amount of amplification applied to an input sound signal. Soft sounds may be amplified somewhat more than louder sounds, with the intention of making them audible, but still soft. Loud input sounds will receive less amplification, but should still sound loud, although not uncomfortably so.

The goal is to 'package' the range of input sounds into a person's usable residual hearing range, i.e. the area between the impaired thresholds (e.g. 60 dB) and the point where sound becomes unpleasantly loud (let's assume, 95 dB). Ideally, there would be a volume control permitting the user to override, at least to a certain extent, the WDRC circuit (to allow for situational and personal preferences).

#### **Adaptive Feedback Management**

A number of hearing aids on this list include an effective feedback control circuit that uses a technique that does not modify the frequency response of the hearing aid. When an acoustic squeal occurs, the hearing aid automatically identifies the offending frequency and creates an internal cancellation signal. An effective feedback management system will permit a user to increase the gain of a hearing aid by 10 or 15 dB without feedback occurring. Open ear fitting would not be possible without this development.

#### **Channels and Bands**

(sometimes these terms are used interchangeably). The term 'channel' usually refers to the ability to modify compression characteristics, while "band" refers to the ability to change the degree of amplification of the band (separate from other bands). The hearing aids listed in this table display a considerable range of the number of channels and bands offered. We should note that there is little clinical evidence for the presumed benefits of more than two channels and three or four equalisation bands.

#### **Directional microphones**

Many of the hearing aids listed in this table include directional microphones. Directional microphones de-emphasize sound signals arriving from the sides and back of a listener relative to those arriving from the front. Some directional microphones are adaptive, changing characteristics depending on the location of the noise source(s). Some are automatic, with the aid itself 'deciding' when to switch from the omnidirectional to the directional mode.

Directional microphones work best when users are close to the sound source and position themselves so that the primary signal is in front of them while competing sounds are at the side or rear (not always possible).

#### **Noise Management/Reduction Programs**

Many of the hearing aids on this list include an explicit reference to some sort of noise control program. These increase user comfort when listening to speech, but speech perception ability is not necessarily improved. As far as I know, when noise (like other people talking) and speech occur simultaneously, it is not possible to eliminate one without affecting the other. Still, some people do find a noise management program a desirable feature, one that makes the listening task less stressful.

#### **Automatic Telecoil**

With this feature, the hearing aid telecoil automatically activates when a telephone is placed next to it. It thus obviates the necessity of the user switching to the "T" position. Originally this feature did not permit reception of signals from neck loops or floor loops, but this has been corrected (using a different memory). This feature can be helpful to someone who has difficulty, perhaps because of arthritic fingers, in switching the hearing aid to the "T" position.

### **2008 Hearing Aid Features**

According to the websites, refinements in the operation of adaptive directional microphones and noise management systems seem to be the primary focus of this year's top of the line hearing aids. For both these topics, the promotional

materials imply that speech perception (or comfort) in noise is improved with the new model. However, peer-reviewed studies on human beings that support these seem to be lacking (or are hard to find).

Another creative development includes binaural wireless connectivity, where two aids “talk” to one another and work in concert. In addition to greater convenience for the user (since one adjustment controls both aids), this capacity may eventually lead to improved localisation and speech perception in noise. Another development is the inclusion of data learning (or logging); this feature not only records the listening programs a person selects, but can also ‘learn’ someone’s volume preference and adjust the hearing aid setting accordingly.

In addition to these innovations, one can find many other appealing descriptions of new products by the various hearing aid manufacturers. It makes me wonder what the hearing aid companies have in store for us next year and whether this year’s crop will then be relegated to the entry or mid-level categories.

### **What is Hearing Better Really All About?**

It does seem to be getting a bit overwhelming and I think it may be time to go back to basics and to focus on what a hearing aid is supposed to do- help someone hear better. We’ve known for years what it takes to do this: a hearing instrument with a large dynamic range that delivers a wide-band, undistorted speech signal into the residual hearing area of the hearing aid user (which is located between the thresholds of hearing and discomfort).

It is only after this has been achieved that the convenience and contribution of special features become relevant. They are important, true, but mainly in specific situations, for specific purposes (such as open-ear fittings), and for the convenience of some automatic function. Hearing better is still what it is all about.

### **Killion Correlation Study**

Mead Killion, Ph.D, demonstrated the fact that this can be achieved in a recent publication, Proceedings of the 2006 International Conference on Hearing Care for Adults. He reports some interesting conclusions in his examination of seven different digital hearing aids. In his study, he had normal-hearing people listen to music through the hearing aids and judge the fidelity of the recordings.

He also measured the ability of two groups of people with hearing loss to understand speech in noise. As expected, both speech perception and fidelity scores varied considerably between the hearing aids. Proving, once again, that all hearing aids are not the same.

What is perhaps his most significant finding was the ‘nearly perfect correlation between: (a) the fidelity ratings to live music of normal hearing subjects; and (b) the hearing aid’s ability to deliver high intelligibility in noise for subjects with hearing loss.’

According to Dr Killion, hearing aids that are judged to provide a “high fidelity” signal for someone with normal hearing would also deliver the highest speech perception scores in noise for someone with a hearing loss. And these do not necessarily have to be this year’s “premium” hearing aids.

### **Is it Worth the Cost?**

So, is the current generation of premium hearing aids worth the cost? It’s impossible for me to say, since so much depends upon the individual’s history, communication needs, etc. We should keep in mind the following: the more that people pay for a hearing aid, the greater their expectations regarding its performance.

Or, as Dr Sergei Kochkin found in a past survey, the more someone spends for a hearing aid, the less likely he or she will be satisfied with the value received. Even though a premium hearing aid may be helping someone, in the person’s opinion, the help received may not be sufficient to justify the additional cost.

### **What Would I Recommend?**

Unless, some current premium hearing aid includes some feature that demonstrably benefits a particular person- a possibility not to be ignored- I’d suggest that a prospective user first consider hearing aids labelled as “entry level, basic, or mid-level”. As noted above, these are not primitive, outmoded devices, but sophisticated electronic instruments (and once ‘premium’ aids in their own right!).

In terms of hearing improvement, in my opinion most hearing aid users will do as well with one of these as they would a top of the line model. Plus save a bundle of money.

Mark Ross, Ph.D, is an audiologist and associate at the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centre (RERC) at Gallaudet University. He and his wife, Helen, live in Storrs, Connecticut. To find more Dr Ross articles on technology for consumers, go to [www.pa-shhh-org](http://www.pa-shhh-org) and [www.hearingresearch.org](http://www.hearingresearch.org).



*Photo: Dr Mark Ross*

# have you heard the latest

The ideal solution for those with moderate-to-severe hearing loss and or low vision is Oricom's new Professional series of amplified corded and cordless phones.

You can now customise handset amplification and tone settings to match your individual needs. You will experience louder and clearer conversations with or without a hearing device. And to ensure you never miss a call again the phones have an extra loud ringer and bright visual ring indicator.

Louder, clearer, cordless communication is now at your fingertips.



Oricom PRO900-1

Contact us now for more information  
and details of your nearest Oricom Professional Series stockist.  
Call: (02) 4574 8888  
or email: [sales@oricom.com.au](mailto:sales@oricom.com.au)  
[www.oricom.com.au](http://www.oricom.com.au)

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100% Australian Owned

# Internet & Phone Scams

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Scammers are getting better at fleecing the greedy and unwary. If you use a computer, it is important that you understand how those funny messages can cause you serious harm. Here are some of the latest tips from the Australian Securities Commission ([www.fido.gov.au](http://www.fido.gov.au)):

## **INTERNET SCAMS - Phishing**

Phishing means emails that try to trick people into giving out their personal banking information. People who fall for phishing scams usually are unable to recover the money that is stolen because they have broken their banks requirement that they keep their account numbers and access codes secure. The best known scam is the Nigerian 419 scam, where you are promised a huge reward if you help someone transfer money out of their country by paying fees or giving them bank account details.

## **Fake surveys**

From the desk of the CEO of your bank – I am very pleased to introduce the online survey for our fellow customers. You have a chance to win one of 25 laptops for participation. The purpose of this survey is to obtain your opinions about the way your bank operates. We are entering a new phase in our company history and I feel it would be appropriate to understand your perceptions of our company at this time. The survey measures opinions and perceptions.

## **Fake security and maintenance upgrades**

Your account has been randomly selected for maintenance and placed on 'Limited Access' status, please enter your account details to reactivate your service.

Please provide your account details to reactivate your account following the introduction of a new security system which will help you avoid fraudulent transactions and keep your investment safe.

Urgent, system problems. Please go to <web address> and re-enter your details.

## **Phoney investigations**

Your credit card has been cancelled in accordance with Article 205 of Chapter 210 of the international fraud department. We suspect that your card was involved in some criminal activity. A violation of the law is a serious criminal offence and could bring you before the courts. Your bank will not be able to assist you until the investigation is over. For further information visit our website at <web address>.

You are subject to a tax e-audit and must complete the following questionnaire within 48 hours to avoid assessment of penalties and interest. Please provide social security, bank account information.

## **False bills and charges**

According to our records your payment for your internet access account is late. Perhaps you overlooked it? Please contact us at <web address> to update your details.

Your domain name registration is due for renewal, please enter the following information exactly as it appears on your credit card statement. This will be compared to the information your bank has on file for your card to verify your payment.

You have won a free gift (or prize), simply complete your credit card details for postage and handling costs and we'll send it out to you.

## **Money has been withdrawn from your account**

\$9,000 was withdrawn from your account last Friday.

## **Why these new fraudulent emails look genuine**

- Fraudsters make their emails look genuine by using:
- The names of real people
- The right logos and branding
- Links to pages from the real website
- Official looking fine print
- A site that mimics the real thing. Technically, it's quite easy to copy parts of genuine web pages to a new fake address.

Some of the biggest names on the internet have been targeted by fraudsters, including:

- eBay – users received emails masquerading as official PayPal alerts that asked recipients to submit bank and credit card details after the user's account has been randomly selected for maintenance and placed on "Limited Access" status.
- Yahoo! – users were encouraged to divulge their personal information in response to an email posing as being from Yahoo! Employees.
- Melbourne IT – deceptive emails lured Melbourne IT customers to a mimic site where they were advised to input their financial details, including credit card numbers to renew their domain name registrations. The mimic site had a similar web address to the official one.
- Westpac Banking Corporation – customers were sent emails inviting them to complete an online survey for a chance to win attractive prizes. The fraudsters web address was similar to the official one. Customers needed to log in their account details to participate in the survey.



### How do these scams work?

You get an email out of the blue with some story about why you have to reply. The email claims to be from your bank, credit card company or some other service you use. It usually asks you to send your account details, and sometimes your PIN, either by return email or through a website.

### Other types of frauds

#### Work from home scams

Employment opportunities that promise huge incomes for little work – usually by asking you to transfer money to someone else as establishment costs or to recruit new victims.

#### Helpless victim/attractive female scams

My name is Binta Agota originally from seirra loene, it's gives me the greatest joy to reach you and became interested in knowing you better, for a real and true relationship and am sure we can have allot to do together in the nearest future so i will like you to reply to me back on For better recorgnition . I will wait to hear from you

#### Spyware and Trojans

Some computer programs conceal hidden programming to invade your computer and send secret passwords and PIN numbers back to criminals. Your computer can get infected with these dangerous bugs if you don't keep your computer security up-to-date. For example, your computer could be attacked while downloading games, music or videos, even if you always delete suspect emails. The risk is greatest from websites that don't have an established business reputation to protect.

#### Phone scams – 'Vishing'

Vishing is when you receive an unsolicited phone call or email asking for personal information which you provide by phone. Because you are talking to someone official on the phone you may be more trusting. You might get a phone call from someone claiming to be from your bank asking you to "update your account information". Or you might get an email asking you to make a call such as:

Due to unusual levels of fraud we have had to suspend any future authorisations being conducted with your Visa Card. If you want this restriction to be removed from your account please call us. Call this number to have the restriction removed. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Dear Credit Union member, The personal identification number (PIN) was entered incorrectly more than three times. For your protection we have deactivated your card. To reactivate your card, please complete the authentication form or call this number.

#### Mule recruitment

Victims respond to job advertisements and agree to work for a fake company and provide their bank account details. The victims may agree to provide details for an account without any funds. The fraudsters then deposit stolen funds into the victims account and transfer the money out of the account somewhere else. The victim may receive a payment for their assistance. The fraudsters disappear but the victim is usually identified and may be prosecuted for participating in a fraud.



For more information Contact the Australian Securities and Investments Commission or your local Office of Fair Trading for information about scams and to report a scam. If you believe you are the victim of a scam you should report it to your financial institution immediately as they may be able to catch the fraudster and recover your money.

## SHHH at Katoomba

By Chris Danckwerts

On the coldest day of the year SHHH braved the elements to carry the flag at the Community Nurse Audiometrists' Association (CNAA) annual conference at the Carrington Hotel in Katoomba. The top of the Blue Mountains was no place for the faint-hearted as temperatures plunged below zero and snow fell during what was supposed to be the middle of spring. Nevertheless, SHHH's intrepid trio of volunteers, Christian, Annette and Chris, were undeterred!

The conference had about 50 nursing audiometrists from all over Australia. They are qualified nurses with additional qualifications in audiometry. So they are well versed in the medical side of things and are trained to operate specialised audiometrics testing and diagnostic equipment in hospitals and with ENT specialists. See their website at [www.cnaa.org.au](http://www.cnaa.org.au) for more details. SHHH was invited to display its wares at the first day of the conference and to talk about what it does. Other organizations represented were Australian Hearing, National Relay Service and Paxton Barrand, together with a couple of equipment suppliers.



Photo: Chris Danckwerts speaking at conference

SHHH emphasised that its role came after medical science and hearing aid technology had done all it could for the patient. Then came the process of adjusting to the many different challenges that hearing loss posed in everyday life. These challenges are by no means obvious, even to professionals working with the hearing impaired, hence the term "invisible handicap". SHHH described how it provides advice, information, support and encouragement in as many ways as it can so that the hearing impaired need not feel cut off from the world.



Photo: View of conference room

There was tremendous interest in what SHHH was doing, and all brochures and leaflets were taken. Many of those present undertook to provide a display of SHHH brochures on their front desks. The conference also made a generous donation to SHHH afterwards. So, all in all, it was a very worthwhile exercise in making SHHH and its work better known to an important professional community.

### National Relay Service Internet relay & more

Internet relay was only launched last year and is rapidly growing in popularity. You don't need a TTY to make calls, rather you can make calls from any computer or laptop at home or work, or friends' houses, and you can make the calls through MSN or through the National Relay Service website. Plus you've got the ease of using a full computer keyboard and computer screen, and you can set the size and colour of the display text to suit your own requirements.

The National Relay Service has produced a booklet for users of the service explaining everything you need know – from profiling to privacy, from costs for different types of calls to tips for using text or speech. There is also a free DVD that has lots of useful demonstrations taking you through each stage of a call. It covers all call types, and both Superprint and Uniphone TTYs as well as how to make emergency calls. It's great for guiding new users through the details of how a relay call works, or as a general introduction to the relay service.

The National Relay Service is an Australian Government program funded by a levy on telecommunications carriers.

To find out more, contact the National Relay Service, (9am–5pm Sydney time):

**TTY:** 1800 555 630

**Voice:** 1800 555 660

**SMS** 0416 001 356

**Email:** [helpdesk@relayservice.com.au](mailto:helpdesk@relayservice.com.au)

**www.relayservice.com.au**



Photo: Christian Carter (left) and Chris Danckwerts (right) with SHHH banner

AVAILABLE  
NOW

widex **mind<sup>TM</sup>440**  
the pleasure of hearing



# Sound Mind, *Sound Body*

**You don't just hear with your ears, you hear with your mind!**

Your mind is the most complex and capable part of the human body. When it comes to hearing better, you want hearing aids that, like the human mind, work incredibly fast, are incredibly smart and manage many things automatically.

You owe it to yourself and your loved ones to actually hear the remarkable sound quality of the new revolutionary hearing aid from Widex - The **mind440**.

Based on a more powerful signal processing system called Dual ISP, the mind440 introduces new distortion free TruSound compression to dramatically increase audibility, an innovative SmartSpeak feature to take the guesswork out of controlling hearing aid functions, and a revolutionary Zen harmonic sound program designed to provide peace of mind.

With its exceptional sound, and features aimed at providing peace of mind - mind440 equates to the pleasure of hearing.



**For more information on the mind440 family of hearing aids, simply contact Widex on Ph: 1800 999 659.**

# Call anyone, anytime

**Internet relay calls** are ideal if you are deaf or can't hear well and have difficulty using your voice.

To make a call, all you need is an internet connection – through a computer or mobile phone. You can even do it via instant messaging.

So now, you can easily communicate with anyone, 24 hours a day, even when you're on the move.

To find out how to make a call, go to [www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au)



An Australian Government Initiative

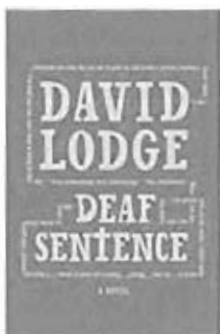


a phone solution for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment

# BOOK REVIEW – DEAF SENTENCE

## by David Lodge

Reviewer: Chris Danckwerts



There are not many books of fiction that I am aware of that centre on the problems of the hearing impaired, so I was intrigued to find out what insights the author of this recently released novel would provide for his readers. A good many, as it turned out.

The central character is a retired academic, Desmond Bates, whose hearing has gradually deteriorated over the last 20 years. This has led him to take early retirement when it was offered to him in the wake of a reorganization of his university department in the north of England. He maintains an extensive daily diary, which is the basis of this book. The main strands of this story are his dealings with a young female PhD student and his father's failing health in faraway London. Both of these sub-plots are well told, and this is a most entertaining book, however my main interest was in how well and accurately Bates described and managed his deafness.

(Incidentally, I have always understood the term "deaf" to refer to the profoundly or totally deaf, much as with the blind. However, in this book, the term is used as we would use "hearing impaired" or "hard of hearing". Perhaps that is what "deaf" can also mean, but it would be good to have some clarification here! I would

judge that Bates has "moderate" hearing loss on the mild / moderate / severe / profound scale of hearing impairment).

So, how well does the book explain to the reader what it's like to be "deaf"? Very well indeed, and at quite some length! Bates' frustration at missing out on so much oral communication comes through very clearly, as do the many embarrassing situations that he falls into. His various strategies for coping are also well described, some of which are spectacularly unsuccessful! The varying degrees of patience that other people, particularly his wife, display towards him also ring very true.

The author in his notes at the end of the book claims that his understanding of deafness comes from "personal experience". I presume he means his own. Certainly there are many wry observations, such as that blindness is seen as tragic but deafness as comical. And there are many other good insights as well.

So, in summary, this book combines a very well told story with a true understanding of the problems of hearing impairment. It is a great mixture of humour and insight. If you are hearing impaired, then buy it for yourself then pass it on to those closest to you. If you are not, but are close to someone who is, then get hold of it to deepen your own understanding of what it is like.

At a recent meeting of my wife's book club, where I am the only hearing impaired person, this book was the selected reading for the month. It generated lots of discussion and opened many club members' eyes to what had not been obvious to them in this "invisible handicap"!

**Notes:** Deaf Sentence was published by Harvill Secker in 2008. Recommended retail price is \$32.95.

**Pictures:** David Lodge, Cover of Deaf Sentence



## MORE FABULOUS FASHION

By Richard Brading

Last issue we looked at the new crop of bright and bold hearing aids aimed at the aging Baby Boomers and young at heart. These are high quality, small behind-the-ear hearing aids that are suitable for open fittings. The article highlighted 5 popular models and discovered that there is a great deal of interest in the new approach to hearing aids. These are all behind-the-ear models and are visible, so that the wearer can show off the style and colour. They are all smaller than traditional hearing aids, so require a bit of brightness to be noticeable at all.

There are lots of other hearing aids on the market, so don't think the fact that an aid is not mentioned is a negative. The quality of modern hearing aids is far superior to those of a decade ago and SHHH doesn't recommend one particular brand or model over another. We encourage our readers to ask questions and to seek the best expert advice from hearing aid professionals about what is most suitable for their needs.

This article includes 2 models missed from the previous article – the Bernafon Brite and Resound Dot.

### Bernafon Brite



The Bernafon Brite is a small BTE that comes in an interesting oval shape and offers a range of 10 earthy colours including gold, green, red and blue. The colours are interchangeable, allowing the wearer to match their hearing aid colour to their clothing or mood. Brite won the Red Dot Design Award for its outstanding combination of form and function. The website challenges consumers to be adventurous when choosing a hearing aid, asking "Who said hearing aids need to be big, beige and boring?"



### Resound Dot

The ReSound Dot is a tiny BTE that has a distinctive boomerang shaped and comes in a range of 14 colours including metallic green, metallic pink and silver. You can just see it on the tip of the dalmatian's nose.

# The SHHH Digest

## The hazards of kissing

A young woman in southern China has partially lost her hearing after her boyfriend ruptured her eardrum during an excessively passionate kiss. The kiss reduced pressure in the mouth, pulled the eardrum out and caused the breakdown of the ear. A doctor thought the woman's hearing would probably return to normal after a couple of months.

Reuters 9/12/2008

## The music box in a finch's brain

The way birds can sing the same song at the same speed day after day has long been a mystery. Scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology investigated by implanting small coolers at various sites in the finches' brains. The devices cooled that part of the bird's brains by up to 6.5 degrees. When the cooler was implanted into an area called the HVC, which is involved in both learning and producing birdsong, they found that the finches sang the same song but more slowly. The equivalent area in human brains controls movement.

The HVC contains several groups of neurons that are activated at different points during a song, which suggests that the timing of these bursts of activity is regulated by the HVC. The HVC operates like the rotating drum in a wind-up music box. Cooling the HVC is like slowing the rate at which the drum rotates. A similar mechanism may work in humans, with each word or common phrase having its own chain of neurons.

New Scientist 15/11/2008

## DVDs without captions

Are you annoyed when you buy or rent a DVD without captions? Well, then you should complain. Media Access Australia provides a forum for hearing impaired consumers to express our dissatisfaction with the DVD industry for failing to provide captions on all DVDs. Many DVDs are distributed by the Australian Visual Software Distributors Association (AVSDA). You can contact them at [www.avsda.com.au](http://www.avsda.com.au), or send them a letter at Level 12, 37 Blich Street Sydney NSW 2000. Or you can contact Media Access Australia, who have an online complaint form at [www.mediaaccess.org.au/](http://www.mediaaccess.org.au/).

## Hear the World – Locally

Dear SHHH,

Thank you for your article on "Hear the World" that was included in your recent November edition of Hearing Matters. Phonak has been very committed to this initiative and with the help of the many celebrities it has been able to involve in the program it has certainly raised the profile of the implications of hearing loss to the global community.

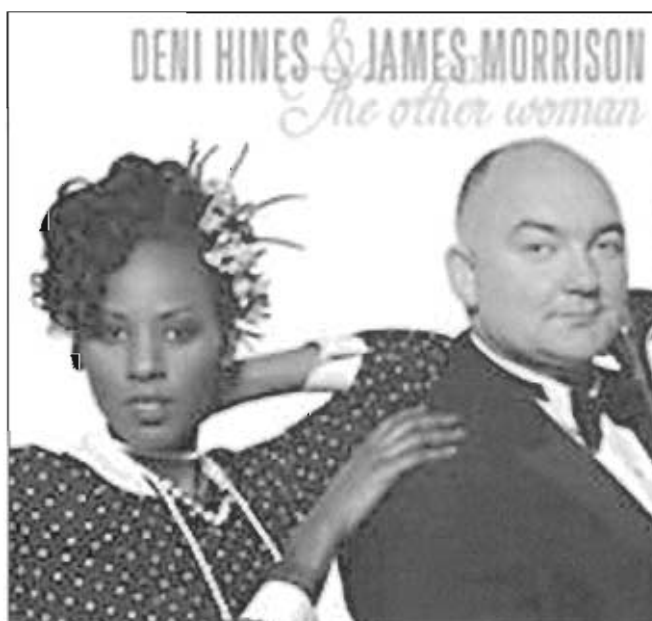
In Australia we have been actively involved in our own campaign and the jazz musician, James Morrison kindly agreed to become our local ambassador. During January/February 2008 James conducted a national tour with singer Deni Hines called "The Other Woman" tour.

Hear the World was a sponsor on that tour and at each concert James spoke about hearing health care and the work the foundation was doing throughout the world in this regard. We have predicted the Hear the World message reached in the region of 1 million people through this concert series, so I believe it was very successful in raising awareness of the foundation and more importantly that it made many people think about the implications of hearing loss throughout the greater community.

We are also involved in a proposed Hear the World project to bring hearing health care to Fiji and Samoa. Both countries only have very limited access to the hearing aid technology so Phonak Australia has joined with an Australian charity called the Carabez Alliance to concentrate on bringing hearing healthcare to the children of the South Pacific. We have been actively supporting this charity for the past few years through hearing aid donations and recently were able to supply the charity with over 600 new hearing aids to continue with their work. Our joint dream is to set up an early intervention program to identify children that are hearing impaired and give them the help and technology that will enable them to integrate into normal schooling and everyday life. In Australia we are very lucky and all children are extremely well looked after by the world class service that Australian Hearing provides. I think if we can replicate only a small part of that program then we will go a long way in allowing many children the opportunity to maximize their potential and the communities of Fiji and Samoa can only benefit.

Let's hope we can make it happen with the help of "Hear the World".

David Rundell  
Managing Director  
Phonak



# The SHHH Notice Board

## SHHH Hearing Information Centres

### Turrumurra

Room 25, Hillview Community Centre  
1334 Pacific Highway, Turrumurra NSW 2074  
Phone & TTY (02)9144 7586  
Fax (02) 9144 3936  
OPEN: Tue, Thur, Fri 10 am to 3 pm

### Canterbury

Canterbury Hospital Outpatients Department  
Phone 9787 1088

### Goulburn

SHHH assists at the QUOTA Resource Centre. Contact Alena Ward on (02) 4827 3913 for an appointment.

## SHHH Support Groups

Local SHHH groups are currently meeting in Baulkham Hills, Chatswood and Newcastle. Contact the SHHH office on (02) 9144 7586 for meeting details of all SHHH Groups.

## Google SHHH Support Group

This internet group provides interesting discussion on hearing matters, help for those seeking general advice, passing on the odd (tasteful!) joke, social interaction and a place to have the chance to vent your frustrations with the system. Constructive comments and criticism are most welcome. It is the members' site and relies upon members corresponding by email to an "open forum" of members. Members will endeavour to answer any questions or give advice when it is sought. Please note this is not a "chat room" and does not require much time to participate. Members choose whether to receive emails or read postings on the website.

The URL to locate the Group Home Page is:  
<http://groups.google.com/group/SHHHgroups>.

Alternatively, log onto the SHHH website [www.shhhaust.org](http://www.shhhaust.org) and click on the "links" icon, scroll down and click on the link.

Emails can be sent to the group at [SHHHgroups@googlegroups.com](mailto:SHHHgroups@googlegroups.com)

To join and participate in the group, you may prefer to send your name and email address to Barry Collins at [barcoll@exemail.com.au](mailto:barcoll@exemail.com.au) who has kindly set up and organised the Group.

## SHHH Board 2009

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Jan Fleming

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### website

[www.shhhaust.org](http://www.shhhaust.org)

## 2009 Annual Membership fees

**Full membership \$37**  
Covers two people with one copy of hearing matters to one address.

**Pensioner membership \$27**  
Covers two people with one copy of hearing matters to one address. Pensioners are those who are holders of the Pension Concession Card.

**Overseas subscription rate \$47**  
(Australian dollars)

**Corporate rate \$150**

## Donations

SHHH needs your financial support

## DONATIONS

All donations to SHHH Australia over \$2 are tax deductible.

## BEQUESTS

If you wish to make a bequest to SHHH please contact our office on 91447586.

# THE BACK PAGE

## *For you Lexophiles (Lover of words)...*

1. A bicycle can't stand alone... it is two tired.
2. A will is a dead giveaway.
3. Time flies like an arrow... fruit flies like a banana.
4. A backward poet writes inverse.
5. In a democracy it's your vote that counts... in feudalism, it's your Count that votes.
6. A chicken crossing the road: poultry in motion.
7. If you don't pay your exorcist you can get repossessed
8. With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.
9. Show me a piano falling down a mine shaft and I'll show you A-flat miner
10. When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
11. The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.
12. A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France, resulting in linoleum blown apart.
13. You are stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
14. Local Area Network in Australia... The LAN down under.
15. He broke into song because he couldn't find the key.
16. A calendar's days are numbered.
17. A lot of money is tainted: 'Taint yours, and 'taint mine.
18. A boiled egg is hard to beat.
19. He had a photographic memory which was never developed.
20. A plateau is a high form of flattery.
21. The short fortuneteller who escaped from prison... a small medium at large.
22. Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.
23. When you've seen one shopping center you've seen a mall.
24. If you jump off a Paris bridge, you are in Seine.
25. When she saw her first strands of gray hair, she thought she'd dye.
26. Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.
27. Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.
28. Acupuncture: a jab well done.
29. Marathon runners with bad shoes suffer the agony of de feet.