

NEWSLETTER

MAGNETISE

Spring 2014

www.hccig.org.uk



Report from the Chair

Welcome to this seasons addition of Magnetise, I do hope you find an interesting read. The Christmas weekend was a great success, well attended and a good time had by all. I want to send my apologies to all those who turned up for the Wine Bar event on the 18th February 2014. Due to the venue having made a double booking we were unfortunately let down badly. I was not informed until the end of the day which subsequently meant it was then to late to inform the members.

A **huge** thanks goes out to Advanced Bionics, Cochlear Ltd and Med-El for the kind grants given to HCCIG in order to update our technology. This much needed grant has enabled us to keep up with the times and continue to provide the much needed advice and support given to both current and future members. It also means we will be able to continue producing our quarterly newsletter, "Magnetise."

Newsletter Updates

Please submit articles for the next publication of Magnetise by the 16th June 2014 to hccigs@gmail.com. Your newsletter will be emailed to you unless you require a hard copy, in this case please do let us know.

Social Media Update

Website

Please do remember if there is anything that you feel should be displayed on our website to get in touch. Guest blogger contributions welcome, email hccig@ymail.com.

Facebook

To find us on Facebook, search Home Counties Cochlear Implant Group, and feel free to add comments, photos, updates on any members news.

Cochlear Implant Patient Identification Card.

When was the last time you checked whether you were carrying your ID card???

Its is advocated that all adult Cochlear Implants recipients and parents of paediatric Cochlear Implant recipients carry their CI ID card at all times in order to ensure that it can be shown to medical staff in the event of the need for emergency surgery.

If you have mislaid your card do contact the hospital for a replacement.

Dates For Your Diary

2014

WINE BAR

Tuesday 15th July 2014

Tuesday 16th Sept 2014 - Advanced Bionics attending

Tuesday 11th November 2014

6pm till 9pm,

Brookes Brothers, Wine Bar, 33-35

Brooke Street, Holborn, London, EC1N 7RS.

Nearest Tube Chancery Lane, exit 2. Just come along, join in and catch up on the latest CI chat.

COFFEE BAR

Postponed until further notice.

AFTERNOON TEA

Wednesday 7th May 2014 - Advanced Bionics attending.

Wednesday 9th July 2014

Wednesday 8th October 2014 from 4pm till 7pm, at Southgate Beaumont Bar-chester Healthcare, 15 Cannon Hill, Old Southgate, London, N14 7DJ. A stunning grade II listed home, in beautiful grounds, another chance to meet other CI users; find out more about Implants from the people that use them. Everyone is welcome, ample of Car Parking spaces.

Manufacturers News



Advanced Bionics Enters the World of Rehab Apps for Adults and Assessment Apps for Children

New iPad apps help adults hear with cochlear implants and professionals assess hearing in young children

Advanced Bionics (AB), a global leader in cochlear implant technology and a company of the Sonova Group, has launched two sophisticated iPad® apps, designed to help adults learning to hear with cochlear implants and hearing professionals working with children.

CLIX is the first instalment in a suite of rehabilitation applications that make up the Advanced Bionics Listening Exercises (able). Cochlear implant systems are frequently referred to as technological miracles for being uniquely capable of restoring one of the human senses, the ability to hear. Recipients of this life-changing technology find that their hearing can improve with practice. The free CLIX app is designed to help adult cochlear implant recipients practice listening for word differences in both quiet and noise. It can also be used by adults with hearing aids.

“Rehab is an essential component of the journey to hearing. AB is taking advantage of the great platforms that

popular mobile devices provide to put helpful new rehab programs right at your fingertips,” said Hansjuerg Emch, Group Vice President of the Sonova Medical Division within which AB resides. “AB is committed to providing industry-leading support services. The CLIX app is a perfect example of that dedication.”

The second app released from AB, **IT-MAIS**, is a version of a popular assessment tool used by professionals around the world to evaluate a young child’s response to sound during their first few years of listening with hearing technology.

“Early intervention in addressing hearing loss is crucial, and assessing young children is particularly challenging,” said Carissa Moeggenberg, Education, Training and Rehab Manager at AB. “We believe the IT-MAIS app will lead to more children being assessed early and accurately, so that we can provide them with the technology that will help them develop language skills earlier and excel in mainstream schools alongside normal-hearing peers.”

Both apps are compatible with the iPad tablet and are available now for download in iTunes store.

For more information about the AB iPad apps, the full range of educational products and services AB offers, or any Advanced Bionics product contact us at info.uk@advancedbionics.com or, please visit AdvancedBionics.com.



My Naida CI Q70 Experience - Is's great and I like it!!

I was very pleased with my Harmony™ processor previously, but the Naída CI Q70 (Naída CI) is a big step forward.

The key difference is that the overall sound quality is better; it's fuller and clearer and louder. There's more top (higher frequency perception) and I think more bottom as well. The sound is more alive and sounds like it has been unmuted. The top most notes of the piano are now heard as a sound rather than a click, even though the receptive pitch range has not changed from AB's standard 250-8700Hz.

Phone reception is better and clearer, and when using the phone with my T-Mic™ 2, known voices have improved. A hearing test shows that my performance has improved by 5-10 dB.

It's smaller, lighter, and easier to put on and take off. The batteries are smaller and lighter and, importantly, have no charge memory. The charger unit is compact and easy to use; its power connectors are smaller and simpler to use. First I had Clarion™, then Auria™, then Harmony with HiRes Fidelity 120™, then ClearVoice™ and now the Naída CI. So I'm very pleased and fortunate to be upgraded for the fourth time in 11 years, with no cost through the NHS.

I currently have four out of the available five programmes set up. One, a T-coil setting only, I have yet to experience. I have only tried the UltraZoom slot once, in an almost 'normal' environment, yet I could detect that it was more focussed. I'm looking forward to a party to test it out fully!

My PowerCel 110 batteries provide about 12 hours of power. The HiRes™ Optima sound processing programme extended my PowerCel™ 110 battery life by approximately 25%. Oxford CI Centre have kindly agreed to get me some PowerCel 170 batteries, which should give me a clear 18 hours – a full day. Because the 170 batteries were not immediately available, I've got PowerCel 230 batteries instead, which give me one full day and almost all of another day.

Another big plus for the Naída CI processor is its wireless connectivity. Any Bluetooth enabled device can stream straight into the processor. I'm now using a Phonak ComPilot and its matching TVLink and Remote Microphone. This allows me to watch TV without having to rely totally on subtitles. The sound level is constant and for some programmes I can dispense with the subtitles. I have also fitted a TVLink to my HiFi stack and now enjoy my favourite radio channels, CDs, and records much more than when I relied on loudspeakers. The RemoteMic is good for car journeys and restaurant scenarios. I'm even thinking of getting a Bluetooth mobile phone, which will complete my new world of connectivity. Thank you AB & Phonak! Richard Byrnes, Naida CI Recipient.

For more information about the Naida CI sound processor or Advanced Bionics please visit www.AdvancedBionics.com.



Nucleus 6 Update

Nucleus 6 has been available to all UK implant centres since July 31st 2013. Since then we have had lots of people notice the differ-

ences. Here are some of the differences of Nucleus 6 and some comments from our recipients:

1. **SOUND CHANGES QUICKLY, NOW YOUR SOUND PROCESSOR CAN TOO.** With SmartSound iQ your processor will automatically keep up with your hearing needs so you can enjoy life with minimal listening effort. "I am not sure how other people who have a cochlear Implant cope without it". (newly implanted adult patient talking about SCAN program)
2. **SOMETIMES THE BIGGEST MIRACLES ARE ALSO THE SMALLEST** Enjoy wearing it all day, every day. "With my auto-on function I just change the battery and its ready to use again- no fiddling with buttons again" (newly upgraded Nucleus 6 recipient)
3. **MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR NATURAL HEARING.** Enjoy the best of both worlds with the all-in-one cochlear implant and hearing aid which works simultaneously to enrich your hearing.
4. **FREEDOM, IN AND AROUND WATER.** Be confident to take a walk in the rain, enjoy the pool or have the freedom to swim in the

sea, as your sound processor is now fully waterproof. "This is the best product! Now my son can participate in water activities and still hear the people around him" (Facebook Mum Comments)

5. **ENHANCE YOUR HEARING EXPERIENCE, WIRELESSLY.** Enjoy clear speech in noisy situations and have effortless phone conversations all through a truly wireless connectivity that streams audio directly into your sound processor.
6. **A PROCESSOR SO SMART, IT CAN TELL YOU WHERE IT'S BEEN** Auditory information about your child's Nucleus cochlear implant can be downloaded by your audiologist. For example, information on how many hours per day the processor has been working. That's especially reassuring when your child is in the classroom and you're at work. Your audiologist can study listening environments and detect patterns that will make the fine tuning process much more accurate.

Messing around in the Water with Nucleus 6

A little while ago Cochlear launched the Aqua Accessory and we have had such a fantastic response to it. Sometimes these things really take us by surprise! Shortly, the disposable device will be replaced by a re-useable one and shortly after this (in time for the summer) you will see Aqua+ appear with any Nucleus 6 that is chosen at clinics. Aqua + is a silicone rubber sleeve for the processor and a waterproof cable and coil that makes the Nucleus 6 the only ear-level processor that is waterproof.

Handy Alerts and Tips on Nucleus 6

How do you know your Nucleus 6 is not working or if the battery has drained?

Well, it's very simple with Nucleus devices. If the coil is not sending a signal to the implant it will flash orange every second (it may have become disconnected

from the magnet). If the orange light flashes are continuous then this means that the battery needs replacing. You can also settle your mind by checking what the processor is picking up by using the monitor earphones. These are supplied and plug straight into the accessory port.

MED-EL

MED-EL's new research and development facility: Innovation is key

As part of MED-EL's commitment to offer the highest quality hearing implants, a significant amount of the company's turnover is invested in research, design and development each year. MED-EL has continued its investment by opening new Research and Development facilities at its head office in Innsbruck, Austria.

The new five-storey building offers scientists, production teams, MED-EL staff and visiting professionals state-of-art training laboratories, measuring laboratories, clean rooms, offices and conference rooms. The building is also highly environmentally friendly. A sophisticated cooling and heating system uses groundwater to provide an efficient, energy-saving solution all year round. Compared to traditional heating and air conditioning, the system saves around 90 per cent of its CO₂ emissions,

the equivalent of around 2,000 car journeys from London to Newcastle and back.

Continual investment in research, design and development drives the company's pioneering innovations and growth; a growth which has seen MED-EL's workforce expand to over 1,500 highly skilled employees worldwide.

For further information about the latest innovations from MED-EL, visit www.medel.com.

MED-EL Sports Headband – Ready for your active life!



Good news for sport lovers

MED-EL has teamed up with renowned sportswear producer skin-fit® to bring you the MED-EL Sports Headband, designed for your comfort and security during sports and other vigorous activities.

The MED-EL Sports Headband features specially designed pockets that keep your Amadé or RONDO audio processor securely in place over the implant during various activities and is suitable for bilateral users.

The breathable microfibre material design protects the audio processor from sweat and moisture, providing maximum ventilation for user comfort, while flat seams ensure a comfortable fit. The material is also odour-resistant and thermo-regulating.

The headband is black and is available in four sizes (XS, S, M and L). Headbands are now in stock and can be purchased from the MED-EL UK Shop, simply email orders@medel.co.uk

The MED-EL Sports Headband should not be used for water sports.

For more information about the MED-EL Sports Headband, visit: medel.com/sports-headband.

Triformance: superior hearing with MED-EL

Providing the best possible hearing experience has always been a focus for everyone at MED-EL. Triformance provides our cochlear implant recipients with the unique advantages of Structure Preservation, Complete Cochlear Coverage, and FineHearing. These technologies work together to offer superior hearing performance.

Structure Preservation

The preservation of the delicate structures of the cochlea (inner ear) is paramount for all cochlear implant recipients, for two reasons.

Firstly, the preservation of your cochlea may be critical to benefit from future therapies and technologies. Future hearing solutions will likely be more successful in a cochlea where the structures have been preserved.

Secondly, many people with hearing loss may still be able to hear certain low pitched sounds—referred to as residual hearing. It is important not to damage the structures of your cochlea so any residual hearing can still be used.

MED-EL's soft and flexible electrode design helps your surgeon to protect your delicate cochlea.

Complete cochlear coverage

MED-EL's electrodes can provide implant users with complete cochlear coverage. This allows the full length of your cochlea to be stimulated so you can experience a more natural sound quality.

The nerve cells along the length of your cochlea respond to different sounds in different places. High-pitched sounds stimulate nerves at the base (shallower part) of the cochlea, while low-pitched sounds stimulate nerve fibres in the apex (deepest

part) of your cochlea. With complete cochlear coverage your implant can stimulate the maximum range of nerve fibres in your cochlea to provide you with the rich and natural sound quality that you deserve.

FineHearing

Our FineHearing technology is the combination of two unique MED-EL sound-processing features that help you to appreciate the subtle differences between sounds including music, background noise, and everyday speech.

FineHearing is designed to provide more unique pitches than any other cochlear implant technology, up to 250.

If you require further information about MED-EL's hearing implant systems, please contact customerservice@medel.co.uk or visit www.medel.com

MED-EL Music Grants 2014 – Apply now!

In 2013 MED-EL UK launched its music grant programme and it obviously struck the right chord: the judging panel were overwhelmed by the level of interest and had the difficult task selecting only two winners from the many deserving applicants.

The piano proved a popular choice for last year's winners. The under 19s MED-EL Music Grant went to 8 year old Adam Kassam from London, allowing his family to purchase a full size electric piano so Adam could continue with his music lessons.

The over 19s winner, Claire Ingham from Woking who has been deaf since birth, is also discovering music since receiving her MED-EL cochlear implant system. She achieved her first musical goal of playing

Christmas carols for her family on the piano during the festive season.

So if you would like to learn how to tinkle the ivories or have a blast on the trumpet and you are the recipient of a MED-EL hearing implant, follow the example of Adam and Claire and apply for this year's MED-EL music grant awards. Applications are now open!

There are two categories of Music Grants: one for applicants under 19 years old and one for 19s and over. To be eligible you must be the recipient of a MED-EL hearing implant. Applicants under the age of 18 years old must have the consent of their parent or legal guardian.

The winners of the grants will receive a musical instrument of their

choice up to the value of £500 and MED-EL will pay for one 30 minute lesson per week for one year. There is also a £30 allowance for sheet music. Travel expenses will not be covered. All tuition fees will be paid directly to the music tutor.

Applications are welcome from all MED-EL implant users with an interest in music, whether they are complete beginners or have prior musical experience.

The deadline for applications is 29th July 2014. For more information, terms and conditions, and an online application form visit: www.medel.com/uk/musicgrant, alternatively please email conferences@medel.co.uk for a paper application form or call the marketing team on 01226 242874.

Research Projects

Say hello to real-time captioning on Google Glass

Did you know? i2i caption can now stream real-time captions to Google Glass on their caption streaming platform, icapapp.

This means you can have a speech-to-text reporter (palantypist or stenographer), a CART writer, or an electronic notetaker listen to your conversation and stream it to your Glass as captions. BRILLIANT for deaf people!

As with all new technology, the Glass can be rather confusing at first. You are probably wondering, what on earth is Google Glass? You'll understand what this product is and how it feels to wear one after the jump, perhaps you're even thinking about the potential uses. Wouldn't you like to have everything captioned for you? For more information visit <http://i2icaptions.com/google-glass-introduction/>.



We would be so grateful if you could take a few minutes and complete this questionnaire about your implant and life with an implant. We are doing this on behalf of Euro CI Users group to gather enough information to support our work with governments to support the development of implant programmes and appropriate funding.

It is on survey monkey and really won't take long, but will provide us with some really useful insights, to help us move on with cochlear implantation and the long-term support that is needed for those with implants.

If you go to this link you will be able to complete it very easily and remain anonymous if you prefer. If you have had this request from another source, I am sorry, but still hope you do it!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/7BBMDB8>

With many thanks for your help with this, Sue Archbold, CEO, The Ear Foundation.



Hearing Link: Self Management Programme

Improve your communication skills and feel more confident.

The Ear Foundation are working together with Hearing Link to provide these friendly and informal **FREE courses** which contain a range of useful strategies and techniques to enable people living with hearing loss to feel independent and more self confident. They are run by experienced trainers who themselves live with a hearing loss.

The course covers many topics including:

- communication
- equipment
- personal safety
- relaxation
- well-being

The programme is suitable for anybody who has a hearing loss and would like to manage better on a day to day basis. People are encouraged to share their own experiences and coping strategies and to learn from others in the group.

There are three sessions in total, each taking place between 10am and 3pm, and it is recommended that you attend all 3 sessions, to get the most out of the programme. Refreshments and lunch are provided free of charge.

The courses will be run over the following 3 dates:
 Monday 28th April 2014, Friday 30th May 2014,
 Monday 23rd June 2014
 Venue: The Ear Foundation, 83 Sherwin Road, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2FB

If you would like to book a place or have any questions, please contact me on rachel@earfoundation.org.uk or on 0115 942 1985.

Text Relay supporting text communication

Ofcom, the UK communications regulator, has commissioned Opinion Leader and Facts International to gather the opinions of regular text relay users about their experience of the text relay service.

There will be some changes to the text relay service from 18 April 2014 and Ofcom wants to check if, and how, these changes deliver a better service. Therefore, Ofcom wants to find out about the experiences of text relay users both now and then again in 2014 when the new service is in place.

We want to talk to as many different users of text relay as possible before 17th March. We would like to hear from anyone who:

- is 16 or over, and
- is willing to complete a short survey (either online or face to face with an interviewer) and diary task.

There will be a £30 thank you payment upon completion of the diary. Communications support will be arranged, if you would like this.

If you would like to take part in the research please either register your interest at

www.facts.uk.com/ofcomtextrelay or call one of our research team at Facts International on 01233 648492.

Please mention this research to anyone else you think may be interested, so they can take part too.

Thank you in advance for your help with this important research!

Future Events



After five years work **SignHealth** are ready to share the results of the world's first proper scientific study of the health of Deaf people. The report is called "Sick Of It", and it was funded by a grant from the Big Lottery. It will be launched

at a conference in central London on March 25th (£95.00; this includes refreshments and lunch).

The programme is attached. Stephen Dorrell MP, Chair of the Health Select Committee and Michael Dixon who is President of NHS England Clinical Commissioners are confirmed to speak along with leading healthcare organisations, Deaf people themselves and experts in the field. The results of the research, and the work already being done to try to give Deaf people better access to healthcare, are important new developments for the health of Deaf people.

This really is a day not to be missed by Deaf people, those working with Deaf people, and others interested in bringing equality in healthcare.

If interested, please email info.bsmhd@gmail.com



Equality in communication for all" - 19th - 25th May 2014

Deaf Awareness Week is a unique campaign in that so many different organisations participate, each able to promote their own work within the broad spectrum of deafness. More more detail please visit, www.deafcouncil.org.uk/deaf-awareness-week.html

The Ear Foundation
Hearing and communicating in a technological era

Sound Advice Adult Days 2014
Helping adults make the most of their hearing technology

These group days give adults, their partners and friends the opportunity to meet up with time to talk on a range of topics. They are run by experienced professionals who can offer friendly help and up to date advice. Adults are also able to visit our **Resource Centre** throughout the day for hands on advice.

Balance
Saturday 1 February (10:30am till 3:00pm)
How our ears are involved? Hosted by Andrew Clements, Physiotherapist, The London Road Hearing Clinic.
(At The Ear Foundation)

Communicating with Signs & Finger Spelling
Saturday 22 March (10:30am till 3:00pm)
Learn more about signing and finger spelling with Helen Starczewski, Speech and Language Therapist
(At The Ear Foundation)

Music
Saturday 10 May (10:30am till 3:00pm)
Come and join us for our music workshop, where we will be joined by a variety of musicians.
(At The Ear Foundation)

BBQ
Saturday 5 July (3:00pm till 6:00pm)
Come and join us for our annual BBQ, in Normanton on Soar, where there will be lots of stalls, games and food, everyone welcome!
(The Willows, Butt Lane, Normanton on Soar, LE12 5EE)

To book a place on any of these events please contact Rachel Lightfoot:
rachel@earfoundation.org.uk or call 0115 942 1985

The Ear Foundation, 83 Sherwin Road, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2FB
Tel: 0115 942 1985 Fax: 0115 924 9054
Web: www.earfoundation.org.uk

Members Corner

MY ONE UNIQUE HEARING JOURNEY WITH THE COCHLEAR IMPLANT

by Tamara Bunting

I was born with profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss and, rather than learning sign language, I relied heavily on lip reading and hearing aids, starting with body worn devices and finally behind-the-ear models. After 38 years I wanted more stimulation than I was getting from the amplification of the low to middle frequencies by the hearing aids, or the silence without them. I felt I was missing out on critical information in my working environment, as a research scientist; I wanted to be able to hold a conversation with my husband and son, in the car, without lip reading, especially in the dark. I was tired from the demands of the lip reading, totally relying on subtitles when watching television, and the little input I was receiving from the hearing aids.

After studying my audiogram I could see that the hearing aids were not giving me access to the speech banana: those middle to high frequencies I could not hear. In particular I was missing out on the sounds “s”, “sh” and the “t” in my name. I decided enough was enough, that I needed something more than the hearing aids, hence my interest in cochlear implants.

After researching on the internet, I really needed to talk to a non-traditional cochlear implantee: an adult who was, like me, born profoundly deaf and decided to attend the HCCIG support group meeting. I had lots of questions that needed answers. Everyone was very helpful and positive about their experience. It was this, along with the post implantation audiogram of someone who had a similar audio profile to mine prior to their operation, that made me decide to go ahead with the cochlear implant.

I went into the activation day with high hopes and low expectations: It was unlike anything I had experienced with hearing aids and, as each of the impending 22 electrodes were stimulated, I felt tiny impulses kicking my brain. It was a totally weird experience. Speech was nothing but a series of beeps; then, all of a sudden, I heard my

son clicking his fingers, drawers opening and closing in the office, and the faintest whisper of my partner’s voice. Outside the hospital motor-cycles were about the only things I could hear, and they were awful; everything else was echoing. PATIENCE is a big word, and one that I’m not good at, but the experience of the CI is like learning a new language. You can’t expect everything at once, nor that “Rockstar” activation (unless you are one of the lucky few), and you have to be patient: to give your brain time to learn to process the signals from the CI; use the SLT sessions, and audio training at home, to understand how to drive and work with the CI.

Now, 3 months post activation, I am more able to interpret the sounds I hear: the beautiful bird song with their wings flapping brings a smile to my face; the rubbing of hands together and the applying of cream onto my skin, aeroplanes and helicopter blades whirring through the London skies and the airbrakes of buses and lorries, something which I never knew existed. The rustling of leaves, packets and papers; the sweeping of the brush bristles. Ice cracking in the glass tumbler; screeching of chairs as they are dragged across the floor; and the tapping of the keyboard as I write this. Having distance hearing is a bonus, as I hear my son in another room along with his breathing in his sleep; hearing whether or not he’s in the shower; his sneaking into the cupboards. The cat’s bell; the constant ticking of the clock; the beeping of the dishwasher and tumble dryer; nail clippers, yuck! I’m now hearing the beeping of the machines at work, the fume cupboards and the timers; the speech of the tannoy on the underground is so clear; even conversation over the other side of the road, something I thought impossible.

It really is a noisy world!

People have also commented on the improvement of my speech, as it is clearer. I’m finding lip-reading a lot easier, and hearing sentences without facing the speaker and hearing much more environmental sounds as time goes on, and I’m only at the start of this wonderful, wonderful journey, with a long road ahead.



Following on from her last article of "Life as a student with a Cochlear Implant," Karen Wild provides us with another student story:

LIFE AS A STUDENT IN THE EXAM HALL

The whispers of the exam hall: Walking down a main road in west London I immediately recognise the exam venue by the major crowds of students outside. Although it were students I didn't know, venturing inside I realise the exam hall was so large that it was accommodating not just my exam, but several others, hence why there were so many unrecognisable students. Wow, Uni had certainly changed since my first degree 15 years ago!

Saying a few hello's to some students I recognised, I sat down and laid out my pens, University card and small bottle of blackcurrant drink. Carbonated drinks were not allowed so it was my favourite drink for making me feel a little more alert if any very puzzling questions arose in the exam. After a few minutes one of the invigilators at the front started speaking. I could sense he were speaking very loudly to tell the whole hall (where hundreds of students were all now quietly seated) when we would be starting and finishing and some other things like that, but I realised I could not understand him, he was too far away and the reverberation effects of the hall was too bad.

Oh well, I would soon be seeing when everyone was able to start anyway. A hundred or so heads would be going down and pens would be scribbling away! Sure enough, I realised everyone was starting and the invigilator had stopped talking. Time for me to get going! Argh! I didn't like the look of this paper but I intended to give it what I could.

About half an hour later, I realised I was being approached by an invigilator, a different one to the one I had spoke to. He was whispering something to me about my ID card but I couldn't understand what. Finally I realised! - Damn, I think I was suppose to also bring the card showing my examination candidate number that had been sent in the post to me. Argh! I quickly asked if that was the problem and finally I picked up that he was saying not to worry, but I noticed him writing down my name. Oops, did that mean I was in trouble/my paper would be marked down? I quietly asked but couldn't understand his whispered response and realised I needed to tell him I am hearing impaired and ask for his response to be written down. But I then realised if I did this I would be losing time. Every second was essential and I could check later.

As he smiled and walked on, I turned my attention back to the exam but I couldn't help noticing a number of coughs. Was someone choking? Surely not, food wasn't allowed in the exam hall! I realised it was many coughs from different students altogether at the same time, as there were just so many students and my hearing with a Cochlear Implant was picking up all the echo's of the hall in a major way. And not just coughs. Pens going down, chairs being pulled closer, ruffling of papers, what a noisy place for a Cochlear Implant user! Of course I always had the advantage of just turning it off, but I realised that would feel too weird for me and well, I needed to hear when time was nearly up as well, in case that first invigilator forgot.

I turned my attention back once again to the paper until just half an hour later when I realised I was being approached again by a different invigilator, another different one from the one I had approached at the start. Of course, the exam hall was so large, they needed many! This time the invigilator was holding up my blackcurrant drink and whispering something to me. I realised that as it was a very dark drink it maybe mistaken for a carbonated coke so I quickly said, "its blackcurrant," but I got the impression I wasn't believed as he was saying something very quietly in a mean way and didn't seem to be giving it back. What was going on? I watched as he screwed open the top. Perhaps he wanted to check it was blackcurrant? I voluntarily said, "you are welcome to try some if you like?" To prove I was an honest person. I was met with a cold stare and a mumble of something. AS I pondered whether to again explain I was hearing impaired and that I had absolutely no idea what he had said to me (or actually did I really want to know) or if I was losing time by doing that, he set it back down and walked away and I turned my attention back to the paper. This is what I was here for after all.

Finally, an hour later I was approached again by the same invigilator, the one who appeared not to have liked my blackcurrant juice. He was pointing a finger to his watch and I realised it must be now that we only had ten minutes left. Damn, I was still on this last question. I hurriedly started scribbling what I wanted to scribble when suddenly he yelled out clearly, "put the pens down now!" Whoops, turned out the exam was already finished and everyone was looking at me!

I sat in shock as he collected my paper and moved on and I decided then I would be informing the Uni and my department that I was not happy with the invigilators/exam hall. All the invigilators either needed to know I could not hear that far back, or perhaps I could be in a private small quieter room? I had heard someone else had been given a separate quiet room the year before due to her expecting a baby and needing the toilet.

I made a mental note I would sort this out for the next year and as we were all given the go ahead to leave I decided not to even approach the invigilators or Mr Blackcurrant about today's problems as the exam hall was absolutely chaos with noise.

Outside I caught up with another student from my course who had been seated behind me. She informed me that she had heard the blackcurrant drama and wasn't impressed with how he had reacted. It became apparent that he thought it could be fizzy blackcurrant. Ah! Now I see! We spoke some more about the end part and she said how she felt all the invigilators should have been told that I was hearing impaired. We discussed the obvious bad communication between the one I had told and the other invigilators, and as I made my way home, I prayed it would be the last time I would be in the hall.

Fortunately after stating my case, my wishes have now been granted and for the forthcoming major May exams (arghhh!) I will be amongst a couple of others in a small private room. Fortunately this way there shouldn't be so many invigilators, hence I will be informed when the last 10 minutes is given out, and no doubt I will hear it in a small room. Anyhow this this not only will I be very prepared for the exam and everything that should be on the desk, but I will also be leaving the blackcurrant juice at home and displaying a still water, which is definitely not fizzy. Hopefully the only thing that will be fizzy is my joy when after much more hard work, I will be loving the exam paper!

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Contacting HCCIG

Please would you only contact Jenny on HCCIG business during working hours of 9.00am to 5.00pm. Monday to Friday. This is to allow Jenny some free time with her family. Thank you.

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Batteries are sent out by 2nd class post on Mondays and Thursdays. You need to call us before 12pm.