(Issue #7) - 2021

Manchester Cicada charity

Lockdown Letter

AGM 2021 update news

As you may be aware last year's AGM meeting was cancelled as it coincided with the beginning of the outbreak of Covid in the general population. We didn’t have an AGM but the appropriate reports were available and sent to the Charity Commission as required.

The activities of CICADA this year, such as events meetups and Xmas lunch have all in turn been cancelled due to the ongoing situation with lockdowns etc. and this year's AGM is going to be affected as well.

Technically speaking the Charity Commission still requires that there is an AGM for the purpose of reporting not just the activities of the charity during the year but also its financial position and as a result last year the EC had an online meeting just for this purpose.

For this year we are planning to have an online AGM with the EC, but others are welcome to join us, but for the smooth running of the meeting it would be useful to know what experience they have of using Zoom.

For the purposes of keeping the members informed copies of the reports compiled for the meeting and the accounts will be sent to those that wish to see them, and the same reports and accounts will of course be visible on the Charity Commission's website as required by law.

At this point in time we are not in a position to schedule any events or meetings until the Covid situation becomes clearer and on current estimates that will not be before the summer, so there will be no discussion at the AGM about the calendar of events. However if you have a question that you would like raised at the AGM please feel free to send it to me and I will ensure that it is addressed.

Following the AGM the full minutes will be published and sent out so that we can all be up to date with things.

To help us in our planning to be able to communicate better with people can I ask those of you who may have used video conferencing software during the lockdowns to let us know how you have managed, which package you have used e.g. Zoom, Google Meet, Teams or any other software. (Email:secretary@manchestercicada.co.uk)

Hopefully by the time of the next AGM we will be able to go back to the normal procedure of physically meeting as in the past.

New facemasks designed to help deaf community

Breathe Easy's masks enable sight of mouth for lip-reading.

An Edinburgh company is making the first face masks for the deaf community which enable sight of mouth for lip-reading.

Breathe Easy, created by Gavin McAdam, has been inundated with orders for the products after trialling the prototypes in early April.

The masks include a plastic insert which allow for lip-reading.

The company is creating around 200 masks a day and 5,000 have already been distributed free to those in need. Plans are already in place to increase production.

Mr McAdam took over the rental of a tailoring workshop in Newington and now has a staff of seven, including three full-time seamstresses to cope with demand.

Working with Deaf Action Scotland, National Deaf Children's Society (Scotland), Forth Valley Sensory Centre and the North East London NHS Foundation Trust, Breathe Easy has been supplying the organisations with the masks that allow sight of the mouth.

Mr McAdam said the initial plan was to manufacture quality fabric masks to front-line workers, those at risk, vulnerable groups and anyone concerned for friends or family.

He said: "While not medical grade, the masks are ideal for casual use and provide a barrier which brings a real source of comfort for many people worried about contracting coronavirus while out in public".

"I was keen to produce something to help the deaf community and the designs have been well received".

Gavin McAdam wears one of the face masks designed by his Edinburgh pop-up company

How do you cope?

by John Newton

I have a friend who is severely deaf and has been for a number of years. He doesn't let it get him down though. Of course it could, if he let it, present a number of problems in his life, he could for example have difficulty using the phone to keep in touch with his friends and family. In social situations or in restaurants or the pub he could feel left out of the conversation. People could get impatient with him sometimes when he doesn't hear and even be rude to him and treat him as though he were stupid. He could have trouble hearing the words in TV programmes or films or at public meetings or find it difficult to understand the speech of his grandchildren

However he tells me that he has overcome all these problems in one way and another. For a start he has very effective hearing aids which restore his hearing to normal and a device which allows him to focus on an individual speaker in a crowd which works well. He certainly is never tempted to avoid social situations because of his deafness. His phone feeds directly into his hearing aids as does his TV sound. If anyone makes a joke of his deafness he laughs it off it doesn't bother him at all. He finds that there is nearly always a loop system at public meetings which feeds the speaker's words to his hearing aids via the "T" setting. He seems to have covered all the angles.

Of course that's all a joke I know no such person. Nevertheless we all, I am sure know people with hearing loss of whom we would say they "cope well" with their problems. I am sure too that we have met people who are oppressed, even crushed by similar problems, particularly at the time they are losing their hearing. We would probably say that most people with hearing loss come somewhere between these two extremes.

Why do some cope and others do not? Or more to the point how do some cope and others do not?

I am reminded of a run in I had once in an old fashioned market hall with a greengrocer who was a bit of a character who like to play to his audience particularly on a busy Saturday morning. He mocked me for mishearing him, getting a laugh from the other customers for his remark, which of course I couldn't hear. Did I laugh it off? No I didn't, I walked away seething and never went back to that particular stall. It taught me one important lesson about coping which is to pick your battle. If a similar situation had arisen with someone I worked with say, or needed to meet with every day, I would have been forced to tackle the issue and try to educate the joker. If it's someone you are unlikely to meet again, it makes more sense to just walk away. Situations like that can happen even within a family. But it takes confidence to speak up for your rights to reasonable treatment and understanding. If you are already feeling oppressed you are likely to retreat into yourself and be further discouraged. So how do you gain that confidence?

Click the link below to find the answer.

Another joke! Sorry! Of course there is no easy answer. Most of us however eventually learn some general lessons from these uncomfortable experiences.

Personally I start with how I myself see my own hearing loss. It's very easy to go along with the common view that hearing loss somehow diminishes you as a person. It's understandable because quite a lot of people reveal in their treatment of you that they feel that way, you are not only deaf but a bit slow or dopy or both. If you are going to cope well you have to get rid of that feeling urgently. If it helps, blame others however unreasonably! They mumble, or wear huge beards or don't look at you when they speak. Tell yourself that deafness is not some rare condition, millions have it! It's nothing special! You don't have two heads (although you might like to have four ears).

Another important step is to try to meet others with similar problems. Why? Because if you know no other deaf people you see your problems as unique, you feel singled out for bad treatment.

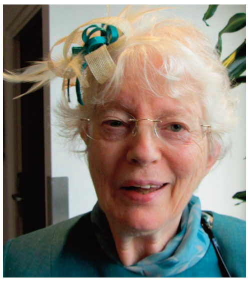
Meeting others teaches you that your problems are not peculiar to you. Often you find that they can be overcome sometimes by technology, sometimes by simple adjustments of your way of doing things, which of course it's for this reason that CICADA and other clubs and charities catering for the deaf are set up.

I could go on about lessons I have learned from my experiences of deafness but I would rather hear about the experience of you the readers of this newsletter. Write to us and tell us about the lessons you have learned from your every day activities, work, shopping, travel, social life and we will include your experiences in future newsletters.

Latest technology updates

Both Norah Clewes and Beryl Hardman have now had their new Cochlear N7 processor upgrades and Norah has also had a new implant fitted as the old one deveoped a fault.

Both now say they are noticing the difference in a lot of ways which is good news especially as we are still under the Covid rules.



The upgrades took place at the Manchester Implant Centre in spite of the current restrictions.

In common with a lot of recent developments in Cochlear Implants and BAHA's they now link directly to a mobile phone in this case using the Nucleus® Smart app. This allows the settings to be adjusted across different environments, monitoring the status of the battery and most important for me anyway, being able to locate a missing sound processor.

The Nucleus 7 Processor

Something called 'direct streaming' has also been added so that your mobile phone can be automatically connected directly to your processor without you needing to adjust anything, so phone calls, music, audio books, videos and more, are automatically connected to the Nucleus 7 Sound Processor from compatible Apple and Android devices.

If you don't have a compatible smartphone or tablet, you can stream calls and music wirelessly with the Cochlear™ Wireless Phone Clip.

(Editor's note: *If anyone else has had a recent upgrade and would like to tell me about it please do, it's nice to have some good news these days)*

A strange encounter part 2

by Kevin Williams

Having survived the possible drowning at the last visit to the doctors I had reason to go back for another visit, or should I say 'experience' as there is no such thing as a friendly chat in a warm room any more.

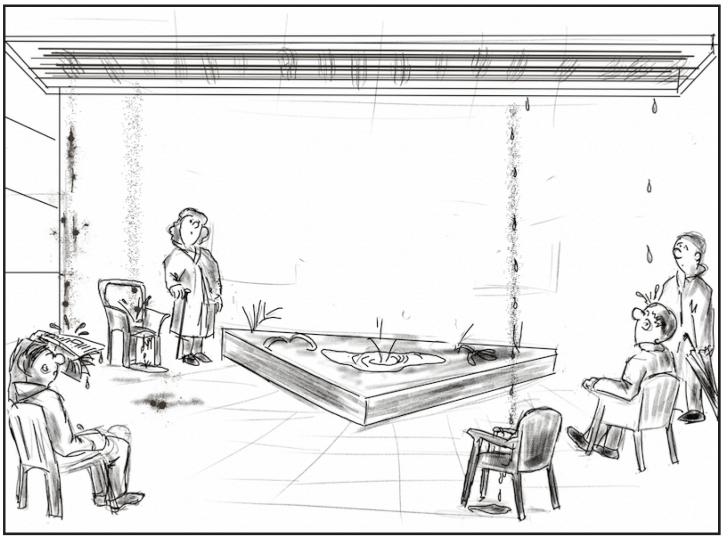
Of course at the time it was still in the middle of the Hyde Monsoon season so I was not looking forward to taking my chances with a sudden flood and went suitably equipped with brolly, stout shoes and a fixed grin and bear it attitude.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn from the receptionist via the built in translating/guessing process that we have all had to develop these days when talking to people that 'VVPt*rvv@ntwaitnnng vrrm' actually meant that they had put a roof on the waiting room!

Well I suppose some scaffolding across the courtyard with the old canvas re-attached could, with a great deal of imagination, be called a roof.

However the scientific organisation of the water disposal system seemed a bit too accurate! Was this a deliberate policy to reduce attendance at the doctors?

I have not been back since then!



Contact details for articles: I would love to hear from anyone with an example of a service, good or bad, or an amusing incident in a queue (there are lots of queues these days)
Cicada: email: secretary@manchestercicada.org.uk - Text: 07533 217730 or postal address:107 Manchester Road, Hyde Cheshire, SK14 2BX
CICADA support Links: http://www.manchestercicada.org.uk/help-support/
Any contacts you help me with will be added to our website and publicised on our facebook page: **Manchester Cicada club**. If you want to join just put in a request.
Manchester Auditory Implant Centre:Repairs and Battery Supply
Tel: for all repairs. 0161 276 8079
Email: auditory.implant@mft.nhs.uk for cochlear implants and BAHA