



Manchester Cicada charity

Lockdown Letter



2021 update news

As we make our way through the various stages of the pandemic and lockdown there would seem to be light at the end of the tunnel. The vaccinations are going well and we seem to be slowly getting back to normal, if normal is the right word to use. At the time of writing the last stage of opening still seems to be June 21st (unless someone knows different) and fingers crossed that it becomes a reality.

As with all charities this last year has been totally disruptive, being unable to meet for any type of event including Xmas lunch and the AGM where we were introduced to more new technology in order to actually carry out an AGM online.

I suspect that many of us are considerably more computer literate than we were a year ago having been exposed to an even wider variety of online activities than before and we have all played our part in increasing the Amazon profit margins amongst many others with a huge variety of online shopping services springing up.

It is a great credit to all the critical businesses such as supermarkets that they have adapted well to the changing circumstances and that the NHS managed to cope with the drastically changed requirements of a major pandemic.

Everyone has been affected in one way or another, I can't remember the last time I had a face to face chat with a GP rather than another member of the staff not to mention the difficulty of trying to understand people in masks!

One of the things that we as a deaf community have also struggled with is the telephone consultations from GPs which have taken over the normal way of doing things.

Hopefully the NHS will start catching up on all the other critical care which has had to be postponed in the meantime.

Provided the progress is met with the lockdown timetable then we are going to start putting together a program of events starting sometime in July starting with a celebratory meal somewhere nice, more details will be sent out nearer the time but I for one can't wait to enjoy a good meal and a catch up.

In the meantime keep safe and well and look forward to meeting up soon.



We've all heard this a few times this year haven't we!

Request for help from the Railways

We have recently been contacted by a representative of the company involved in the development of railway stations asking for our help. If you have any thoughts that might be of use I encourage you to contact Martyna directly or alternatively send an email to me and I will forward it to her.

My name is Martyna Szybowicz, I am representing company called Vextrix that is regularly involved in the rail stations improvement projects in the design and project management side. We are based in Manchester, Liverpool and London.

I wanted to contact your community today, to ask if anyone at the society would be interested to answer a couple of questions for us.

We are currently working on the station improvements on the TransPennine Route between Leeds and Manchester on a project known as the TRU – TransPennine Route Upgrades.

As part of the upgrades, our designers will be designing the locations for the induction loops and this is where I was hoping for your input. I'd like to ask the members of your community a couple of questions on the induction loop design as follows:

- * What locations would you find the loops to be the most useful at a train station?
- * Currently, are there any locations that you have experienced an induction loop would be helpful but they never are installed there?
- * What type of problems do you encounter with Induction Loops at train stations?
- * How can these issues be remedied – would you like to suggest anything that is best suited for people with hearing impairments?
- * Is there any other comment, on the induction loops or any other feature of the railway station, that you would like to share?

Answers from the users of induction loops would be very much appreciated and the input into the design works will provide invaluable. We are aiming at improving the accessibility and usability of the railway stations with the input from the user groups to make informed design decisions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with queries on the above.

Thank you.

Martyna Szybowicz BSc MSc GradIOSH IMAPS
Senior CDM Consultant - Principal Designer
mszybowicz@vextrix.com



Alerting Devices

by Kevin Williams

One of the biggest changes to our daily lives over the past year or more is the experience of living in isolation. As a national trend there are more people than ever living on their own and in the case of those with hearing issues the basic things such as fire safety, daily alarms and security are of concern. This is not an exhaustive list of ways to try and address the issues and I would welcome feedback from anyone's experiences of sourcing, using or concerns about the lack of equipment.

Prior to the modern age, people with hearing loss sometimes had to rely on others for their safety and connectivity to the rest of the world. Thankfully, as technology has rapidly evolved, so too have devices that help people with hearing loss live more independent lives.

Today there are assistive listening devices, hearing aids, FM systems, infrared systems, captioning and amplification devices that help people communicate with others, hear the sounds of everyday life and enjoy entertainment when they otherwise would have a difficult time due to hearing loss and hearing impairment.

Alerting devices can help people stay connected and safe every day and in emergency situations. They use one or more of these types of signals:

1. Visual - a flashing light
2. Vibrotactile - a vibrating component
3. Auditory - increased amplification and use of lower frequency sounds

Alarm clocks for the hearing impaired

Hearing a standard alarm clock can be a challenge for people with hearing loss. Specially-designed alarm clocks for people who have hearing loss come in many forms, including those that have built-in strobe lights or bed-shakers and those that have an outlet where you can plug in a vibrating alert, or a lamp to wake you up each morning.



Smoke, fire and carbon monoxide detectors

Some of these devices are sold separately while others are part of a combination fire and carbon monoxide detection system. Many have extra loud alarms as well as flashing strobe lights, depending on your need. There are also bed-vibrating fire alarms that have a component that goes under your pillow or mattress—depending on its strength—and alerts you to a fire by shaking you awake.

There are also alerting devices with technology that detects the pitch of your existing smoke detector and respond with a much louder, lower-pitched sound that is more likely to wake you. Some devices shake you awake while the digital display turns orange and says "FIRE."

We recommend contacting your local Fire Brigade team and asking for a Home Fire

Safety check.

The example information below is from the Cheshire Fire Brigade service.

Smoke alarms for deaf and hard of hearing people

It is vital that people who are deaf or hard of hearing have the right smoke alarms in their home to protect them and give them that valuable time to escape from a house fire.

Conventional smoke alarms work by emitting a loud noise when smoke is detected, providing the vital early warning of fire, and therefore aiding escape. People who are deaf or hard of hearing need additional ways of making them aware the alarm has been activated, including vibrating pads and flashing strobe lights.



Deaf people need to place a vibrating pad under their mattress or pillow at night. If smoke is detected, the alarm will sound and set off the pad to assist in waking them.

Book a home fire safety check

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service does not charge for Home Fire Safety Checks or any of the detection equipment fitted.

During a Home Fire Safety Check we can advise you on planning an escape route, positioning alarms and, of course, ensure that the correct working smoke alarm is fitted. We are here to help make sure your home is as fire safe as possible.

Residents who are deaf or hard of hearing can book a home safety check by texting '**HSA**' and your name and address to **07624 808300**.

Doorbell signallers

There are doorbell signallers which work with or without an existing doorbell to make sure you know when someone is at the door. There are also security signallers that alert you if a door or window is opened in your home. Door signallers can range from a simple flashing strobe light to a system connected to your phone or one with its very own receiver. There are some that you keep in a central location in your home and they alert you, through a message and/or a flashing light when you're receiving a phone call or someone is ringing the doorbell.

Phone signallers

Phone signallers either plug directly into the outlet and phone line or are attached to the side of a phone to pick up the sound directly. However, with the prevalence of cell phones today, there are more unique, discreet and advanced options on the market than ever before.

Newest phone technology

Most recently, tech companies have come up with discreet, modern and even high-style bracelets and smartwatches that alert people when their cell phone is ringing. Even people without hearing loss can benefit from this, such as when your cell phone is on silent or tucked away in a purse or bag, but people with hearing loss can especially benefit since they often don't hear their phones ringing.

Smartwatches can vibrate to alert you to incoming calls.

Baby cry signallers

Regular baby monitors often do not generate enough sound for people with hearing loss to determine if their babies are crying. But manufacturers now make transmitters and receivers specifically meant to detect a baby's crying and transmit it to a central alert system.

Weather alerts

Sometimes, people with hearing loss do not know about a dangerous storm because they cannot hear the rumble of thunder or crack of lightning. Additionally, some people don't watch TV or listen to the radio. In these cases, weather alerts can give warning about impending storms or other disastrous weather situations on the horizon. A weather alert radio can be used by itself or with other alerting accessories, such as strobes or bed-shakers, depending on your needs and preferences.

Other alerting devices

There are some devices that alert you to any noise or movement, depending on what you need them for. Some are centrally located in your home, while others can be worn like a pager. Others will alert you to whatever you program them for, including the phone ringing, the doorbell sounding, a baby's cry or wherever else you have transmitters located in your environment. There are also devices that are specifically for motion detection.

As technology advances and more attention is given to the rising numbers of people living with hearing loss, it's likely that these alerting and signalling devices will greatly advance and include sleeker or artistically inspired options that also have high function and accuracy.

Ask a hearing healthcare professional in your area for assistance finding alerting devices that will meet your needs. Link below has many examples of helpful devices:

Connevans <https://www.connevans.co.uk/catalogue/122/Alerting-Devices>

Something completely different!

by Kevin Williams

How to impress your friends and family!

Anyone who knows me can testify to the fact that I can get too focussed on things at times. I was recently looking for ideas for articles for Resound on the internet and mis-typed a word for something and was presented with a page telling me all about Vestigiality.

The more crossword orientated amongst you would no doubt be able to tell me all about this word in an instant, I however was not familiar so I looked up the definition.

'Vestigiality is the retention during the process of evolution of genetically determined structures or attributes that have lost some or all of the ancestral function in a given species. Assessment of the vestigiality must generally rely on comparison with homologous features in related species'.

There were examples of this that occur in Humans such as the Appendix, the Coccyx etc. interesting but not relevant to a hearing charity however on further investigation I came across this which would make a memorable party trick, and its to do with the ears and it concerns the Auricular Muscles which we've all got!

The auricular, or extrinsic, muscles of the human ear include the anterior auricular muscle, the superior auricular muscle, and the posterior auricular muscle.

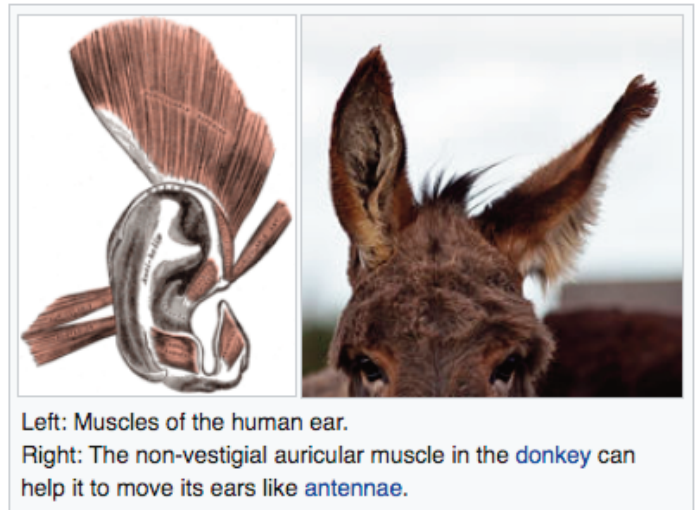
Together, they control the pinna, or the visible part of the ear.

In many mammals, ear movements produced by the auricular muscles play a role in sound localization and the expression of emotion, but in humans, the muscles are considered nonfunctional.

Darwin proposed that humans effectively capture sounds by positioning the head to receive them, thereby compensating for the loss of or eliminating the need for the auricular muscles.

Through repeated effort, however, humans can recover some ability to wiggle their ears!

I wait with bated breath for those of you with video evidence to post on our Facebook page!!



Latest technology updates

The latest recipients of the N7 processor update are John Newton and Alan Corcoran, if you've had one then I would welcome any feedback you can supply on your experiences.

In common with a lot of people who get the new upgrades the immediate effect is not always noticeable, the quality of the sound of course is better but to different degrees with each person.

Norah has said that there were certainly improvements in her ability to hear women better although men are still a problem.

Not sure if that was to do with the implant or Men in general ;)



John was so impressed with the bag that he got with his implant that he sent me a photo, I was equally impressed and assume there must be oodles of stuff in there, gadgets, spares and manuals.

From past experience with equipment I have received there is usually a generous supply of add-on bits all packaged up nicely but I think that sometimes although the staff at the hospital do a sterling job of going through some of the additional bits at the time of the switch on etc. that sometimes there's just too much to take in at one go.

If anyone thinks that it might be an idea to run a session for people who've had an upgrade and go through the practical side of using the extra equipment and trying out the setting up of it as well as explaining where best to use it, then let me know and we can see about setting up a session as soon as we get the all clear from the pandemic.

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