



Dear all,

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Happy New Year. I'm writing this looking out onto snowy roof tops. So far we haven't had to cancel any sessions but please don't take unnecessary risks and, if you can't safely get to a session or to a home visit, please call the office and we will make other arrangements. At least this year the cold has come after Christmas so we know the days are getting longer, spring isn't far off and we won't have to wait too long for warmer weather. I have had an iris blooming in my garden since December and it is poking out through a snow drift now, looking a bit chilly, but giving me hope that better weather isn't far away.

As Alan our Chairman outlined in the last newsletter, the Trustees are reviewing the CAMTAD name as part of a revision of our constitution. We will be consulting widely on this and no decision has been taken. We want to hear your views and you will shortly be getting a letter asking you what you think. Please take the time to reply as your views will count. The decision on this will not be taken until the AGM in

June so there is time to discuss this fully before then. Whatever we call ourselves, the values that we put at the heart of CAMTAD will remain the same.

We are getting replies to the service user survey which show a very high level of satisfaction with the service that is provided at the hearing help sessions. I knew that this was the case but it is very helpful to have the paperwork to back this up. I am particularly pleased that the statement "Having my hearing aid maintained by CAMTAD helps me to enjoy life more" gets a resounding affirmative response "Strongly Agree". It shows how a good regime for managing hearing aids means much more than just the technical aspect of hearing better. I will tell you more about the survey results as we get more responses in. Thank you to the receptionists who are distributing the forms.

Volunteers are encountering problems where Specsavers

has not issued a brown book so there is no record to which we can refer for servicing. This is an issue that I am taking up with CAHS.

The new body which will run our NHS the Clinical Commissioning Group has now been formed. This will cover an even bigger area than the former PCT and will include Peterborough, parts of Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. However there are 8 local commissioning groups that are represented within the big umbrella body, which have a say in how things are to be run. The chosen priorities for our region are - care of the elderly, end of life care and tackling coronary heart disease.

I attended a UK Council on Deafness conference which was considering the impact of health reforms for people with hearing loss and Deafness. Some interesting and depressing statistics emerged largely from an analysis of GP

patient surveys. Amongst the patient group with severe loss 83% have at least one other long term health condition and 33% had at least two other conditions. One of the problems is that the other conditions which have life threatening consequences such as a high blood pressure, will take priority in terms of treatment, and the potential link with hearing loss is overlooked. There was a whole-hearted agreement that getting more of the group with unmanaged hearing loss into the audiology pathway would have a significant effect on reducing the impact of other health problems. The task on a

national scale is to get the new commissioning groups to recognise the importance of tackling hearing loss.

But on a more cheerful note I had very rewarding feedback from a new hearing aid user who had heard one of the talks we are giving in conjunction with Camsight. She told me that she knew she had a bit of hearing loss but was a bit vain and didn't want to use a hearing aid. But after the talk, she went back to her GP and got a very swift referral to audiology. She is now fitted with an aid and open fits and was astonished by how much difference it made to

her. So there is someone who has embraced her hearing aid and is enjoying life, no longer one of the people who takes 10 years to get help.

And finally we had the sad news just before Christmas that Cornie Thorne had passed away. Many of you will remember him as a long serving CAMTAD volunteer. I attended the funeral on behalf of CAMTAD, which was very well attended.

Frances

Cornie Thorne

We were all very sad to hear of the death of Cornie Thorne in December. Cornie was a loyal and long-serving volunteer, having been with CAMTAD since 1998, and will be remembered by many of you. Fellow

volunteers have described him as someone with impeccable manners, who made all his clients feel special, and had great enthusiasm for his work.

He had many other activities and interests, and some of you

may also remember his appearance in the Cambridge Evening News as part of a World War II living history exhibition in 2009.

We send our deepest sympathy to his family and friends.

Retirements

We are sorry to say goodbye to some of our long-standing volunteers who are leaving CAMTAD. John Clark has retired after more than 20 years as re-

ceptionist at Sawston, and Barbara and Chris Seekings, who are stalwarts of the Ely Hearing Help Sessions, are retiring in March.

They will all be missed, and their hard work and contribution to CAMTAD have been much valued. Our best wishes to all of them for a happy retirement.

Sickness and absence

A couple of reminders for volunteers: if you are unlucky enough to succumb to one of the nasty viruses that are around at this time of year,

such as flu or Norovirus, please stay away from the hearing help sessions until you are fully recovered. Obviously hand hygiene at the sessions is also extra important.

If you are going to be away, either due to sickness or holiday, please phone the office so that we can tell Fran or Jane, and will know not to contact you for home visits (where relevant).

Access to healthcare report

Action on Hearing Loss have produced a report into the experiences of people with hearing loss when accessing health care. The results show that people with hearing loss or deafness (whether profound or mild) have a degree of difficulty, from the start when the appointment has to be made

through to getting the right medicine for a diagnosis they understand. Practice nurses were rated significantly higher than GPs in their ability to communicate clearly. 28% of the respondents were unclear about a diagnosis after a consultation and the most common reason for not understanding

was the GP not facing the patient. The recommendation is that all practice staff should have deaf awareness training and know how to access good communication support for people. Communication needs to be put at the heart of the system.

Lip reading classes

Addenbrooke's Audiology Department publishes a list of lip reading classes available in the area, and below are the brief details for Cambridgeshire. The classes are not run by Addenbrooke's themselves, so for more information such as ability range, course fees and starting dates, please get in touch with the individual contacts listed.

Mondays

Addenbrooke's Hospital
10.30-1.30 and 13.30-15.30

Contact: Joy Badcock/
Jan Harmer, 01223 217797

March Youth and Community
Centre, Station Rd, March
10.00-12.00
Contact Jenny Holding, 01354
740894

Tuesdays

Trinity Methodist Church, Wis-
bech

10.00-12.00

Contact Jenny Holding, 01354
740894

Wednesdays

Self-help group:
Mayfield School, Warwick Rd,
Cambridge

Contact Astrid Whiskin,
01223 703530

Huntingdon Library

14.00-16.00

Contact Jenny Holding, 01354
740894

Fridays

Chatteris, Quaker Way (please
phone to confirm location)

10.00-12.00

Jenny Holding, 01354 740894



Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults

c/o HearingLINK, 27-28 The Waterfront
Eastbourne East Sussex BN23 5UZ
atla@lipreading.org.uk
www.lipreading.org.uk

Cambridge - Suffolk - East Anglia

**ATLA has received a bequest from the estate
of the Lady Lisette Lincoln of Bury St Edmunds**

**This is to be used for the training of Lipreading Teachers
in the Cambridge, Suffolk, East Anglia area**

Lady Lisette did not attend a lipreading class herself but had a friend who taught lipreading. Seeing how much her friend had improved the lives of those attending the classes, Lady Lisette left a bequest in her will. She wanted to make sure there would be a continuation of lipreading teachers in this area

If you would like to train – or know anyone else who would, please pass this information on to them.

ATLA is holding money to train **2** people

For more information please contact:

ATLA Treasurer Janet Thomas, carinya@eastc.fslife.co.uk

or ATLA Secretary Mary Bayntun, mary@mbayntun.wanadoo.co.uk

Returns forms

Many thanks to all the volunteers who have been sending in their returns forms for home/residential home visits. Just a reminder to send these in regularly please; we send them off to the NHS, and also use them

to compile our own quarterly returns figures. As it's getting close to the end of the financial year, I'd be grateful if you could send in any outstanding returns as soon as possible, so that I can collate the figures up to the end

of March for the Annual Report. You will also need to put in Expenses claims for the year ending March 2013 as soon as possible after the end of the month. Many thanks,
Andrea

Keeping warm and well in Winter



Cambridgeshire County Council have issued some advice on keeping warm in winter, which might be helpful, particularly for passing on to any vulnerable people you may know:

1. Heat your home well. By setting your heating to the right temperature, 21c during the day and 18c at night, you can keep your home warm and your bills as low as possible.

2. Get financial support. There is extra funding available to make sure you can keep your house warm during winter.

3. Eat well. Food is a vital source of energy, which helps to keep your body warm.

4. Get a flu jab. You can get a free jab from your GP to protect against seasonal flu if you are over 65, have a long-term health condition or are pregnant.

5. Look after yourself and check on neighbours or relatives to make sure they are safe, warm and well. Keeping active is important for your health. But if you do go out in cold weather it is important that you wear extra clothes to make sure that you wrapped up warmly. During very cold and icy weather conditions it is safer for older people, very young children and

anyone with health problems to avoid going out.

6. Have your heating and cooking appliances checked. Carbon monoxide is a killer. Make sure that flues and chimneys are swept and checked for blockages and ventilation points are not blocked. If not connected to gas or electricity mains, and use heating oil, LPG or wood products as the main heating source, make sure that you have a sufficient supply to avoid running out in winter.

To find out more about extra services such as grants, shopping services, smart energy information and more, contact Care network on 01223 714452 or email warm-homes@carenetwork.org.uk

Music and Silence

Some of you might have heard an interesting programme on Radio 4 just before Christmas (part of the series 'It's My Story'), presented by the composer Michael Berkeley, who two years ago suffered a catastrophic loss of hearing triggered by an ordinary cold virus.

The programme followed his story over the course of a year, as he came to terms with his partial deafness and talked to other musicians who had suf-

fered similar loss. He described his frustration at trying to assess the sound balance at a performance of his own organ concerto at the previous year's Proms, and demonstrated at the piano how sounds were distorted for him. However, during the course of making the programme, he found that his brain started to fill in the gaps, and he began to enjoy listening to music again. This was explained by a specialist at the University

College London Ear Institute, who described how the connections between the ear and the brain can, in certain cases, ultimately help to compensate for this type of hearing loss.

Unfortunately the programme is not available on iPlayer, but some background information is available at www.michaelberkeley.co.uk/ and www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01p41h6

In the News

Grown hearing hairs 'beat' deafness in mice

Tiny hairs in the ear which detect sounds have been regenerated to reverse deafness for the first time, say US researchers in the journal *Neuron*.

An injection of a drug led to the creation of new hairs in tests on mice.

Normal hearing was not restored, rather the mice went from hearing nothing to detecting sounds such as a door slamming or traffic.

Experts said it was "tremendously exciting" but warned treating humans was still a distant prospect.

To hear anything sound waves have to be converted into electrical signals which the brain will understand. The first step in the process takes place deep inside the inner ear where vibrations move tiny hairs and the movement creates an electrical signal.

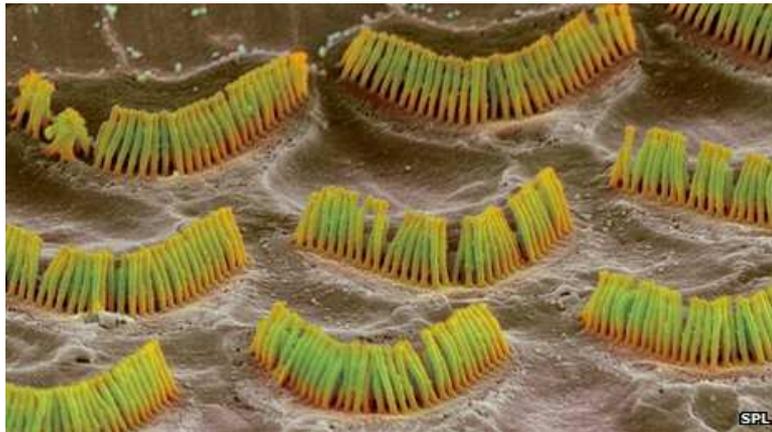
Most hearing problems are as a result of damage to these hairs.

The study, by Massachusetts Eye and Ear and Harvard Medical School, looked at mice which were completely deaf and had virtually no hairs remaining in their ears.

A drug was used to target cells which normally support the individual hairs. It changed the destiny of the cells, by altering which genes were being used in the cells, to transform them into hair cells.

One of the researchers, Dr Albert Edge, said: "It hasn't been possible to regenerate hair cells in adult mammals before, this is very exciting. It shows for the first time that it's possible."

Brain scans showed that some sounds could be heard.



Rows of tiny hairs in the ear detect sound

Dr Edge added: "There was a slight improvement, but not a huge improvement.

"They can detect a loud noise in a low frequency, something like a door slamming or traffic - but this is definitely not normal hearing."

Similar advances were made with stem cells in 2012. In that study, the connections between the hairs and the brain were broken and stem cells were used to create new nerves. Rebuilding the hairs themselves is a far greater challenge.

Prof Dave Moore, the director of the Institute of Hearing Research in Nottingham, said the workings of the ear were incredibly precise and constantly vibrating, meaning rebuilding hairs was like trying to demolish and then rebuild a 15-storey building in the middle of a city, without damaging any of the surrounding buildings, all in the middle of an earthquake.

He said: "It's a really promising development, but it is one which needs to be treated with considerable caution in terms of a human therapy.

"There's been a lot of false starts - hair cell regeneration was originally demonstrated in

the 1980s and everyone thought it would just be a matter of years."

He said it was an exciting first step, but there was still a huge challenge ahead to develop a useable treatment.

Dr Ralph Holme, head of biomedical research at the charity Action on Hearing Loss, said: "The idea that a drug could be used to 'trick' the cochlea into producing new hair cells to improve hearing is tremendously exciting and offers real hope to the millions of people seeking a cure for their hearing loss.

"But, it is important to remember that this research is still at a very early stage and that only a partial recovery in hearing was observed.

"It will be important to test whether the approach will be useful in treating hearing loss that has been present for a long time."

Article by James Gallagher, Health and science reporter, BBC News.

Reproduced from BBC News Website, 10th Jan 2013.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-20960418>

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 22nd February 2013	Equipment Information Session at Brampton Hearing Help Session
Thursday 28th February 2013	Training for new volunteers starts 9.30-12.30 at CDA (next door to CAMTAD), 8 Romsey Terrace
Thursday 21st March 2013	Equipment Demonstration 10.00am – 12.30pm Drop-in Scotsdales Garden Centre, 120 Cambridge Road, Great Shelford, CB22 5JT
Tuesday 28th May 2013	Equipment Information Session at Ely Methodist Church Hearing Help Session
Tuesday 4th June 2013	CAMTAD AGM Abbey Meadows Community Wing, Galdfrid Road, Cambridge, CB5 8ND Refreshments available from 6.00pm. Formal meeting at 7.00pm
26th September 2013	Equipment Demonstration The Priory Centre, St Neots
29th November 2013	Equipment demonstration Huntingdon Community Church, Huntingdon
Tuesday 1st October 2013	Equipment Information Session at Buchan Street Hearing Help Session

Community Navigators

Routes to activities and services



Care network are looking for Community Navigators.

Care Network Cambridgeshire is looking for volunteers to help older people find their way to activities and services which they would enjoy or find useful. These people will be called Community Navigators who will provide information on local services to the local community.

This could be pointing people in the direction of a club or activity group, helping them access local transport like a community car scheme, or giving them information on benefits, modifications to their home, or help at home. Whatever the query, the project aims to give all older people a 'Community Navigator' local to them who can help them find what they want, when they need it.

Care network will provide free training and on-going support to help you build up the skills, knowledge, and confidence to carry out the role.

Being a Community Navigator only takes a few hours a month, and compliments any involvement you may already have in your local community. It's an opportunity to be part of something that can make a real difference to people's lives, and it should be interesting and fun too!

Contact the community navigator team now on 01954 212100 for more information. Alternatively you can email us at community.navigators@care-network.org.uk

Funded by  Cambridgeshire County Council