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## *Dear All*

Happy New Year to you all. Yet again we are looking at a busy calendar for 2016.

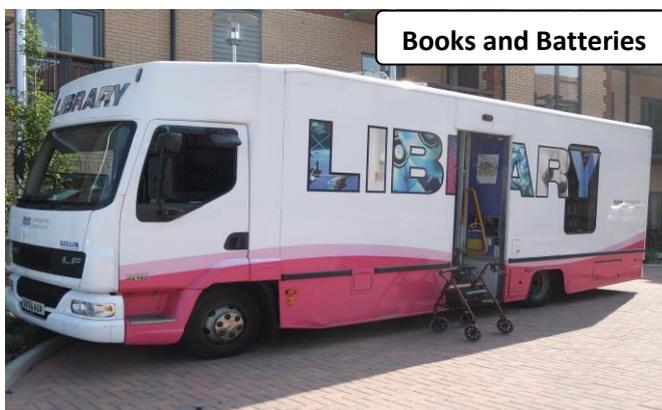
To continue the theme of money, our New Year started with a wonderful surprise, a cheque for £2,500 from the Chivers Trust. We also have donations from the Cambridge Castle Townswomen's Guild, who named us charity of the year and raised £210. The Thomas Galon Charity in Swavesey gave £109, St James Church in Cherry Hinton raised £160, Brampton Parish Council have given a grant of £200 and the Nicholas Swallow Trust donated £100. There were also generous gifts from individuals. We are very grateful to all those who are supporting us through these more stringent financial times.

This year sees the launch of our work in partnership with the County Council mobile library. The library service covers the whole county with 4 vans and has short stops in many more places than we attend. The vans now carry a small stock of batteries and we hope that people in villages that are difficult to reach will be able to get their batteries more conveniently. The drivers have a flow chart of questions to ask, and they carry Cambridgeshire Hearing Help leaflets, so people are directed towards our services for retubing in a timely way.

You can now tell our service users that they may be able to get batteries close to home.



...and Batteries





Some volunteers have taken stock of their commitments at New Year and have decided to follow other paths, so we are saying goodbye to Margaret Forster, Helen Ballantyne, Crawford Smith and Nigel May. Thanks to all of them for their hard work over the years and best of luck for the future.

The Best Practice Advisory Group has been considering how we can help Care Homes to identify people's hearing aids as, once out of the ear, there is little to tell one from the other to the untrained eye. We undertook a trial of stickers in the shape of initials and numbers and found that the metallic stickers from Hobby Craft worked well and stayed on without difficulty for at least 3 months. A single sheet with multiple letters costs little more than £1 so we will stock these and sell them on to Care Homes. It is a small intervention but it may save a lot of trouble for the residents.

Managing ear wax is a continuing source of frustration to our service users and we have been investigating resources for this in the County. A visit to one of our hearing help sessions with a whistling hearing aid may sometimes be the first time a service user becomes aware that wax could be a problem. As we cannot investigate in the ear, our role is to advise a visit to GPs' practice nurse for further investigation. However we have come across occasions where GPs surgeries do not always make appropriate referrals onwards where needed, so we hope that having the information about resources should help service users to push for what they need. The information and policy is added to the newsletter.



Anglia Ruskin University has again invited volunteers to join the audiology students in an informal seminar to talk about the experience of using audiology services from the patient viewpoint. This has been popular with volunteers as it is an opportunity to help students understand the process from the "other side". This is happening in March so if you would like to join in please contact the office as soon as possible.

Finally some good news about hearing aid provision. In the face of evidence of the benefits of fitting hearing aids early, South Staffordshire have dropped rationing of hearing aids for those with a mild loss. The Commissioning Framework is in the pipeline which should help to get NHS commissioning groups to work within the same parameters. However there will be no screening for hearing loss in the foreseeable future.

## *Frances*

### *'Golden Lobe' success for Audiologist*

There were celebrations at Addenbrooke's after David Baguley, Director of Audiology, was awarded the 'Golden Lobe' for Outstanding Services to Audiology.

"I am delighted to have been given this prestigious award," he said. "I have outstanding colleagues at Cambridge University Hospitals and I thank them for their support."



## *Audiology News*

Addenbrookes have been distributing mercury free batteries. While this is great for the environment it is causing a few issues, predominantly with Phonak aids and especially when using FM systems (with ear level receivers) and wireless streaming. Some users are reporting very short battery life, intermittency, false battery warning alerts and spontaneous restarts. Investigations have shown that the problem is with the Zenipower batteries rather than the hearing aid.

Addenbrookes are recommending that users remove the sticker at least 2 minutes (preferably 5 minutes) before using. There is evidence that mercury free batteries take longer to activate (air needs to get into the battery when the sticker is removed) and the battery life can be 10% shorter than a mercury containing battery so this is now even more important. Batteries have been ordered from a different manufacturer to see if this solves the problem.

CHH is supplied by Specsavers with Rayovac batteries which are not free of mercury but do not have the same problems. It is still a good idea to wait a few minutes after removing the sticker before putting in the battery, to lengthen its life.

## *Recycling Hearing Aids*

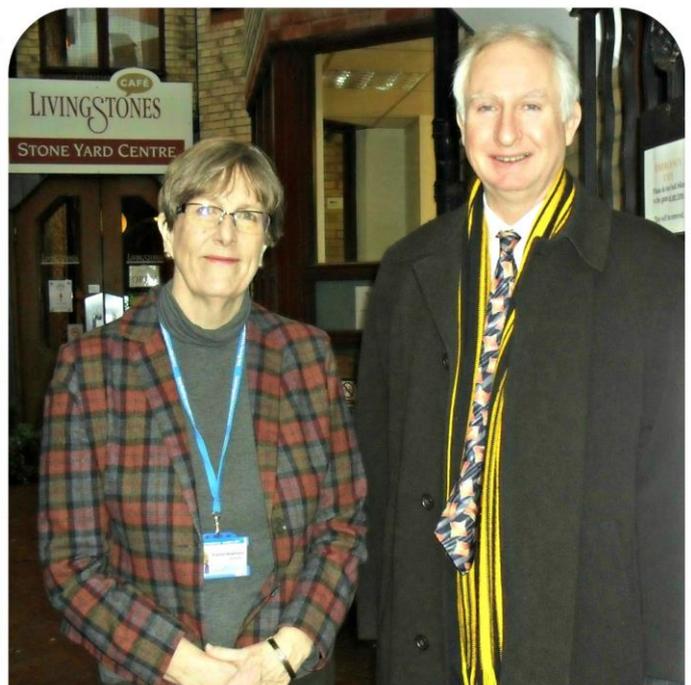
Hearing aids are almost unobtainable in some parts of the world. Derek Rutter from the March Lions Club <http://www.marchlions.org.uk/> also Multiple District (British Isles and Ireland) Speech and Hearing Officer has written to tell us that Lions Clubs International, in partnership with the Starkey Hearing Trust, recycle about 10,000 unwanted hearing aids.

They are refurbished in the UK and are sent out via missionaries to all parts of the world where the population cannot afford to purchase them, and distributed to those most in need.

Contact Derek [rutter@rutter.f9.co.uk](mailto:rutter@rutter.f9.co.uk) if you want to know more on or we can give you his address.

Addenbrooke's Hospital also has a hearing aid recycling programme so you can be sure that these precious pieces of machinery are not wasted.

*Local MP, David Zeichner* visiting our St Andrew Street, Cambridge Session and meeting our volunteers. David comments, "Cambridge residents with hearing loss tell me that a hearing aid is their lifeline".



## *Managing Ear Wax - Policy and Information 2015*

Ear Wax is a natural substance produced by our bodies to keep ears conditioned and prevent infections. It should come out of the ear naturally and not cause a problem. However it can build up and block the ear, causing hearing loss. Wearing a hearing aid can sometimes stop wax migrating out of the ear leading to a build-up of wax in the ear canal. This may cause the hearing aid to whistle and not function correctly.

Some people need to have their ears regularly cleared of wax. If a service user asks us about wax removal or we become aware this might be a problem, we will always recommend that they visit the practice nurse at their GP surgery to find out the best way to do this. We do not advise people ourselves on what to do, as we do not know the condition of the ear, and some home treatments may be harmful if, for example, they have a perforated ear drum or infection.

We should be advising all service users to have their ears checked for wax before attending a new assessment or review of their hearing with the audiologists. NHS Audiologists are not qualified to remove wax, so patients will have a wasted appointment if they have not had wax removed from their ears before attending a review.

There is more information about treatments on the NHS Choices website but here is a summary of what is currently available -

Ear drops which soften ear wax and encourage it naturally to be released. Olive oil is available from pharmacies and is often recommended by healthcare professionals where the ear is in good condition. This method is not suitable for people with any problems with the ear canal or ear drums (and can be a bit messy, especially for hearing aid users, as it can make the aid difficult to use whilst the substance is in the ear canal).

Ear irrigation is a process that can be done at the local GP surgery where oil in the ear is not effective. This is the modern alternative to syringing and involves using a pressurised flow of warm water to remove the wax. Again this is not suitable for anyone with a perforated ear drum or infection in the ear. It is not suitable where there is hearing in only one ear as there is a small risk of it causing hearing loss. Often GP surgeries recommend using olive oil for a few weeks prior to ear irrigation as this makes the wax easier to remove by irrigation. Some GP surgeries are reluctant to offer this service because of the risk.

Micro-suction can only be administered by ENT specialists. This process is basically a vacuuming of the ear canal and is the only procedure available to people with perforated ear drums. Unfortunately there are limited resources available for this and it can involve a long wait for an appointment.

There are some home remedies we would definitely not recommend: using a cotton bud which may result in wax being pushed further into the ear and damage to the ear canal and/or infection; there are some home use versions of micro-suction available which could also result in damage to the ear; and ear candling is an alternative therapy that has no known benefit but could cause damage.

Wax management is the responsibility of the GPs. We are aware that some patients have been left in limbo by surgeries which do not offer ear irrigation, and they have the right to insist on a specialist service.

There are now specialist ENT services locally at Nuffield Health Centre, Sawston Medical Centre, Princess of Wales Hospital, and Doddington Hospital and North Cambs offer the service in Isle of Ely and Wisbech. We have yet to be informed of the Hunts area services.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Earwax/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

<http://cks.nice.org.uk/earwax>

<http://www.cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk/search.htm>

***Meet the Team*** - We are pleased to introduce you to one of our volunteers. In this issue we would like to present to you Roger Hill.

**What is your work for CHH?**

I work as a volunteer cleaning and re-tubing hearing aids but also offering advice to those who, like me, wear hearing aids and need some reassurance and help about overcoming some of the challenges. I try and do about one session a week to ensure I don't forget how to do the re-tubing! I am also a Trustee of CHH. I was asked a few years ago if I would like to put some of my past business knowledge to use in helping to manage the charity and agreed to allow my name to be put forwards for election. Our main job is to ensure that we follow all the rules of the Charities Commission, maintain a high quality of service to our users and keep the charity financially solvent – a challenge in these difficult economic times.

**Why did you choose to work for this charity?**

My family had a history of age related hearing loss so when in my 50s I started mishearing words in meetings and my teenage children got bored of repeating things. I decided to do something about it, initially by going to a lip-reading class, but eventually finished up with hearing aids. At one of the lip-reading classes, I said that I was thinking of slowing down from full time work as I had reached retirement age, and they said why not become a CAMTAD volunteer? I remembered that my mother and grandmother had worn hearing aids but had had terrible trouble in getting anyone to service them, which meant they eventually spent long periods in a drawer rather than in their ears! So I decided to volunteer, initially knowing very little about what it would involve.

**Who would you most like to meet and why?**

The concert pianist Alfred Brendel to understand how he came to terms with having to give up his career as a result of suffering from arthritis in his fingers.

**What makes you cross?** Dishonest politicians!

**What makes you happy?** Seeing the smile on someone's face when they can hear again after I have cleaned and re-tubed a hearing aid, and it fits properly.

**If you had supernatural powers what would you change in the world?**

Unify religious beliefs to help reduce conflict and war.

**What message would you like to leave to the next generation?**

Be optimistic in everything you do.



# Huntingdon Grafham Water Lions Club

## - Annual Safari Walk

This is the 37<sup>th</sup> year Huntingdon Grafham Water Lions Club will be holding their Annual Safari Sponsored Walk around Grafham Water. This year the walk will be held on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2016. In the past 36 years the walk has raised over £200K, benefiting many local charities and worthy causes.

If you would like to take part in this year's walk, promoting Cambridgeshire Hearing Help, please contact Norman Hardy to let him know of your interest and for sponsorship forms.  
 Norman: 01480 860061 [norman@normanaldridge.plus.com](mailto:norman@normanaldridge.plus.com)



### Dates for your diary

<b>29<sup>th</sup> February 2016, 10.30am – 12noon</b>	Equipment Demo Talk by Emma Marriott from Action On Hearing Loss. Venue: CDA, Deaf Centre, 8 Romsey Terrace, Cambridge. CB1 3NH. All are welcome, but <b>You must book to attend.</b>
<b>11<sup>th</sup> March 2016, 10am – 12noon</b>	Demo of Hearing Help Equipment, including Action on Hearing Loss stall, at Scotsdale's Garden Centre, 120 Cambridge Road. Great Shelford. CB22 5JT.
<b>9<sup>th</sup> March 2016, am</b>	Anglia Ruskin informal Seminar on using audiology services from the patient viewpoint – Contact the office to book and for more information.
<b>Last Friday of every month, 10am – 12noon</b>	Display of Hearing Help Equipment and opportunity to discuss your hearing needs with a trained volunteer at St Andrew's Street Baptist Church, Cambridge. CB2 3AR

*Chair: Ruth Kern 01954 202093 Vice Chair: Roger Hill 01353 740021*

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### Booking Form for Equipment Demo Talk on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Name.....

Contact No. ....

**Please book me in**

Detach and return booking slip to the office to reserve a place