MoD issue smart ear plugs to all new troops

By Gemma Davidson

BRITISH troops getting ready to deploy to Afghanistan are being issued with electronic sound-cancelling ear plugs designed to let them hear what they need to - orders, conversations, enemy footfalls - but prevent hearing damage caused by explosions, gunfire and so on, it has been revealed.

News of the digi-plugs comes courtesy of the Times, reporting from the ranks of 19 Light Brigade as it prepares to head out to Helmand Province later this year.

The Times reporter notes that the heavy-duty fighting in Afghanistan - intense firefighting, with much use of heavy weapons, airstrikes, artillery and so forth being routine - has taken its toll on British troops’ hearing, with many having to be taken off combat status as a result.

Normal earplugs or ear defenders have long been issued, but tend not to be worn as they prevent soldiers hearing orders, radio calls or other necessary sounds.

The MoD says it has bought 10,000 sets and intends that units headed into combat in Afghanistan - starting with 19 Light this year - will be routinely equipped with them.

The Telegraph’s headline writers believe that the PIHP plugs are “individually moulded” for better ear protection.

According to an MoD statement:

“The TTS will compress any loud external noises and feed them back to the wearer’s ears at a safe level thereby providing hearing protection and situational awareness. Speech is passed to the radio via the TTS ensuring the soldier remains in communication with his team.”

The system is called Personalised Interfaced Hearing Protection (PIHP), and apparently the plugs are “individually moulded” for better ear protection.

All troops deployed to Afghanistan will now receive protectors

PRINCE OF HEARTS: Prince Harry, the Royal Patron of the charity WellChild, plays around with children at the 2008 WellChild Awards ceremony, which have now been launched for the 5th year. The awards recognise the bravery of sick children from all over the UK, and the dedication of their families, doctors, support workers and teachers. Nominations for the 2009 WellChild Awards are now being taken, so if you know a child, family, medical worker or teacher who deserves some recognition, turn to page 5 to find out more details.

Continued on page 4
Ear Foundation celebrates 20th birthday with a party

By Gemma Davidson

A CHARITY which pioneered the first multi-channel cochlear implants for children celebrated its 20th birthday on 1 March.

The Ear Foundation funded the first implants in 1989 with a great deal of support from the local community. Since then, the majority of profoundly deaf children in the UK now have cochlear implants and are able to hear.

The implants have transformed the opportunities available to these children and for the increasing numbers of deaf adult who are choosing to have implants. Many implanted children and adults attended the birthday party at the charity’s Lenton Headquarters.

The Lord Mayor of Nottingham, Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan was there to greet them, as well as local favourite Colin Wells, star of Hollyoaks.

Those in attendance got the chance to learn about internationally-renowned Ear Foundation, the technology which allows implants to be carried out, and how this had changed over the last two decades.

The party was the start of a month of celebrations, with family walks (Hear, Talk and Walk) taking place around the country, and the first ever concert for deaf and hearing people taking place at the Djanogly Centre in Nottingham University on 24 March.

An Ear Foundation spokesman told Hearing Times: “The amazing opportunities offered by cochlear implants for deaf children and adults will be celebrated throughout the month, culminating in a family weekend at Center Parcs.”

Marian Batt, mother of Michael, the boy who received the first implant in 1989, said ‘The change in 20 years is unbelievable. We all had to fight for implantation to be available and The Ear Foundation funded the operations then. Now the amazing opportunities Michael has are open to all deaf children and their families.’

For information on events, call Sue Archbold or Jo Collinson on 01159 42159 42 1985. For information on cochlear implants, visit www.earfoundation.org.uk.

Celebrities out in force for charities

WELCOME to another exciting edition of Hearing Times!

February has been a very busy month, what with National Tinnitus Week and plenty of charities finding something to celebrate.

It is nice to see our sports teams doing so well in the run up to the Deaflympics in Taiwan this September, and bringing in medals by the week it would seem! Turn to the back pages to see how the athletics team are doing in local events. One name to keep an eye on is Lauren Peffers: a very promising young runner who is almost guaranteed to bring home another great haul of medals this year. It is only March and she has already smashed a European indoor record. Well done Lauren!

It is also nice to see so many celebrities doing their bit for deaf and hard of hearing charities this month, from Peter Stringfellow supporting the National Tinnitus Week (Peter has suffered from tinnitus since 1983) and the Dancing on Ice stars lending a hand to the deafblind charity, Sense. Boxing hero Ricky Hatton is also throwing his weight behind the RNID Great North Run this year, turn to page 4 to find our how you can get involved and help raise some money for the charity, as well as getting fit at the same time!

As always, we are keen to involve as much fresh talent as possible in Hearing Times. If you would like to write a story for us, submit photographs from an event you have been to, or just send us an idea for an article, please do email us at editorial@hearingtimes.co.uk for more information.

Next month Hearing Times will be attending the annual American Academy of Audiology convention in Texas, USA, so we will be bringing you all the news from over the pond, as well as letting you know of any exciting new products we come across!

See you next month! Gemma (Editor)
Hearing implants in both ears are now available for profoundly deaf children in Scotland for the first time.

Until now, children and adults with severe to profound deafness have been offered one cochlear implant to maximise their hearing ability.

New policy guidance for Scotland’s health boards recommends double hearing implants be offered to all severely to profoundly deaf children who are not adequately helped by acoustic hearing aids. Double implants will also be offered to severely to profoundly deaf adults who are also blind or have other disabilities that increase their reliance upon their hearing.

Scottish Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon said: “Having met with a number of parents of deaf children, I’m very aware of how much they value the National Cochlear Implantation Service.

“Being able to offer hearing implants in both ears from now on will make an enormous difference to the lives of severely deaf people in Scotland. “This is particularly true for deaf children, who evidence shows will get the greatest benefit from the new double implants. This opens up a whole new world for them,” she added.

The Health Secretary gave a commitment in September 2008 that the NHS in Scotland would review its guidance and make any necessary changes when the latest NICE technology appraisal on bilateral implants was complete.

Double implants will now be offered to all deaf people who meet the clinical criteria – children and adults – at an estimated cost of around £750,000 per year.

Chris Ratcliffe, director of the National Deaf Children’s Society Scotland, said: ‘We are delighted that following the NICE announcement in England and Wales, the Scottish Government is making good on a promise made to us in September to offer the same provision of bilateral cochlear implants on the NHS for deaf children in Scotland. This move brings Scotland in line with many other European countries.

“NDCS Scotland is very pleased with this announcement, the latest in a programme of exciting developments in paediatric audiology modernisation in Scotland, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Scottish Government to deliver an audiology service which is fit for every deaf child,” Ratcliffe added.

People who have previously been considered under the old guidance will also now have the right to be assessed again under the new rules, and if they meet the clinical criteria, they too will be able to receive a second implant.

The new policy will be implemented with immediate effect for those people who meet the criteria and are currently waiting for implantation. Around 32 children each year need cochlear implantation and from now on all will be offered bilateral implants.

Ear protectors for all school music teachers, research says

SCHOOL music teachers have been warned to wear earmuffs or stand behind noise screens to protect their hearing from noisy beginners.

The most potentially deafening instrument is the cornet, with just one honk being enough to cause permanent ear damage.

And standing in the direct fire of instruments such as the flute, oboe and saxophone can become risky after just 15 minutes, research suggests.

Standing next to a school band is even more dangerous, the Health and Safety Executive warns.

‘Sounds peaking above 140dB are liable to cause immediate and lasting damage rather than accumulating over time,’ the HSE warns.

‘Schools peaking above 140dB are liable to cause immediate and lasting damage rather than accumulating over time,’ the HSE warns.

‘It is therefore crucial that a thorough noise control strategy is in place before any exposure to loud noise might occur.’

To avoid overexposure, teachers can stand behind screens, ensure they do not stand in the line of fire of an instrument or, as a last resort, wear ear protectors.

If this is not enough, consider the use of acoustic screens, they must be careful not to place them so that the sound reverberates back to the child, putting them in added danger.

The advice is aimed at protecting workers. But the HSE says: “Consider the use of hearing protection for both teachers and students to protect hearing during “loud” lessons.”

A sound idea for children overseas

SPECSAVERS hearing centres have announced a new fundraising partnership with UK charity Sound Seekers.

More than 300 stores will host fundraising activities and collect unwanted hearing aids for the charity. Sound Seekers will recycle the collected aids, taking them abroad to help improve the lives of deaf children in developing countries.

Richard Holmes, marketing director of Specsavers says: ‘Sound Seekers provides essential support for children in countries where audiology services are scarce. Specsavers stores offer an ideal platform from which to request recycled hearing aids and host fundraising activities for the charity. We are delighted we can offer this level of support to such a worthwhile cause.

“The partnership follows the success of a similar scheme already in place with UK charity Vision Aid Overseas (VAO). Since 2003 a quarter of a million glasses have been collected and recycled by Specsavers optical stores for VAO for use in developing countries.

Sound Seekers CEO Gary Williams says: “In the countries we work in fewer than one in 40 people who could benefit from a hearing aid have one. Every single donated hearing aid counts, so we are very grateful to Specsavers for their support.”

For further information on the initiative, please visit www.soundseekers.org.uk.
New club for deaf and blind people set up

A NEW support group for deaf and blind people has been set up in East Anglia.

The Uttlesford Deafblind Club – one of 12 such clubs in Essex – held its first meeting earlier this month in Saffron Walden and will continue to meet once a month for local people with combined sight and hearing loss to come together in a relaxed social setting. Members can then share advice and information, go on organised outings, have lunch and enjoy other activities.

A spokesman for the club said: “Most of our club’s members are elderly people where the onset of sight and hearing loss is age related. It can be an isolating and debilitating situation. “We try to encourage and renew confidence in people to show them with a little bit of support a lot of things are possible. Sometimes it is a person’s only outlet.”

Uttlesford Deafblind Club is also one of three organisations chosen by Waitrose’s Saffron Walden branch for its ‘local good causes’ scheme.

The supermarket has donated £1,000 to be split between three causes as chosen by shoppers, who receive a token at the checkout which they can place in the box of the cause they’d most like to support. The more tokens a cause gets, the bigger the donation they receive.

With just one volunteer helper trained in deafblind awareness, the small Uttlesford group is seeking new members and volunteers, as well as funding.

If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information please contact volunteers liaison worker Sue Ryder on 07751 657 525 or email s.ryder@deafblind.org.uk

Troops to get ear protectors in Afghanistan

A NATIONAL deafblind charity is celebrating after a milestone was reached in its specialist library.

A total of 1,500 loans on deafblindness have been issued from the library of Sense, the national deafblind charity, which says it is delighted at the service’s success.

The lending milestone was reached when Annie Hall, a speech and language therapist for Surrey Primary Care Trust, borrowed, ‘Learning through interaction’, which explores ways of using different forms of technology to teach children with multisensory impairments and other multiple disabilities.

Sense’s Ian Cloke library provides a vital service to deafblind people, families and carers, as well as professionals. Holding over 7,000 articles, DVDs, publications and books, it is a source of specialist knowledge, information and resources on all aspects of deafblindness.

The library was originally started by Gini Bartlett, mother of a deafblind man whom the library is named after. Gini said: “It started off as just a pile of photocopied articles and a few journals. But it just kept on growing! It is remarkable to see it as the leading specialist service it is today and I am absolutely thrilled and proud it is named after Ian.”

Charity chalks up library milestone

Ricky Hatton hits the road for RNID

RICKY ‘The Hitman’ Hatton is joining forces with the RNID to raise funds at this year’s Great North Run, and is calling on all aspiring athletes to come along and join him.

The IBO World Light Welterweight Champion is urging people to register for the Royal National Institute for Deaf People’s (RNID) guaranteed places at the world’s biggest half marathon, which takes place on Sunday 20 September. The places are available on a first-come, first-served basis to fundraisers who pay a £40 registration fee before the 17 July deadline and raise a minimum of £325.

Hatton says: “You don’t need to be fighting fit to sign up for RNID’s Great North Run team, but you’ll be making a powerful contribution to changing the world for deaf and hard of hearing people.

“Get in the running now for a knockout time and help raise vital funds for RNID’s research and services around the country.”

Money raised by fundraisers pounding the 13-mile route from Newcastle to South Shields will help fund RNID’s services, which provide essential support for deaf and hard of hearing people, and its research into understanding the causes of hearing loss.

For more information about running for RNID, contact Caroline Jupé on telephone/textphone 0845 634 0687 (local rate) or email events@rnid.org.uk or visit the website www.rnid.org.uk/greatnorrnun.
Unsung heroes gain voice at award night

A NATIONAL charity for sick children is launching its 5th annual awards after a very successful ceremony last year.

WellChild, the charity that supports sick children and their families, have kicked off 2009 with the announcement of its 5th annual awards after launching its 5th annual awards after

Awards for the last two years, said: “I was really honoured to be a part of the event. I think [WellChild] do amazing work, and I feel privileged to have been a tiny part of it for the night. If I can help out next year, don’t hesitate.”

The main attraction at the bash was an appearance by the WellChild Royal Patron Prince Harry, who chatted with the winners and their families. The WellChild Awards celebrates the bravery of children and young people coping with serious and complex illnesses and conditions – and also honours the dedicated doctors, nurses, teachers, brothers and sisters who go the extra mile to make a difference to the lives of sick children.

If you’ve been inspired by the bravery of a child, or by the dedication of someone who cares for children, take time to nominate them for this year’s awards by completing the online form or downloading the nomination form to complete and post. Both can be found at www.wellchild.org.uk.

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The Editor

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Sound, said: ‘each year, the team at Sight and Sound raise funds for charities which are complementary to the services we provide.

“A key part of our work is assisting patients with hearing difficulties, so Hearing Dogs for Deaf People nicely fits the bill,” she added.

The charity, whose patron is HRH The Princess Royal, aims to offer greater independence, confidence and security to deaf people by providing dogs trained to alert them to everyday sounds.

Gemma Walton from the charity said: “Hearing Dogs receives no government funding, so to ensure we keep helping deaf people we rely entirely on the generosity of individuals and companies like Sight and Sound.”

Sight and Sound proprietor Roger Tabberer, also a qualified hearing aid audiologist says: “Hearing loss develops slowly, gradually getting worse as you get older, and deafness can be a very isolating and lonely disability.

Obviously, there’s a great deal we can do to assist our patients, but a hearing dog provides the added benefit of giving the recipient increased independence, greater confidence, companionship and a feeling of security.”

**Audiologists’ care roadshow is back in town**

By popular demand, the British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (BSHAA) Customer Care Roadshow is back in April.

The Crowne Plaza Hotel at Manchester Airport will be the venue for two half-day workshops designed to put audiologists’ commitment to the scheme and to customers into practice.

Professionals can discuss how top class customer care can be a positive business advantage in the current tough economic climate and can increase sales and help develop long-term relationships with clients, as well as lead to greater customer satisfaction.

The workshops will be taking place on Wednesday 15 April and the Society has kept the price for the half day to £30 per delegate including tea or coffee, and a resource kit to take away.

For more information, and to download an application form, please visit the website www.bshaa.com.

**Exchange scheme opens up the world**

A UK CHARITY is launching a global exchange for young deaf people both home and away to get a taste of what life is like in other countries.

Deafway and the National Federation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People are organising their first ever global exchange specifically for young deaf people aged 18 to 25 in the UK and Nepal.

The aim is for the youngsters to work together, develop and share valuable skills and to make valuable contributions to local communities.

Deaf Global Xchange is a six-month volunteer exchange and will run from September.

Deafway have been working in partnership with Deaf organisations in Nepal for the last eight years, and together they have contributed to the building of schools for deaf children, as well as various community work with deaf children and adults in areas of Nepal where support and provisions are scarce.

Volunteers will join a team of 18: half from the UK and half from Nepal.

The team will live in the two host communities for six months, which includes three months in Preston, Lancashire – Deafway’s UK base – and three months in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal.

The volunteers will live in pairs in host homes with a local family while creating and performing pieces of deaf/sign language theatre to local charities or community organisations.

**Audiologist of 2009 is launched**

A COMPETITION to recognise exceptional service within audiology is being launched for its second year following a great response in 2008.

Rayovac’s Audiologist of the Year 2009 rewards both professional’s and customers by offering cash prizes to both.

Last year’s winner Lisa Binns-Smith told Hearing Times: “Being nominated for the Audiologist of Year Awards is a fantastic feeling, knowing that someone has really appreciated the patience and hard work you’ve put in.

“It also provides a sense of real achievement, knowing that you’ve helped to change someone’s life for the better – even perhaps, as was the case with my generous nomination – to know you’ve helped someone to succeed in their own profession.”

The competition is open to all hearing care professionals, including hearing aid audiologists, audiologists and dispensers, in the UK, France, Italy, Sweden, Spain, Germany and Austria. From these six country winners, an European hearing care professional winner will be chosen by the panel, who will receive £5,000 (£4,500), a trophy and framed certificate. Additionally, the overall winning hearing care professional will be invited to collect their prize at the 2009 EUHA congress in Nuremberg, taking place from 21-23 October 2009.

Entries must explain, in their own words, why their audiologist deserves to win the coveted title.

The judges are looking for inspirational stories: has your audiologist helped out in difficult or unusual circumstances? Have they simply been a pillar of support for many years? Audiologists or dispensers must be nominated by patients who have had – or are having – a device fitted between August 2004 and July 2009.

Entries must only be submitted by patients, who will be asked to state how their hearing care professional has helped them and why they believe they should win the competition.

Those nominating an audiologist also stand a chance of winning a cash prize and electrical goods.

To nominate your audiologist, visit the Audiologist of the Year website at www.audiologistoftheyear.co.uk for further details and an entry form.

**Disabled miss out on independent living**

INDependent living for older and disabled people is being jeopardised by a lack of investment in technology to make their lives easier, according to a new report published in February.

The research was published as a new design and development centre to enable more products to facilitate independence – known as assistive technology – opened in Scarborough Street, London, on 27 February.

Assistive technology, as well as meeting the needs of an ageing population, can also meet the growing expectations for independence for disabled people – a group that makes up 10% of the UK working population and contributes a disposable income of almost £50bn to the UK economy.

Backed by a start-up grant of £2.35m from the London Development Agency, ATcare works closely with assistive technology users and manufacturers, social and health care professionals, industry and local communities to ensure that assistive technology products can be delivered to meet these needs.

The report shows that assistive technology products remain on the drawing board because of a lack of knowledge and commercial expertise.

The report highlights that of 362 assistive technology products researched between 2004 and 2007, less than one quarter made it through to final product development.
Turning deaf conceptual art into commercial one

FIRST, I am going to do a plug. Bear with me. On Saturday 25 April at 7pm, Salon is holding an exhibition of signed limited-edition prints at Nincomsoup in central London (www.salonart.org.uk).

The printed images – shot by Miles Thomas – depict works made by deaf and hard-of-hearing visual artists during Salon’s activities in 2006-08. Profits from the sales will be split between Salon for the benefit of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community and the artists who created the original pieces, except in cases where the artist has specifically asked for all profits to be reinvested in Salon.

This is not aiming to be a conceptual art exhibition, although we would naturally respect buyers’ wishes to learn of the theories behind the works featured. Instead, it is a selection of some of our best images collected over the years, printed on light-fast specialist art paper for the sheer pleasure of our buyers.

Why have we reached this point in time? Deaf visual art has explored themes of communication for over two decades, with the intention to promote and celebrate deaf culture. However, although some truly witty works of art have come out of that culture, it can still be a hit-and-miss affair. The challenges lie not in visiting art collections, collecting images of inspirational paintings, or even meeting mainstream artists. That conforms to the basic principle of accessing visual art as a spectator.

Rather, it is developing the BSL equivalent of contemporary visual art theory – which can be rather arcane and deeply rooted in spoken language culture – that is difficult. You need to know the rules before you can break them. Experience indicates that the deaf visual artists most likely to do that tend to be bilingual.

Moreover, the prevailing view – that art is what you make it – makes it even harder to pick creative gold from the flotsam, ensuring that artists such as Stella Vine continue to attract controversy.

Salon was formed in 2005 to address exactly this issue. We may have been too radical for some. While many of the deaf and hard-of-hearing visual artists who came to us recognised their exclusion from the mainstream contemporary art scene, it was hard to create an environment in which the full impact of a conceptual 2D or 3D piece, questioning the status quo from a deaf perspective, could be realised.

That’s not to say that our activities didn’t incur creativity in our artists; they did. The result was some scrumptious pieces of deaf innovation. Among those that took your breath away with their visual purity were Martin Glover’s Old Man’s Ear, Matt Jenkins’ Untitled (The City vs Nature), and Colin Redwood’s Natural Satellite. Printed images of all three will now be exhibited next month in editions of 250 along with several others.

But let’s not harbour any illusions here. Being part of a minority group, the number of BSL-using deaf visual artists able to transcend the commercial/community art mould is far outweighed by that of their mainstream peers.

Commercial art is no bad thing though. An artist’s agent told me recently how hard it was to sell high-concept works of the sort endorsed by Tate Modern. Would a Yves Klein blue canvas be happy in an one-bedroom flat? Only if it was of the huge penthouse variety! Then again, it’s been said that the only difference between Stella Vine and other similar artists is marketing.

So, instead of aiming for the moon, let’s work on developing an eye for aesthetics and/or visual witticisms that buyers can treasure. And if you do get short-listed for the Turner Prize? Kudos to you.

Melissa Mostyn

The Melissa Mostyn column

Cycle champ donates jersey for deaf kids

THE WINNER of the Tour de France 2008 has donated his winning yellow jersey to an online auction in aid of deaf children.

Carlos Sastre, 33, from Spain, has pledged the jersey through online cycling shop Wiggle, with all proceeds going to the National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS).

The ten-day-long auction will start on 15 April on eBay’s charity auction site. All funds raised will go towards a multi-sports day that NDCS will be running for deaf children and young people in Walsall, West Midlands, on 10 October.

Mr Sastre said: “I am very proud to help the National Deaf Children’s Society to raise awareness of the obstacles that deaf children face at school and in their every day life.

“Every deaf child has the right to be fully included and valued by society. In this sense, NDCS’s services for and campaigns in aid of deaf children help to make their voices heard.”

Simon Kirby, NDCS corporate development manager, told Hearing Times: “We are pleased to have become a charity partner for the auction of Sastre’s yellow jersey and are grateful to Wiggle for supporting our sports day for deaf children and young people in Walsall.

“Access to sports activities is extremely important for deaf children.

Top prize: Hawwa Ahmed (7), Imran Ahmed (11) with Carlos Sastre’s winner’s jersey.
**Tinnitus Awareness Week 2009**

National Tinnitus Association hails week of education and awareness as ‘best yet’

NATIONAL Tinnitus Week 2009 has proven to be a huge success with widespread coverage achieved before, during and after the awareness week. The British Tinnitus Association have proactively sought to raise the awareness of the debilitating condition, along with the help and support that the BTA can provide to sufferers, through a range of activity.

National coverage including a series of interviews and headline news was achieved on GMTV halfway through the awareness week which resulted in countlessができを使うための条件を満たす。る。v.s.

The BTA received thousands of letters through its Stoppa newsletter, which ran a series of articles focusing on the condition of its readers.

The BTA has also had a fantastic response from the medical profession and tinnitus sufferers. A number of Professional Advisors to the BTA were on hand during the week to talk in radio interviews, along with writing editorial features and providing tips and advice on the condition for medical journals, consumer magazines and both regional and national newspapers.

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A humourous take on stuffy world of politics

Gethsemane
National Theatre
Captioned by STAGETEXT
By Chris Attewell-Hughes

DAVID Hare’s new show Gethsemane plays rather merrily with the tatters of the Labour party. Although its theme is slightly outdated, it still brings to light the difficulties that a party like Labour has in raising funds to keep it afloat. Rather more refreshingly, it also points out that, just like MPs themselves, political children can also fall victim to scandal. Suzette Guest (Jessica Raine), daughter of home secretary, Meredith Guest (Tamsin Greig), is caught smoking dope and later exploited by the fourth estate when she moves back in for the last time. Her repulsion for hair-dresser turned party fundraiser, Otto Fallon (Stanley Townsend), is exquisite. And when paired with Townsend’s nonchalant attitude towards politics fireworks do fly. It’s pure delight to see the rage seeping out of Greig when her character discovers that Fallon is a governor at her daughter’s school; appointed there to help cover up her little mishap.

At the other end of the spectrum is the rather disappointing Lori Drysdale (Nicola Walker) who has been given the regrettable task of touting moral speeches; first to the audience, then to the cast. Walker’s acting isn’t at fault, merely the clumsy role of the ex-teacher being doled out to her. Lori’s husband, Mike Drysdale (Daniel Ryan), is nervous and pac-ears around on the spot as if he were some disobedient lapdog. Painful as his presence is, his being hired by Otto Fallon means Hare can set up a nice spot of banter between Otto and Lori. This means yet more tedious moral tutting, but the way in which they meet (as the way every other character meets) is well-thought and intriguing and is perhaps Gethsemane’s saving grace.

The Stone
Royal Court Theatre
Captioned by STAGETEXT
By Chris Attewell-Hughes

MARIUS Von Mayenburg’s The Stone is bar far the best play that London has seen this year. As the best ones are, the idea’s a simple one. A house in Dresden, Germany is first occupied by a Jewish family. Mieze (Justine Mitchell) is fleeing her home to escape Nazi tyranny and selling the house for a de-pressingly low sum to Witha (Linda Townsend), daughter of home secretary, Meredith Guest (Tamsin Greig), an unwilling member of the Nazi party. Later Witha’s husband is shot dead and she and her daughter, Heidrum (Helen Schlie-singer) move away. In their place Stefanie (Amanda Drew) moves in with her grandfa-ther. When said grandfather dies, Witha, Heidrum and Heidrum’s daughter, Hannah (Loo Brealey) move in. It’s here where the story begins, rather than back with Mieze. And from here the story chops and changes from time period to time period. The depar-ture from one era to another is seamless thanks to bare stage. It’s simply a white cube with very few props. All actors remain on the stage and as the story progresses, different actors engage with one another while the others stand motionless.

The stone in question is one that is thrown at Heidrum’s fa-ther, Wolfgang (Jonathan Cullen). Passers-by suspect the house’s occupants are still Jewish. Wolfgang keeps the stone and later Heidrum buries it in the garden and then digs it back up again when she moves back in for the last time.

The concept of such seamless scene change while maintaining a dramatic piece about Jewish dis-crimination and losing one’s home would be a complicated one if it weren’t for the stunning execution by the cast. Each member is talented enough to make the evening a thoroughly enjoyable one. There’s even the odd dash of humour contributed by the lovely Linda Bassett playing the dith-ery grandmother. Correcting her granddaughter’s behaviour, she cries: “If she talks while she’s eating, her teeth will fall out.” Priceless.
Provided by Signed Performance in Theatre (SPIT) www.spit.co.uk

17 March 2009
19:00 The Marriage of Figaro - Mozart (Opera) Cynrum (Llandudno) Captions in-house
19:30 A Chorus of Disapproval (Play) Mercury Theatre Colchester Captions in-house
18 March 2009
19:45 Gethsemane (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions by STAGETEXT
20:00 Sweeney Todd (Play) Queen’s Theatre Hornchurch (London) Captions in-house
20:00 Salome - Richard Strauss (Opera) Cynrum (Llandudno) Captions in-house

25 March 2009
10:30 and 13.30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at The Brindley, Runcorn Integrated performance
19:15 The Elixir of Love - Donizetti (Opera) Cynrum (Llandudno) Captions in-house
19:30 Over There (Play) Royal Court Theatre (London) Captions in-house
19:30 A Chorus of Disapproval (Play) Mercury Theatre Colchester BSL interpreted

20 March 2009
10:30 and 13.30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at The Brindley, Runcorn, Integrated performance
19:00 The Marriage of Figaro - Mozart (Opera) Cynrum (Llandudno) Captions in-house

21 March 2009
13:30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at The Brindley, Runcorn Integrated performance
14:00 Mary Poppins (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) BSL interpreted
14:30 Patience (Gilbert and Sullivan) (Opera) Edinburgh King’s Theatre BSL interpreted
14:30 Lord of the Flies (Drama) New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich Captions in-house
15:00 Where There’s a Will (Play) English Touring Theatre at The Lowry, Salford (Manchester) Captions by STAGETEXT
19:15 The Elixir of Love - Donizetti (Opera) Cynrum (Llandudno) Captions in-house

22 March 2009
15:30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at Buxton Opera House Integrated performance

24 March 2009
11:30 and 13.30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at Cramphorn Theatre (Chelmsford) Integrated performance
19:00 The Marriage of Figaro (Opera) Birmingham Hippodrome Captions in-house
25 March 2009
10:30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at The Broadway, Barking (London) Integrated performance
19:30 Invasion (Play) Soho Theatre (London) Captions in-house
19:45 Andromaque (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house
20:00 Salome (Opera) Birmingham Hippodrome Captions in-house
20:00 Sweeney Todd (Play) Queen’s Theatre Hornchurch (London) BSL

26 March 2009
14:00 Mary Poppins (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) Captions in-house
14:15 The Elixir of Love (Opera) Birmingham Hippodrome Captions in-house
19:30 The Caretaker (Play) Octagon Theatre Bolton BSL interpreted
19:30 The Attraction (Play) Chickenshed (London) BSL interpreted
19:45 Andromaque (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house

27 March 2009
19:00 The Marriage of Figaro (Opera) Birmingham Hippodrome Captions in-house
19:30 Wuthering Heights (Play) Oldham Coliseum Theatre BSL interpreted
19:45 Andromaque (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house

28 March 2009
14:30 Andromaque (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house
14:30 Oklahoma! (Musical) Edinburgh King’s Theatre BSL interpreted
19:15 The Elixir of Love (Opera) Birmingham Hippodrome Captions in-house
19:45 Andromaque (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house

April 30 2009
19:30 Where’s a Will (Play) English Touring Theatre at Oxford Playhouse Captions in-house
19:30 Gates of Gold (Play) Library Theatre Manchester BSL interpreted

April 4 2009
11:00 BFG (Children’s) Edinburgh King’s Theatre Captions in-house
14:30 West Side Story (Musical) The Royal Centre, Nottingham Captions by STAGETEXT
14:30 Pack of Lies (Play) New Theatre Cardiff BSL interpreted

April 5 2009
19:30 England People Very Nice (Play) National Theatre (NT) (London) Captions by STAGETEXT
19:30 Witches of Eastwick (Musical) Birmingham Hippodrome BSL interpreted

April 7 2009
13:00 Oklahoma! (Musical) Venue Cymru (Llandudno) Captions in-house
19:30 Waiting for Godot (Play) Edinburgh King’s Theatre Captions in-house interpreted

April 8 2009
19:30 Mary Poppins (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) Captions in-house

April 9 2009
14:30 A Song at Twilight (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house
19:30 Honeymoon Suite (Play) New Vic, Newcastle under Lyme Captions in-house
19:45 Tusk Tusk (Play) Royal Court Theatre (London) Captions in-house

April 10 2009
19:30 Madame de Sade (Play) Donmar Warehouse at Wyndham’s Theatre (London) Captions by STAGETEXT

April 11 2009
19:30 Lonesome West (Play) Mercury Theatre Colchester Captions in-house

April 12 2009
14:30 Gypsy (Carmody Comedy) Plymouth Theatre Royalty Captions in-house

April 13 2009
19:30 Tuscan Sun (Play) Royal Court Theatre (London) Captions in-house

April 14 2009
14:30 Gethsemane (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house
14:00 The BFG (FamilyShow) Plymouth Theatre Captions in-house
19:30 The Lonesome West (Play) Venue Cymru (Llandudno) Captions in-house

April 17 2009
19:45 Tusk Tusk (Play) Royal Court Theatre (London) BSL interpreted

April 18 2009
14:30 A Song at Twilight (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre BSL interpreted
18:00 The BFG (Family Show) Plymouth Theatre BSL interpreted
19:30 Mary Poppins (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) Captions in-house

April 19 2009
19:30 Dimetos (Play) Donmar Warehouse (London) BSL interpreted

April 20 2009
19:30 Dimetos (Play) Donmar Warehouse (London) Captions by STAGETEXT

April 21 2009
19:30 Sneaky Snacks Sim (Play) New Vic, Newcastle under Lyme BSL interpreted
19:45 Tusk Tusk (Play) Royal Court Theatre (London) Captions in-house

April 22 2009
19:30 Madame de Sade (Play) Donmar Warehouse at Wyndham’s Theatre (London) Captions by STAGETEXT

April 23 2009
19:30 The Fever (Play) Royal Court Theatre (London) Captions in-house
19:45 ‘Allo ‘Allo (Comedy) Civic Theatre, Chelmsford BSL interpreted

April 24 2009
14:30 Gypsy (Carmody Comedy) Plymouth Theatre Royalty Captions in-house
14:30 Witches of Eastwick (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) BSL interpreted
19:30 Witches of Eastwick (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) Captions in-house

April 25 2009
11:00 and 14.00 The War of the Buttons (Children’s) Hawth Theatre (Crawley) Integrated performance

April 27 2009
10:30 and 13.30 The War of the Buttons (Children’s) Hawth Theatre (Crawley) Integrated performance

April 28 2009
19:30 The Lonesome West (Play) Mercury Theatre Colchester Captions in-house

Poetry Corner

The Age of the Common Man

Reflections on a visit to the National Portrait Gallery

An exhibition devoted to that
Most modern of phenomena – the News photograph, the moving image still
A moment captured in time,
A moment fixed in celluloid
A filmic substance
Yet a Permanent record
Of royals and reptiles
Of politicians and sporting heroes
Of movie stars and miners
The historical recordings reveal
The changes through the decades
Chartered by enterprising types
With box brownies
And an eye for the main chance
Thecarefree Duke on a fun fair ride
Transformed by time and circumstance
Into the careworn monarch at war
Deepened and saddened
A face etched in worry
An image of suffragette,
Not so much man-as-lady-handled
By burly policeman
With thoughts readable in grey face
“Now come along Madam, please cooperate,
there’s a good lady.”

Other scenes
Of early-century endeavour
Of Brass in Betero and Johnson,
Their flying machines
Or pictures from Flanders field
Of visiting politicians inspecting trenches
In trench coats, all the while
Reflected glory of the slaughter
Complicit in their smile.
The years roll on
The technology develops,
Yet black and white
Still tell their story
A blurred backdrop to
Frame a resolute war leader
Crowds outside courtrooms,
Scandal, gossip and celebrity
Heroism and histronics
Daily encounters recorded.
“ What’s the picture?”
Asks the pictures-as-photographer.
“ The world of the common man.”
The historian replies
With thoughts readable in grey face.
“ Now come along Madam, please cooperate,
there’s a good lady.”

WBR Jeremy
Provided by Signed Performance in Theatre (SPIT) www.spit.co.uk

17 March 2009
19:00 The Marriage of Figaro - Mozart (Opera) Cymru (Llandudno) Captions in-house
19:30 A Chorus of Disapproval (Play) Mercury Theatre Colchester Captions in-house

18 March 2009
19:45 Gethesmane (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions by STAGETEXT
20:00 Sweeney Todd (Play) Queen’s Theatre Hornchurch (London) Captions in-house
20:00 Salome - Richard Strauss (Opera) Cymru (Llandudno) Captions in-house
20:00 Empty Bed Blues (Play) Lakesides Arts Centre (Nottingham) BSL interpreted
20:00 Abnormally Funny People (Play) Soho Theatre (London) Captions in-house

19 March 2009
10:30 and 13.30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at The Brindley, Runcorn Integrated performance
19:15 The Elixir of Love - Donizetti (Opera) Cymru (Llandudno) Captions in-house
19:30 Over There (Play) Royal Court Theatre (London) Captions in-house
19:30 A Chorus of Disapproval (Play) Mercury Theatre Colchester BSL interpreted

20 March 2009
10:30 and 13.30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at The Brindley, Runcorn, Integrated performance
19:00 The Marriage of Figaro - Mozart (Opera) Cymru (Llandudno) Captions in-house

21 March 2009
13:30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at The Brindley, Runcorn, Integrated performance
14:00 Mary Poppins (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) BSL interpreted
14:30 Patience (Gilbert and Sullivan) (Opera) Edinburgh King’s Theatre BSL interpreted
14:30 Lord of the Flies (Drama) New Wolsey Theatre Ipswich Captions in-house
15:00 Where There’s a Will (Play) English Theatre Touring at The Lowry, Salford (Manchester) Captions by STAGETEXT
19:15 The Elixir of Love - Donizetti (Opera) Cymru (Llandudno) Captions in-house

22 March 2009
15:30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at Sutton Opera House Integrated performance

24 March 2009
11:30 and 13.30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at Crumhorn Theatre (Chelmsford) Integrated performance
19:00 The Marriage of Figaro (Opera) Birmingham Hippodrome Captions in-house
19:30 Mary Poppins (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) BSL interpreted

25 March 2009
10:30 Baa Moo Yellow Dog (Children’s) Half Moon at The Broadway, Barking (London) Integrated performance
19:30 Invasion (Play) Soho Theatre (London) Captions in-house
19:45 Andromaque (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house
20:00 Salome (Opera) Birmingham Hippodrome Captions in-house
20:00 Sweeney Todd (Play) Queen’s Theatre Hornchurch (London) BSL

26 March 2009
14:00 Mary Poppins (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) Captions in-house
19:15 The Elixir of Love (Opera) Birmingham Hippodrome Captions in-house
19:30 The Caretaker (Play) Octagon Theatre Bolton BSL interpreted
19:30 The Attraction (Play) Chickenshed (London) BSL interpreted
19:45 Andromaque (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house

27 March 2009
19:00 The Marriage of Figaro (Opera) Birmingham Hippodrome Captions in-house
19:30 Wuthering Heights (Play) Oldham Coliseum Theatre BSL interpreted
19:45 Andromaque (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house

28 March 2009
19:30 Andromaque (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house
14:30 Oklahoma! (Musical) Edinburgh King’s Theatre BSL interpreted
19:15 The Elixir of Love (Opera) Birmingham Hippodrome Captions in-house
19:45 Andromaque (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre Captions in-house

1 April 2009
19:30 Where there’s a Will (Play) English Touring Theatre at Liverpool Playhouse Captions by STAGETEXT

2 April 2009
13:00 The BFG (Family Show) Plymouth Theatre Royal Captions in-house
14:30 A Song at Twilight (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre BSL interpreted
18:00 The BFG (Family Show) Plymouth Theatre Royal BSL interpreted
19:30 Mary Poppins (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) Captions in-house

20 April 2009
19:30 Dimetos (Play) Donmar Warehouse (London) BSL interpreted
19:45 Allo Allo (Comedy) Plymouth Theatre Royal Captions in-house

7 April 2009
19:30 Burnt by the Sun (Play) National Theatre (NT) (London) Captions by STAGETEXT
19:30 Mary Poppins (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) BSL interpreted

9 April 2009
14:30 Where there’s a Will (Play) English Touring Theatre at Oxford Playhouse Captions in-house
19:30 Gates of Gold (Play) Library Theatre Manchester BSL interpreted

10 April 2009
20:00 Gates of Gold (Play) Library Theatre Manchester Captions in-house
20:00 The Witches Of Eastwick (Musical) Birmingham Hippodrome BSL interpreted

11 April 2009
11:00 The BFG (Children’s) Edinburgh King’s Theatre BSL interpreted
14:30 West Side Story (Musical) The Royal Court, London, Captions by STAGETEXT
14:30 Pack of Lies (Play) New Theatre Cardiff BSL interpreted

15 April 2009
19:30 England People Very Nice (Play) National Theatre (NT) (London) Captions by STAGETEXT

16 April 2009
19:30 The Tempest (Play) The Royal Centre, Nottingham
19:30 Dimetos (Play) Donmar Warehouse (London) BSL interpreted

17 April 2009
17:00 The Witches of Eastwick (Play) The Royal Centre, Nottingham BSL interpreted
17:00 Scooby Doo and The Pirate Ghost (Family Show) Birmingham Hippodrome BSL interpreted
19:30 Waiting for Godot (Play) Edinburgh King’s Theatre Captions by BSL

18 April 2009
14:00 The BFG (Family Show) Plymouth Theatre Royal Captions in-house
14:30 A Song at Twilight (Play) Cambridge Arts Theatre BSL interpreted
18:00 The BFG (Family Show) Plymouth Theatre Royal BSL interpreted
19:30 Mary Poppins (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) Captions in-house

20 April 2009
19:30 Dimetos (Play) Donmar Warehouse (London) Captions by STAGETEXT

21 April 2009
19:30 Honeymoon Suite (Play) New Vic, Newcastle under Lyme Captions in-house
19:45 Tusk Tusk (Play) Royal Court Theatre (London) Captions in-house

22 April 2009
19:30 Madame de Sade (Play) Donmar Warehouse at Wyndham’s Theatre (London) Captions by STAGETEXT

23 April 2009
19:30 The Lonesome West (Play) Mercury Theatre Colchester BSL interpreted

24 April 2009
17:30 Witches of Eastwick (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) BSL interpreted
19:30 The Fever (Play) Royal Court Theatre (London) Captions in-house
19:45 Allo Allo (Comedy) Civic Theatre, Chelmsford BSL interpreted

25 April 2009
14:30 Gypsy (Crabtree Operatic Society) (Opera) Hawth Theatre (Crackley) BSL interpreted
19:30 Witches of Eastwick (Musical) Wales Millennium Centre (Cardiff) Captions in-house

26 April 2009
11:00 and 14.00 The War of the Buttons (Children’s) Hawth Theatre (Crackley) Integrated performance

27 April 2009
10:30 and 13.30 The War of the Buttons (Children’s) Hawth Theatre (Crackley) Integrated performance

28 April 2009
19:30 The Lonesome West (Play) Mercury Theatre Colchester Captions in-house

Poetry Corner

The Age of the Common Man

Reflections on a visit to the National Portrait Gallery

An exhibition devoted to that
Most modern of phenomena – the News photograph, the moving image
A moment captured in time, a moment fixed in celluloid
Filmy substance yet a
Permanent record
Of royals and reptiles
Of politicians and sporting heroes
Of movie stars and miners
The historical recordings reveal
The changes through the decades
Chartered by enterprising types
With box brownies and
An eye for the main chance
The carefree Duke on a fun ride
Transformed by time and circumstance
Into the careworn monarch at war
Deepened and saddened
A face etched in worry
An image of suffragette,
Not so much man-as-lady-handled
By burly policeman
With thoughts readable in grave face
“Now come along Madam, please cooperate, there’s a good lady.”
Other scenes
Of early-century endeavour
Bleriot and Johnson,
Their flying machines
Bleriot and Johnson,
Other scenes
Of visiting politicians inspecting trenches
In trench coats, all the while
Reflected glory of the slaughter
Complicit in their smile.
The years roll on
The technology develops,
Yet black and white
Still tell their story
A blurred backdrop to
Frame a resolute war leader
Crowds outside courtrooms,
Scandal, gossip and celebrity
Heroism and histronics
Daily encounters recorded.
What’s the picture?
Asks the picture photographer.
The world of the common man
The historian replies
plus ca change?

WBR Jeremy
Sudoku

Hard

1 7 2 3 8
5 9 6 1 5
4 2 3
9 6 3
2 7 1
3 4 5 6 7

Easy

3 2
9 5 1 8 4
5 1 3
7 9
6 5 7
2 5 3
4 3 8
1 6 2
5 3

Last month’s solutions

Hard

1 8 5 9 7 4 2 3 6
7 6 2 3 5 1 9 8 4
9 3 4 6 8 2 1 7 5
4 2 3 8 6 9 7 5 1
5 9 6 1 4 7 8 2 3
6 1 7 2 3 5 6 4 9
3 5 8 7 1 6 4 9 2
6 7 9 4 2 5 1 8
2 4 1 5 9 6 3 6 7

Easy

9 5 6 2 4 3 1 0 7
2 7 3 8 1 6 4 9 5
8 4 1 9 7 5 6 3 2
3 8 9 5 6 1 2 7 4
7 1 2 4 9 8 3 5 6
4 6 5 3 2 7 8 1 3
6 3 7 1 9 2 5 4 8
5 2 8 7 3 4 9 6 1
1 9 4 6 5 6 7 2 3

The aim of these fun puzzles is to fill in the missing boxes so that each vertical and horizontal column contains the numbers 1 to 9. Furthermore, each sub-grid of nine boxes must also contain the numbers 1 to 9. Sudoku is now recognised by experts to be the perfect mental workout to keep the mind fit and active and stave off the effects of age-related degeneration. Try the hard puzzle for advanced players, or the easy puzzle if you are a beginner.
Hearing Dog of the Month

Fairytale happy ending for former rescue dog Cinders

A FORMER rescue dog that now works as a hearing dog for her profoundly deaf owner in Elton in Aberdeenshire has been named Hearing Dog of the Month by the charity that trained her.

Like the pantomime character after whom she is named, Cinders had a tough start to life. Her mum was rescued from a puppy farm along with her eight young puppies, and Hearing Dogs for Deaf People selected all of them for training. Unfortunately, only Cinders and her sister Beauty went on to make the grade as hearing dogs, and Cinders was placed with Ian Finney in December 2007.

Ian has been deaf since he was three. “During a childhood illness I relied on my faithful mother to wake me up in the morning,” he says, “or alert me if I had to respond to various sounds in the surrounding area. I was quite shy in making conversation with those I didn’t know in case I didn’t hear what they said. As I grew older my thoughts turned to being independent, but although I coped well with hearing aids during the day I was particularly scared of fire or an intruder at night. I found that although technical aids were available, at some point batteries would fail or mains failures would prevent them working.”

Embarrassment

Eventually Ian did move into his own home, but found his sleep was suffering due to his concern at trusting his life to these products. As a telephone engineer on a callout rota, he needed to be available day and night to respond to emergencies and also be able to attend courses away from home. His fear of not hearing a fire alarm and having to rely on assistance from hotel staff was realised.

He explains: “I had earlier told the receptionist I was deaf, and that night their fire alarm had a false trigger and I was greeted by one of their staff in my room. Imagine both the shock waking up with someone you don’t know peering over you, and the embarrassment of not being able to reply. More and more often my alarm clock let me down, and I started to think about the numerous times I had missed visitors at the door and callers ringing me. At times like this it is easy to sink into depression.”

In 2005 Ian took the decision to apply for a hearing dog and in December 2007 Cinders was placed with him. The impact that Cinders was to have on his life was evident from the outset. “Within days of being at home I had packed up my old gadgets and put them away. I found almost immediate-ly I had a lot more energy in the mornings as I was sleeping much better, and since we have been home together I have not missed the alarm clock once. First thing every morning I am greeted with a paw on the bed followed by a hug. I also no longer have the irritation caused by missing doorbells or phone calls. Cinders has been so reliable, in fact, that I now often take out my hearing aids when home alone.”

Improved health

Cinders has also had a beneficial effect on Ian’s work. “Cinders loves being in the van with me and particularly enjoys visits to farms and forests: she is an outdoor girl at heart. Before we were paired up I used to work through my lunch break, but now I am finding lots of parks and forests to give Cinders a run and it helps improve my health by allowing me to relax away from work for a while.”

“Hearing Dogs changed Cinders’ life when they took her on from the puppy farm, and Cinders has, in turn, changed my life. Every morning the friendly paw that reaches out to me not only says ‘good morning’ but reminds me of what the Charity does for deaf people and what Cinders does for me. It moves me beyond words can describe; in fact to the extent I have tears in my eyes. Thank you Cinders, and thank you Hearing Dogs.”

‘How my life has been transformed by a C.I’

By Miss Universe Great Britain hopeful Siobhan Brindley-Lewis

My name is Siobhan Brindley-Lewis. I am 22 years old and became deaf aged three of meningitis.

At the age of five I had my first hearing aid and went to Percy Shurmer Primary School in Balsall Heath where things went well. But at the age of six, I found that my hearing aid didn’t work for me anymore and I couldn’t hear anything.

The doctors at the children’s hospital in Birmingham told my family about cochlear implants in Nottingham Hospital and they decided to go for it. We went to the hospital and met ENT surgeon Prof Gerry O’Donoghue, and he performed the operation when I was seven – it went really well.

After eight weeks’ recovery from the operation, we went back to Nottingham to try the cochlear implant on and have it switched on. It was loud and I could hear things clearly. I could hear much better than with a hearing aid. The first noise I heard was water running and my mum said “Wow.”

Hazel Lloyd, a special speech therapist, stayed with me throughout my time at Aston Court School and Sixth Form, and I had my ears tested every six months in Nottingham up to the age of 16, now just once a year.

I am very happy to have a cochlear implant because I can hear everything better, e.g. music, TV, bird song, car, fire alarms, etc. It’s also helped me to improve my speech more than the hearing aid did.

Lots of people ask me questions about my cochlear implant and how it improves my hearing. I advise them how much it has helped me, my hearing and my speech.

I thank my family and the doctors at the Children Hospital for the cochlear implant. I’ve had my CI for 17 years. It’s important to me to hear and communicate better in my life, and without it my hearing and speech wouldn’t have improved.

‘Living my dreams’

However, after suffering from meningitis, I have never let my hearing impairment prevent me from reaching my goal and living my dreams.

I am a qualified beauty therapist and was even awarded “Special Recognition” for progress into Higher Education in 2005. In 2007 I graduated with a degree in Beauty and Spa Service at the University of Derby/Butlins, where I had the opportunity to visit the Czech Republic, Malta and Cheltenham College Spa.

I also won Miss Deaf UK “Best Evening Gown 2008” and modelled for Cancer Research. I am now a contestant for Miss Universe after securing a place as one of the 40 finalists out of 500 entrants.

I try not to let my disability stop me from doing anything and have a very positive ‘can do’ attitude. I pray to God to help me realise my dreams as life’s not easy. Even when I have experienced disappointments, I have kept focus on my goal and won through.

To help Siobhan reach the Miss Universe final on the 3 May and win a modelling contract with Vibe Models, please vote for her by calling 0901 6561 55510. For voting details, please visit the Miss Universe GB www.missuniversegb.co.uk

Supplied by our good friends at The Deaf Blog.co.uk

editorial@hearingtimes.co.uk

‘Hearing Dogs changed Cinders’ life when they took her on from the puppy farm, and Cinders has, in turn, changed my life”, Ian Finney
We try out the latest technology on the market so you know what to rely on. If you would like us to review a product, email info@hearingtimes.co.uk

**PRODUCT**

UniVox TV Loop system DLS-30TV

**MANUFACTURED BY**

UniVox

The TV volume control can be a constant battle. With more than one person in the room, hearing quality can be low, and disagreements high! The DLS-30 is a personal loop system designed to enhance the listener’s viewing by providing perfect TV sound in your favourite chair, at a volume you can hear. It’s simple to install, only needing a SCART plug connected to the TV, and a mains plug for power. The 10m wire runs discreetly around the room, and the flat pad fits underneath your favourite chair. That really is all you have to do. The 10W amplifier delivers up to 1A RMS into a 10-turn loop and an approx. 4.4T (0.44Gauss) magnetic field is developed above the centre of the loop. This system is ideally suited to a single user, since the loop coverage is focused well for a single chair. It is possible for two or three people sitting close to the loop to hear, but the volume is only constant above the loop. However, the option is available to install a loop around the sofa, for which UniVox offer a “Sofa loop” accessory. The frustrating, yet recurring problem of no vacant seats is only constant above the loop. However, the frequency response from 80Hz to 4KHz is exceptional for a loop system. This proves awkward, and any attempt to view the small screen is hindered by the shortness of the strap. The directional microphones work well, but suffer from handling noise. Contego experiences some interference from the mobile phone, and being digital it stops working without warning. It offers many modes of operation with uni and omni directional microphones work well, but suffer from slightly less time on our hands however, a simpler product might be more helpful.

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

An excellent, simple, high quality device which is easy and discreet to install, with no adverse effects on the TV or its wiring. Good product.

**PRODUCT**

Contego

**MANUFACTURED BY**

Comfort Audio

The first impression of using this product was the frequency response (bass and treble) extending from 150Hz to 9+KHz which is exceptional for a loop system. This accounts for the clear uncoloured sound. The loop signal is louder than some, but a simple volume wheel on the loop amplifier allows an easy method of adjustment. I found that 5 (out of 10) made a comfortable compromise with a clear undistorted sound. (Glasses may be handy, as the numbers on the volume wheel are small!) Also impressive is the clever “TV-sync” adjustment. More and more digital TV’s and decoders these days produce their audio out of sync with the displayed TV picture, due to delays in digital signal processing. DLS-30 has a little screwdriver slot allowing you to carefully adjust the delay until the sound and picture are perfectly synchronised. Fiddly at first, but you only have to do it once for this brilliant feature. The loop measures 400mm by 400mm, providing a uniform listening area for one seat. In an adjacent seat, the loop field reduces by 80% (considerably quieter). The amplifier draws 12W from your electric supply, costing a mere 25p per week, even if you don’t switch it off at night.

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

An excellent, simple, high quality device which is easy and discreet to install, with no adverse effects on the TV or its wiring. Good product.
Deaflympics team chosen for Taiwan

By Brian Kokoruwe

THE ATHLETICS team who will be representing Great Britain at the 2009 Deaflympics in Taipei, Taiwan, has been announced.

DUKA has picked its team for the 2009 Deaflympics using a combination of selection criteria, a qualification standard statistically developed using the results from the 2005 Deaflympics, the results from the most recent European and World Championships, European and World Records as well as selection panel discretion.

The team are being trained alongside the very top-ranked hearing performers in the UK Power of Ten ranking in the superb English Institute of Sport (EIS) indoor facilities in Sheffield. Thanks to England Athletics, most of the athletes will receive high-calibre training in Sheffield with those doing hammer or endurance, while long distance events will be receiving their training in Hull.

DUKA Deaflympics athletes will join their relevant event group, and each lead-event coach will have their own appropriate session plan organised.

The training sessions are not a timetable but rather ‘to suit all situations’ but individual session are developed to suit the various disciplines. However, during the day, each event group will have a strength and conditioning workshop lasting for about one hour. Shot, javelin and discus coaches will be present as well as sign language interpreters.

From everyone at Hearing Times, we offer our best wishes to all of the athletes competing in the games.

European 400m record for Lauren

A YOUNG runner who scooped a gold in the Deaflympics in 2005 is celebrating after making the leap to 400m in great style.

Lauren Peffers, the 2005 Melbourne 800m gold medallist, is enjoying her new event so much, she is improving rapidly.

Team Edinburgh athlete Peffers decided to ‘trial’ the 400m distance last year and has taken it like duck to water.

Peffers’ latest competition was at the Scottish Closed Senior Championships. Despite a nery start, Peffers ran a magnificent 57.44 seconds to improve on her previous 58.86 personal best.

For her superb performance, she took home the bronze and a new European Deaf Indoor 400m record. This improved on the 58.01s record previously held by Belarus’ Alena Tsiarents-syev.

I am very pleased to start the 2009 season with a new European Record. I hope that I can further improve on it later, but the important thing is to remain injury free, enjoy training, competitions and not to peak too early in the season,’ said a delighted Peffers, a member of the Dunbar Running Club.

‘My aim is the 2009 Deaflympics,’ she added.

Entries are invited for deaf tennis tournament

THE TENNIS Foundation and the British Deaf Tennis Association are now inviting entries for the 2009 National Deaf Tennis Championships, which take place at the National Tennis Centre, Roehampton, London, from 2-4 May.

This will be the first National Deaf Tennis Championships and the first National Championships organised by The Tennis Foundation to be held at the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton, the home of British tennis.

The National Championships will give GB National Deaf Tennis Squad members the chance of three days of intense competition as they continue their preparations for the Taiwan Deaflympics.

As well as ‘open’ divisions singles and doubles events for the country’s leading players, the National Championships also includes ‘B’ division events for younger and up-and-coming players.

For further details or an entry form, please contact tournament director Becky Drew at The Tennis Foundation. Email: Becky.Drew@tennisfoundation.org.uk. Phone: 020 8487 7119 or visit: www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/disabilitytennis/deafftennis

Deaf soccer kids take on national youth stars

TWO deaf youth teams from Manchester took part in the Deaf Friendly Football Club National Youth Football Tournament on 15 February at the Powerleague Derby Soccerdome at Pride Park.

The under-16s teams from Manchester United FC and Manchester City FC joined 24 other deaf youth football teams from across England to take on the exciting competition organised by the National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS). Each team took part in a number of five-a-side matches throughout the day. The team from Manchester United beat Manchester City 3-1 in the group stage, but both teams lost in the quarter finals. Teams from Everton FC, Luton and Derby were the proud winners of each age category.

The tournament was the flagship event of the NDCS Deaf Friendly Football Club project, a ground-breaking project designed to make football more accessible to all deaf children.

For more information on how your club can get involved, email football@ndcs.org.uk or phone 0121 234 9820. Website: www.ndcs.org.uk/football.

Sporting hopefuls: the UK deaf athletics team pictured in August last year at the World Deaf Athletics Championships in Izmir, Turkey
Deaf sports development officer named

A NEW Deaf Sport Development Officer has been appointed for the Federation of Disability Sports Organisations (FDSO).

Sean Curran, who has been deaf since birth and uses British Sign Language as his first language, has been appointed to the role which covers the whole of Yorkshire, Humberside and the north-east of Lincolnshire.

Curran’s new role requires him to support the development of a variety of opportunities in sport and recreation for deaf people while working in conjunction with County Sports Partnerships, community Sports Networks, local authority sport development officers, specialist schools, colleges and universities as well as with deaf clubs and associations to support the development plan and the implementation of associated and supporting programmes of work.

Sean, who will be based at the FDSO office in Ossett, near Wakefield, told Hearing Times he is keen to get in touch with anyone with an interest in sport.

‘My main aim is to work with anyone who is deaf or hard of hearing that have an interest in any type of sport activities and athletics or are involved in sport activities through voluntary work, schools, clubs, etc.’

For more information, please contact Sean Curran by email at scurran@fdsos.co.uk, or by SMS on 07861996692.

Deaf sprinter wins bronze in Scottish games

AN UP-AND-COMING track and field star has taken an impressive bronze medal at a recent indoor competition.

John Ruddy, 19, has been developing and going from strength to strength since he burst onto the international arena two years ago at the European Championships in Sofia, Bulgaria.

As part of his preparation for the 2009 Deaflympics, Ruddy is following a very tough training and competition schedules, so tough that he simply ‘looks forward to having a rest in front of the television every evening’ rather than mess around with his mates.

At this early stage of the season, Ruddy has competed in several indoor competitions. On 5 February, he had a good day at Kelvin Hall Athletics Stadium in Glasgow where he achieved two personal bests and a superb bronze medal in the 200m at the Scottish Schools Athletics Championship. It is possible that Ruddy was the only deaf athlete competing, which makes his achievement even more remarkable.

The day unfolded rapidly when he won his 60m heat in a time of 7.43s, this was a very close heat with 0.1s between 1st and 5th place, which went on to a photo finish to determine the final positions.

John’s time the first time he has gone under 7.5 seconds. ‘It was so good to get that “monkey” off his back, as I know it was annoying him for the past year or so,’ said his father, John Snr.

Unfortunately, in the 60m semi-final, John lost it at the start, when he appeared to ‘freeze’ which is not like him. He came on strong at the end of the race, but sadly missed out on a place in the final. To qualify for the final, John had to win his semi or be one of three fastest runners-up, but as it turned out John was 2nd with a time of 23.08s, an indoor PB, and only 0.01s slower than the winner of the first semi-final.

‘We knew then that a medal was possible,’ explained Ruddy.

Although Ruddy got a poor start in the final itself, he still ran a great race to take the bronze medal in a magnificent time of 23.18s, with the winning time being 22.7s and 2nd place was 23.09s.

A week after his brilliant bronze medal in the Scottish Schools Championships, Ruddy participated in the Scottish Under-20 Championships. He repeated his superb schools performance and brought home another bronze medal in the 200m, where he ran a solid 23.26s.

GB women’s soccer chief steps down

THE CHAIRMAN of the GB Deaf Women’s Football team has announced he will be stepping down from the post only months before the team sets off for the Deaflympics in Taiwan.

Dominic Everett, who has chaired the team since 2006, announced his decision at a training weekend in February. He will leave the team in April.

In a statement, the women’s team said: ‘After two years’ reign, it was felt that a new chairperson needed to be appointed to guide GBDFW into a new direction with strength.

‘As both the coaching and management teams are now in place through a strenuous recruitment drive, the new chairperson will be able to continue supporting and advising them into the new direction, focusing on the Deaflympic Games 2009 and beyond.’

Everett said: ‘Regrettably, I will not be here to watch how GBDFW is doing in the Deaflympic Games, but as a keen squash supporter holding the role of the World Deaf Squash Incorporated technical director, it would be extremely difficult to hold both roles.

Martin Willis from Woking has been approached for the position and will be installed as a new chairman from April.

For more information, please contact Sean Curran by email at scurran@fdso.co.uk.