



Distinctions

news from

Seaford Hearing Centre &
Sevenoaks Hearing Care Centre

100 years old and hearing well

Mabel Blaber is a very special lady - a centenarian since December 2005, she is our most senior patient. We supplied and service her ReSound binaural in-the-ear hearing aids.

We asked her nephew Peter Fellows of Seaford to tell us something about Mabel and he duly obliged.

Mabel, the fourth of ten children, was born in Lewes, from where she has never

moved. She left school at the age of 12 to become a doctor's receptionist before marrying her husband Harold, who was a groundsman with Lewes Corporation.

She took her first flight in an open cockpit aircraft between the wars and much later had the contrasting experience of visiting her sister in Canada by jumbo jet.

During the second world war Mabel and Harold were bombed out of



their cottage and it was many months before they could return home. After

Harold passed away in 1962 she moved into a flat in Lewes where she remained until going into North Corner Residential Home nine years ago.

She is still an avid letter writer and

Peter tells us that her brain is still as sharp as a needle.

We are grateful to Peter for sending these notes and the photograph of Mabel on her 100th birthday in the company of the Mayor of Lewes, and Lewes MP Norman Baker. Standing behind Mabel is her younger brother Raymond, a mere 79 years old!

We add our congratulations and best wishes to Mabel for continuing health and happiness in her 101st year.



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A small achievement by Phonak

In our last issue of Distinctions, astronaut Buzz Aldrin was telling us that he was 'over the moon' with his new Phonak Savia digital hearing aid. We too were moonstruck by its astonishing features and intelligent performance in all kinds of challenging listening situations.



So small it could fit within this oyster shell!

Now the Phonak whiz kids have gone one step further – or should we say one step smaller - with the launch of the microSavia. A little larger than the tip of your finger, it disappears behind the ear, with a practically invisible micro tube leaving the ear naturally open. microSavia offers all the benefits of its big sister for the user whose hearing loss requires a little less amplification.

Summing up, it's a remote controlled, occlusion free instrument with a chipset said to be as powerful as a Pentium processor, featuring datalogging, directional microphone technology and something called digital SurroundZoom.

Now you may not be particularly impressed by all this jargon. But if you want to learn more about the benefits,

then you'd better come and see us, because this is a seriously good hearing aid.



AAA convention beckons

At this time of year Robert Davies' pulse starts to race at the prospect of flying across the Atlantic to the American Academy of Audiology convention, to be held this year in Minneapolis. Robert regards this as a 'must go' event as it enables him to wise-up on all the new product launches and keep abreast with the latest developments in what is a very fast moving technology.

There'll be a full report in our next issue.

4.5 million in denial... or in the dark

The newly constituted British Academy of Audiology (BAA) recently held its inaugural conference in Torquay. Robert Davies was in attendance and was impressed by the latest developments in hearing products showcased by the leading manufacturers present.

One fact that particularly left its impression on Robert came from speaker John Lowe of RNID. He suggested that 4.5 million people of all ages in the UK had a hearing problem which could be helped – but either they did not wish to help themselves, or they did not know where to go.

Robert commented: 'These people are missing out on a quality of life that can be restored to them. The industry has made great strides in developing hearing aids that are both highly effective and very discreet – the Phonak microSavia (see above) is a typical example. We see plenty of evidence that more and more people have no negative issues with the wearing of hearing aids.'

However, this statistic suggests that the education process needs to continue.'

Matt's a proud fellow

We are delighted to announce that Sevenoaks-based Matt Cannon has been admitted as a Fellow of the British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (BSHAA), the national body representing and promoting the highest standards in the practice and application of hearing aid audiology.

Managing Director Robert Davies commented: 'All of our audiological staff are Fellows of the BSHAA and Members of the AIHHP, which promotes the highest standards in the independent sector. Matt's achievements and those of his colleagues underline our shared

commitment to quality, ethical standards and professionalism in our practice.'



NHS patients waiting for months... even years!

In this area, patients have to wait for up to 2¹/₂ years for their hearing aids under the NHS. These are the startling findings of the 2005 review of hospital audiology departments by the British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists.

Here are the performances of hospitals in our area, covering the time taken, from asking for your first appointment to receiving your hearing aid.

Royal Sussex County Hospital Brighton	130 weeks
Conquest Hospital St Leonards-on-Sea	58 weeks
Kent & Sussex Hospital Tunbridge Wells	52 + weeks
Eastbourne District General Hospital	51 weeks

These figures contrast starkly with the times you would experience at Seaford and Sevenoaks Hearing Centres. Here you can arrange a consultation at a time that suits you, usually within a week. You will be tested by an experienced professional who will give you as much time and care as you need – and within two or three weeks, your aid will be fitted.

Bluetooth comes to the aid

Whenever some new techno-gadget comes on the scene, it's not long before manufacturers are puzzling out how to bring the benefits to hearing aid users.

Now there's news that you can enjoy all the benefits of Bluetooth wireless communications, thanks to US manufacturers Starkey Hearing Aids. The miniature attachment is called Eli DirX and it offers wireless communication between a hearing aid and a growing assortment of modern Bluetooth signal sources.

ELI DirX connects to any compatible communication device, for instance a mobile phone, computer or TV, eliminating the hassle of cable clutter and offering users the freedom to communicate anytime and anywhere.

Mobile phone users can enjoy a conversation free of feedback or

interference from their hearing aids.



Also new from Starkey is a Bluetooth mobile phone moulded plastic headset earpiece – it fits snugly in the user's ear canal and provides much better comfort. Ideal for car-commuting mums and dads!

These gadgets are known collectively by audiologists as 'Assisted Listening Devices'. Sounds a bit daunting but a visit to our Hearing Centre will soon make it easy to understand – and open your eyes and ears to the brave new world of technology-led assistance for people with hearing difficulties. The range includes lapel mics, infra red transmitters, neck loops, telephone amplifiers, door bells and 'wake & shake' alarms to name just a few!



Supported by over 100 deaf charities and organisations under the umbrella of the UK Council on Deafness, Deaf Awareness Week takes place on 1st to 7th May.

We are giving our full support to the week. Take the opportunity to visit us at either Sevenoaks or Seaford for the answers to your hearing questions. Get in touch with us if you would like to know how you could help with the week.

The patient's story

James Wright, aged 35, is an Eastbourne-based house renovator. He has been a patient at Seaford Hearing Centre for nine years. However, his hearing problems date back to his childhood and he has been wearing hearing aids since the age of seven – although he admits to trying not to wear them during his teenage years.

We originally fitted James with a Siemens CIC aid in one ear and four years later he 'upgraded' to a ReSound IC5, still in one ear. But eventually he acceded to Robert Davies' judgment that his condition called for hearing aids in both ears.

James says: 'This time I am pleased I opted for the best and have a pair of Phonak Savia 22 DSZ hearing aids. I can control the hearing aids both from a small tactronic switch on the aids, as well as a small pocket remote control called a sound pilot.'

Throughout his working life James has had to cope with the occasional consequences of mishearing other people. He says: 'Some results were quite amusing - others, just downright embarrassing. Wearing two has improved things tremendously - and in social situations these aids are brilliant.'



'My tasks are much easier with my improved hearing. I have known Robert for quite a few years now and always found him thorough, courteous and knowledgeable.'

A final footnote on preventative protection: James says that he always wears ear protection when working, especially with machinery. 'For most people, hearing loss is progressive and one's existing hearing should always be preserved.'

Return to Kenya

Last year we told readers of Distinctions about Robert Davies' mission to Africa, supplying hearing aids, equipment and giving support to a School for the Deaf in a remote part of Kenya. The news is that he's planning a return trip later this year - and this time he'll have his Sevenoaks colleague Matt Cannon in tow. Right now Robert is gently leaning on suppliers for donations of hearing aids and diagnostic equipment. Judging by their responses, his requests are not falling on deaf ears!



Open days

Our Open Days at Seaford and Sevenoaks are always popular with both existing patients and newcomers. For details and dates, look out soon for announcements in the local press – or visit our new website: www.s-hc.co.uk.

Son of Metrix - another winner from ReSound

When Robert Davies and Matt Cannon went to the launch of the ReSound Plus5 hearing aid in Las Vegas recently, they were totally knocked out by its superior features and performance.

The ReSound Plus5, which is targeted at the middle price range, has taken its inspiration from the ReSound Metrix – a hearing aid which is unashamedly right at the top end of the market. It packages many, though not all, of the innovative features developed for Metrix - and the belief is that the Plus5 performance is every bit as good as some instruments costing twice as much.

The publicity blurb from ReSound states: 'Plus5 is the most technology-loaded product available for the price. And when you try these hearing instruments, you will notice an immediate and dramatic improvement in your hearing.'

Robert and Matt would be the first to support that statement.

The new ReSound Plus5 - and some of the sights of Las Vegas that Robert and Matt took in at the launch.



Seaford Hearing Centre 4 Dane Road, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 1LL Tel. 01323 899655
Sevenoaks Hearing Care Centre 73 London Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1AX Tel. 01732 741486

Services also available at

East Grinstead McIndoe Surgical Centre, Holtje Road Tel: 01342 315111

Hailsham Mark Soper Opticians, 72 High Street Tel: 01323 841699

Goring-by-Sea Bateman's Opticians, 48 Goring Road Tel: 01903 247042

Tunbridge Wells McIndoe Surgical Centre, 6 Mount Ephraim Tel: 01892 616100

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