



Distinctions

news from

Seaford Hearing Centre &
Sevenoaks Hearing Care Centre

ReSound Metrix stars in the States



As Robert Davies, Managing Director of Seaford and Sevenoaks Hearing Centres, headed for Washington DC and the American Academy of Audiology Convention – he was full of anticipation. GN ReSound had been promising an exciting new instrument, but they were playing things mightily close to their chests – that is until the convention got underway.

Racheting up the tension in this way produced no sense of anticlimax whatsoever as ReSound Metrix was unveiled to some of the world's most strongly opinionated audiology professionals. As Robert said, 'ReSound Metrix' delivers superbly on four key challenges set for their new product – speech clarity, sound quality, fitting accuracy and open fitting.'

We'll spare you the technicalities in favour of a summary of the main benefits:

- Unrivalled advantages in making sense of busy, noisy situations.
- The very latest advances in feedback cancellation and improved directionality.
- Smooth and subtle switching between functions without making it obvious to the user.
- Highly accurate resolution across the full range of frequencies.
- Features the most effective ever noise cancellation system.
- Uses the latest data logging technology to provide a precise picture of the user's listening environment.
- Dramatically reduces occlusion (the excessive sound of the user's own voice).

It should be mentioned that, with all these features, ReSound Metrix is positioned at the high end of the price range – but you may consider the enormous benefits well worth the cost. Certainly you are welcome to visit either of our Hearing Centres to discuss whether ReSound Metrix would transform your quality of hearing.



Battening down the hatches

As the approaching autumn turns to winter, we find ourselves at home more often, watching TV and rediscovering the art of chatting among our family members. This is the time to ensure your hearing aid is performing at its best – so keep it clean using the products we recommend.

Remember also, to save unnecessary shopping trips in the cold and wet, ensure you are well stocked with batteries. Better still, join our Battery Club and receive our loyalty book – after every 10th packet of batteries you buy, we give you one free.

Finally, back to Robert's visit. Predictably he rates the event a 'resounding success!' He even found time to slip out between events and point his camera at some of the sights of Washington DC, a couple of which he is proud to share with readers of *Distinctions!*



Classic views of the White House and Washington Monument.



Buzz Aldrin's giant leap in hearing quality
page 2



Aid for Crete
page 3



New smoke alarm. See It. Feel it.
page 4



Buzz Aldrin's giant leap in hearing quality

On 20 July 1969, Buzz Aldrin became the second most famous human being on earth – or rather on the moon – as he followed Neil Armstrong down the steps of Apollo 11 and onto the lunar surface.

Now in his 76th year, Dr Buzz Aldrin looks back on a unique personal experience as well as the technical brilliance of the mission. He also has good reason to be thankful for the technical advances in hearing aids, since he noticed a few years ago that 'everyone seemed to be mumbling at cocktail parties'.

Facing up to hearing loss presented a special challenge for Aldrin. He says, 'When your life has depended on effective communications between earth and the moon, your expectations remain extremely high! Hearing loss is progressive and none of us likes to admit to any little flaws we might have – so there's a great tendency to postpone dealing with reality.'

It was when he discovered Savia that he experienced a giant leap forward in the quality of his hearing. Savia is an entirely new digital hearing instrument developed



by Phonak, comprising both In The Ear and Behind The Ear models.

With Savia you can rediscover the quality of life provided by effortless, natural hearing – thanks to technology that would have even boggled the minds of 1960's NASA boffins!



Robert Davies, Managing Director of Seaford and Sevenoaks Hearing Centres also noted that Savia was attracting a lot of favourable comment when he recently visited the American Academy of Audiology convention in Washington DC.

To share the outstanding qualities of Savia – you don't need to go to the ends of the earth or beyond. Try Seaford – or Sevenoaks!

Musicians get the message – loud and clear

Music might be the food of love – but it is also the potential cause of hearing loss for musicians. Whether you're attacking your drum kit in the heaviest metal band around or playing the violin in an orchestra, you're at risk.

Happily many musicians are alive to the fact that prevention is better than cure and are taking to wearing ear defenders. We have seen evidence of this, for instance in the increasing numbers of referrals at Seaford Hearing Centre from the Brighton Institute of Music.

There's more to defenders than meets the eye (or should we say ear?) with different levels of protection offered. It works like this – a safe level of noise is around 87 decibels. If you're that heavy metal drummer, you are going to be exposed to around 110 to 120 decibels. That means you'll need an ER25 defender, the '25' representing the decrease in decibels provided.

For somewhat less ear-shattering musical performances we can supply as low as ER9.

Ear defenders may not seem particularly complex items - but the process is in fact quite complex. They take about three weeks to make, but they will be good for three or four years. Expect to pay around £175 a pair.

Ear defenders also offer the solution to one of the most common causes of domestic strife. Wearing them at night is perfectly safe, and although they don't stop you snoring, they do stop you hearing your partner!

Tinnitus explained

Tinnitus is one of the least understood medical conditions and yet at least five million people in the UK are affected. Indeed, for over half a million sufferers, tinnitus disrupts their ability to lead a normal life.

Tinnitus is a sound that is heard in one or both ears when there is no external source for this sound present. Sounds can take many forms ranging from whistling, humming and tissue paper rustling to kettles boiling or even tunes or melodies.

The noise can affect concentration and cause insomnia. When it is very disruptive to someone's life, it often causes great anxiety and sometimes depression.

It helps to understand that tinnitus is not a disease – but a symptom. Nearly all causes are benign and for many people it is part of the wear and tear of the aging process – it is more likely to occur after the age of 60. Sometimes it vanishes as

suddenly as arrives, it can be intermittent or permanent.

These days there are a lot more decibels around and so tinnitus is affecting increasingly younger people. But excessive noise is not the only cause. Earwax, head injury, high blood pressure, diabetes, some medications, Meniere's disease, hearing loss and stress are all linked to the condition.

Whilst there is no cure, there is plenty that can be done to manage it effectively.

One common misunderstanding is that wearing of hearing aids only makes tinnitus worse. The truth is that when selected and set up correctly they alleviate the condition. Hearing aids enable people with hearing loss to appreciate the normal sounds of everyday life again – giving the brain something else to listen to, so that the tinnitus seems quieter. It is not an instant fix so patience and perseverance is required.

If you suffer tinnitus that is perhaps associated with your hearing problem we do urge you to arrange for a free consultation with us. We can also demonstrate sound enrichment 'relaxers' which introduce pleasant or neutral sounds like waterfalls, oceans and birdsong. They focus your attention away from your condition and make it seem less intrusive.

The advice therefore is to manage tinnitus properly rather than just put up with it.

We need your aid

Your old hearing aid that is!

We are supporting the Lions Club in an initiative to help people with hearing difficulties in third world countries.

Just drop in you old instrument to Seaford or Sevenoaks Hearing Centre - and after the necessary TLC it will be on its way to making a real difference in someone's life.

Aid for Crete

Sevenoaks Hearing Centre's Matt Cannon was visiting the beautiful holiday island of Crete recently – but not to idle away his days on the sun-kissed shores of the Mediterranean.

The purpose of his trip was to help bring the latest in hearing technology to underprivileged islanders suffering in silence because they could not afford to buy hearing aids in the absence of any government assistance.

Manufacturers GN ReSound who have a

presence in Crete wanted us to assist with fitting and teaching the patients how to use their new instruments. The hearing aid in question was the brilliant new Resound Metrix which you can read more about in our story about the American Academy of Audiology convention on the front page. This provided Matt with an unrivalled opportunity, not only to help these people, but also to familiarise himself with the features of the instrument.

Matt reports that the reactions of the patients were often very moving, as they rediscovered their hearing and were able to experience an immediate and dramatic improvement in quality of life.



Matt Cannon (left) at the ReSound centre in Crete receiving a briefing prior to working with patients.

This is our second overseas charitable visit – earlier this year Managing Director Robert Davies visited a remote area of Kenya on a similar mission.



It's amazing!

It never ceases to amaze us just how rapidly the technology of hearing aids is advancing. Hearing aids can never quite replace what nature intended us to use, but there are people out there working feverishly to develop products that are making the gap ever narrower.

Now, if you haven't visited our Hearing Centre recently, we do urge you to look in to see if the new technology could make a difference to your quality of hearing.

The watershed – in common with many consumer products – has been the development of digital. Once the preserve of only the top of the range instruments, entry level digital has now become more accessible and there is no doubt that you

get far superior performance than with the old analogue systems. At this point we should add that some patients are very happy with their analogue aids and of course we continue to supply and repair these systems.

With digital development comes an increased responsibility of people like us who are involved with the supply and fit. Unlike the NHS, we invest time and meticulous care from the outset, which extends to the aftercare of the system. Professional counselling is crucial to getting the most out of your digital aid. Regular check-ups after fitting are essential, and thereafter we recommend every six months.

So, what do you know about data

logging? Nothing? That's what we knew until this feature started turning up on the premium price systems. A kind of spy in the ear, the device logs all kinds of information during the first two or three weeks of use. You'll be relieved to know that it doesn't take any notice of anything you say or think! You then bring your system to us; we download the data, analyse and review your hearing patterns and, if necessary, instruct your aid electronically to change its ways. The whole process takes only about 15 minutes.

A modern aid should last longer than earlier versions. Any significant changes in your hearing can usually be addressed by wiping the program and starting again.

Summing up - the technology is here. It exists to improve your quality of life. We're here to make sure it happens. So take advantage of it!

Bodies merge

In a move described by Robert Davies as 'showing that the UK is right at the forefront of audiology worldwide', three bodies representing different disciplines within the hearing professions have merged into one – The British Academy of Audiology (BAA). Robert wasted no time in registering for the second conference of the BAA at the end of November this year, held in Torquay.

The new body will offer encouragement, inspiration and guidance to its members whilst working to develop and promote excellence in services for patients. Robert added: 'This is a sensible move as it embraces everybody with professional standing in audiology rather than individual disciplines.'

Already as large as the EUHA based in Germany, the BAA will soon become second to only the American Academy of Audiology in its importance and influence in the profession.

New smoke alarm: See it. Feel it

Smoke alarms are an essential safety feature in most houses – but research has revealed that a third of deaf and hard of hearing people have difficulty waking up to a smoke alarm – especially as hearing aids are often removed at night. Furthermore, nearly a quarter of people said that they would struggle to know if an alarm went off during the day.

An end to this worrying situation came with the recent news that RNID, the charity representing deaf and hard of hearing people, has launched a new smoke alarm for deaf people.

The alarm has an audio alert, flashing strobe light and a vibrating pad which can be placed under the mattress. If this issue is alarming you, then take a visit to Seaford or Sevenoaks Hearing Centres and we'll show you how effective it really is.



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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, Holtye Road Tel: 01342 315111

Hailsham Hugh 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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