EXPERIENCES OF ACQUIRING HEARING LOSS: LESSONS FOR REHABILITATION.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Contents

Appendix A QMU Ethics ........................................................................................................... 3
Appendix B NHS Ethics ............................................................................................................. 5
Appendix C Dallas consent form ............................................................................................. 6
Appendix D COPA information form ....................................................................................... 7
Appendix E Example Consent form .......................................................................................... 9
Appendix F Presentations and publications from study .......................................................... 11
Appendix G Transcripts ........................................................................................................... 12

NHF 1 ....................................................................................................................................... 12
NHF 2 ....................................................................................................................................... 16
NHF 3 ....................................................................................................................................... 20
NHF 4 ....................................................................................................................................... 23
NHF 5 ....................................................................................................................................... 26
NHF 6 ....................................................................................................................................... 29
Dallas 1 .................................................................................................................................. 31
Dallas 2 .................................................................................................................................. 39
Dallas 3 .................................................................................................................................. 48
Dallas 4 .................................................................................................................................. 56
COPA 1 .................................................................................................................................... 62
COPA 2 .................................................................................................................................... 70
COPA 3 .................................................................................................................................... 85
COPA 4 .................................................................................................................................... 117
COPA 5 .................................................................................................................................... 141
COPA 6 .................................................................................................................................... 153
COPA 7 .................................................................................................................................... 169
COPA 8 .................................................................................................................................... 182
COPA 9 .................................................................................................................................... 196
COPA 10 ................................................................................................................................. 222
Appendix H Sample of coding analysis .................................................................................... 232
Appendix I Examples of coding using NVivo software .......................................................... 239
Appendix J Glossary of terms .................................................................................................... 243
Appendix A QMU Ethics

Christine DePlacido
Research Student
Speech and Language Sciences
School of Social Sciences, Media and Communication

30 July 2004

Dear Christine

Approval of Research Degree Programme

We have now received the report from the external reviewer, Dr Alys Young, on your research degree proposal.

I am pleased to inform you that the Convener of the Research Degrees Committee has taken Convener’s Action to approve your proposal for your study entitled: An evaluation of social support, attitude and motivation, as causal factors of disability/handicap mismatch in newly diagnosed hearing impaired subjects, subject to receipt of your written response to the minor queries raised by the external reviewer in her report which is attached for reference.

You will retain the status of a full-time supervised research student for the remainder of your probationary period, at the end of which you will be required to submit a Probationary Report and a decision about your continuing registration will be made.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, on behalf of the Research Degrees Committee, on gaining approval for your proposed research degree programme, and to wish you continued success with your study.

Yours sincerely

Linda Welsh
Secretary to the Research Degrees Committee
Cc  Dr Janet Beck, Director of Studies
     Michele Hipwell, Second Supervisor
     Dr Christine Cnossen, Head of School
Appendix B  NHS Ethics

Fife NHS Board

Mrs Christine DePlacido
Principal Audiological Scientist
Fife NHS Trust
Hayfield Road
Kirkcaldy
KY2 5AH

Date 10 September, 2004
Your Ref AJSL1067 50501-50
Our Ref Mrs Allison Smir
Enquiries to 8576
Extension 01592 643356
Direct Line alison.smith@nhs.net
Email

Dear Mrs DePlacido,

Full title of study: An evaluation of social support, attitude and motivation, as causal factors of disability/handicap mismatch in newly diagnosed hearing impaired subjects.

REC reference number: 04/S0501/50
Protocol number: 1.0

The Research Ethics Committee reviewed the above application at the meeting held on 7 September 2004.

Ethical opinion

The members of the Committee present gave a favourable ethical opinion to the above research on the basis described in the application form, protocol and supporting documentation.

The favourable opinion applies to the following research site:

Site: Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy
Queen Margaret Hospital, Dunfermline

Principal Investigator: Mrs C DePlacido, Principal Audiological Scientist, NHS Fife, Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy

Conditions of approval

The favourable opinion is given provided that you comply with the conditions set out in the attached document. You are advised to study the conditions carefully.

Approved documents

The documents reviewed and approved at the meeting were:

Application Version: 1.0 Dated: 24/08/2004
Investigator CV Version: 1.0 Dated: 24/08/2004
Participant Information Sheet Version: 1.0 Dated: 24/08/2004
Participant Consent Form Version: 1.0 Dated: 24/08/2004

Chair Professor James McColl
Chief Executive George Brechin
Fife NHS Board in the Common Room of Fife Health Board
Appendix C Dallas consent form

Queen Margaret University Edinburgh
Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

Consent Form

I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this study.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage without giving a reason.

I understand that the data will remain completely anonymous throughout and that I will not be named in any publications or presentations that result from this study. No one will be able to identify me either from test results or from interview data.

I agree to participate in this study and to my interview and/or the results of my hearing profile being used for analysis, reports and presentations.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Contact details

Signature of Investigator

Date

Further information is available from:
Christine DePlacido, (cdeplacido@qmu.ac.uk)
Speech and Hearing Sciences, Queen Margaret University
Appendix D  COPA information form

Example Information Sheet for Potential Participants

We are Christine DePlacido,(Senior Lecturer in Speech and Hearing Sciences, Queen Margaret University) Pauline Campbell (Lecturer in Speech and Hearing Sciences, Queen Margaret University and Maria Wolters( Research fellow at Edinburgh University) We are looking for volunteers to take part in a research study. Please take some time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask us if there is something that is not clear or you would like more information.

In this project we want to find out how older people become aware of hearing loss, and how they obtain help in dealing with this. The study consists of two parts.

1 The first part is a tape recorded interview about your experience of hearing loss. This part lasts approximately 1 hour

2 In the second part we conduct a series of short tests which will give us more information about your hearing. In particular the range and loudness of sounds you hear and how well you can understand speech. All tests are standard audiological tests and none of the tests are painful or invasive. We will explain all the results to you and provide you with a report of our results which you can take to your GP. This part will take about two hours but there will be opportunities for breaks between the tests.

The total duration of the experiment will be 3 hours split over two sessions, with plenty of time for breaks, If you are unable to travel, the interview and tests can be carried out in your home.

We will keep a record of the tests results and interview. All the information will be kept strictly confidential. All data will be anonymised, which means you will not be mentioned by name or identified in any report or presentation. The results of this study will be
reported at conferences and in journals. All of the techniques used in this experiment are perfectly safe.

If you have read and understood this information sheet, any questions you had have been answered and you would like to become a participant in this study we will ask you to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw from the study at any stage without giving a reason.

If you would like to consult an independent person who knows about this project but is not involved in it, you are welcome to contact Professor Fiona Gibbon (details shown below)

Contact details of the researchers

Name of researcher(s): Christine DePlacido
                            Pauline Campbell

Address:                Dept of Speech and Hearing Sciences
                        Queen Margaret University
                        Queen Margaret University Drive
                        Musselburgh
                        East Lothian
                        EH21 6UU
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Email / Telephone:      cdeplacido@qmu.ac.uk / 0131 474 0000
                        pcampbell@qmu.ac.uk / 0131 474 0000

Dr Maria Wolters
Dept of Informatics
Edinburgh University

Contact details of the independent adviser

Name of adviser:         Professor Fiona Gibbon

Address:                Head of Subject
                        Speech and Hearing Sciences
                        Queen Margaret University
                        Queen Margaret University Drive
                        Musselburgh
                        East Lothian
                        EH21 6UU
                        Edinburgh EH21 6UU

Email / Telephone:       fgibbon@qmu.ac.uk / 0131 474 0000
Appendix E. Example Consent form

Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Centre for the Older Person’s Agenda

"The use and misuse of auditory profiles"

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this study.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage without giving any reason.

I agree to participate in this study.

Name of participant: _____________________________________

Address _______________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

Signature of participant: _____________________________________

Signature of researcher: _____________________________________

Date: _________________
Contact details of the researcher

Name of researcher: Christine DePlacido

Address: Senior Lecturer, Department of Speech and Hearing Science
Queen Margaret University
Queen Margaret University Drive
Musselburgh
East Lothian
EH21 6UU

Email / Telephone: cdeplacido@qmuc.ac.uk / 0131 474 0000
Appendix F  Presentations and publications from study.

Publications

Conference proceedings
DePlacido C G (2010) Exploring acquired deafness from the patients perspective. BAA study day, Bristol University. 25th of March 2010
Appendix G. Transcripts.

NHF 1
Interviewer
How long have you had trouble with your hearing?

NHF 1
That's a good question, about eight or nine years maybe?

Interviewer
What kind of work did you do?

NHF 1
I did a variety of things, first started off working on the railway-going way back to the old steam engines, ken going back and forth? And then I drove buses and that. I worked with the coal board; I was a medical attendant for the coal board. I used to go underground to check the first aid boxes and that and then (coughs) I went to the C-workshop as a medical attendant- it was really noisy. I was on the floor there instead of being in the medical centre, so if I was required they had this hooter signal that they thingamied but………. 

Interviewer
How did you first realise you weren't hearing?

NHF 1
Actually it was when I worked with the coal board, when I worked in the office in C- the senior nurse for Scotland, she used to be my nursing sister in B-, when I worked in B-she used to come down to see me and I was always saying "What?.....What?" and she said you would be better get your hearing tested, so they did a hearing test and they said" You've got a slight hearing loss, but I never really noticed it myself. But somebody would be talking and I would say “What"

Interviewer
How did you first realise you weren't hearing?

NHF 1
Ah well I started…. (laughs) funnily enough I didnae ken if it was a habit I'd gotten into……….I started………. even though I heard what they were saying, I started saying "What was that"? Just an automatic habit... Or maybe it’s just a habit I got into. I've programmed myself to say you're missing half the thing. They are halfway through saying something and I am almost automatically saying what? I think I must have programmed myself to that loss"

Interviewer
So once they started to mention it you started to act as if there was a problem?

NHF 1
Aye, Mmm

Interviewer
Why do you think that was the case?

NHF 1
I think it was more because I was starting to notice there was a problem there. Before I wasn’t thinking much. Once someone drew my attention to it Is seemed to become more aware of it being there.

Interviewer
What kind of things in your life were being affected?

NHF 1

I'd say……(hesitates....) well when you are going out socially having conversations you were just picking up bits of the conversation and you were trying to work out what was going on., and it was the same when you were going on courses. You would sit there and you were missing out on bits of what was going on. I became really aware then that it was going on.

Interviewer

How did you feel about missing things

NHF 1

I worried about it, I thought what is going on here? I was really annoyed about it.....(laughs)

Interviewer

What about others were they noticing it as well?

NHF 1

Aye they were noticing it, the usual comments about “deaf in your auld age” but they were quite tolerant.

Interviewer

When you stated to realise you were losing your hearing, was there anything in particular that worried you?

NHF 1

In case I went deaf altogether ...(laughs) ...I said to myself I wonder if I should learn to lip read and all this…mind….I never got down to it but its all at the back of your mind.

Interviewer

Do you still worry that your hearing will get worse.

NHF 1

I wasn’t until my last hearing test when they told me I needed a hearing aid for both ears that I thought, oh I am getting bad, I need two hearing aids. I don’t honestly like the thought if I am being honest of wearing two hearing aids, but if you’ve got to, you’ve got to

Interviewer

So what is it about having two aids that bothers you.

NHF 1

I’ve rarely seen anyone with two, there’s probably hundreds of thousands of them but.....I’ve never paid much attention, and the fact is folk can see you with hearing aids.

Interviewer

So, people being able to see them bothers you?

NHF 1

Aye it does

Interviewer

Has that always bothered you?

NHF 1

It has to be honest, yes, it has

Interviewer

How did you feel about actually getting a hearing aid?

NHF 1

Well.....I didn’t really think much about it until I actually got it. When I got it I’m saying to myself “Oh folk will see that I am deaf” sort of thing with having this on. No I think what are they going to say when they see two of them. I hate to think.

Interviewer

Do you think that will affect whether you wear it or not?
Well,…..(laughs)….It’s a good question that. I think its got benefits so I will just have to persevere and wear it. I will probably get used to it and then not think so much about it.

Interviewer

So are there still things that bother you about your hearing loss or having a hearing aid.

NHF 1

Only thing I still find is, even with my hearing aid on, I still say Eh? Even though I sometimes hear them sometimes I dinnae hear them. I don’t know whether that will be rectified one I get the new one. I didn’t realise until I got my last hearing test that this ear was as bad.

Interviewer

So this came as a surprise to you?

NHF 1

It was a surprise cos all along I thought it was just this ear, then I got the test and they said it was this one too.

Interviewer

What about social settings and that kind of thing, are you managing okay now or do you still have some concerns?

NHF 1

Well…..Still missing some conversations- once I get this other one that might help. Or maybe its just a habit I’ve developed into. I’ve programmed my mind to say your missing half the thing

Interviewer

So you think you are asking people to repeat themselves almost before you have time to think about what they are saying?

NHF 1

Oh yes they are half way through saying something and I am almost automatically saying “What?” I think have programmed myself to that hearing loss

Interviewer

So what do your friends think about that, do they just repeat it?

NHF 1

Aye they repeat it but at home I get they sarcastic remarks from my wife (laughs) and the grandkids say “Oh, granddad”

Interviewer

How does that feel for you? How do you cope with that?

NHF 1

I just….I just get used to it…..(laughs) It’s just the way things are.

Interviewer

Is there anything else about your hearing problems or wearing hearing aids that bothers you?

NHF 1

With me it’s the just the fact that you can see them

Interviewer

Is that the biggest problem for you?

NHF 1

Oh yes, definitely, but there’s definitely some benefit because when you switch it off you hear the difference

But mostly when there’s background noise I still have a problem. It’s okay when it is just one to one.
But if I was to turn on the fan would you struggle a wee bit?

Oh yes

Is there anything else you wanted to talk about?

No just I had a problem for about two or three years before I got my hearing aid, longer than that in fact, but it didn't bother me, but when it did bother me it was about two years after that before I came here, just because of the thought of wearing that thing in my ear...but there we are, I've got it now.

Is there anything else you need to tell me

No that's about it.
Interviewer
What kind of work did you do?

NHF 2
Ah, it was some considerable time ago, um- because I retired when I was 57. I was a technical manager in a computer firm.

Interviewer
Were you ever working in noise or were you in an office?

NHF 2
It was office work. My wife was just pointing out that a friend of ours said that people who had been in the army sometimes had a problem because they were exposed to gunfire in the ranges. Personally I don't think so I am talking about 40 years ago.

Interviewer
So how long have you actually noticed a problem with you hearing?

NHF 2
Um..... really just about a year, and as you will see from my medical records I've got something called myeloma which is a disease of the blood and..... I haven't asked the consultant about this...but.. possibly ..I understand...the hearing requires good blood supply. That might have something to do with it because it was only in the last 18 months or so it was diagnosed

Interviewer
Is that right?

NHF 2
Yes .myeloma...so that could have caused it.

Interviewer
So it was about a year a go you noticed you were not hearing Can you tell me how you noticed... what brought it to light

NHF 2
Um having to turn the television up and realising I was not hearing what people were saying...(mumbling)... recently I have noticed that when there are a lot of people talking it sounds quite loud but is not very easy to distinguish.

Interviewer
So the loudness was there but not the clarity

NHF 2
Yeah

Interviewer
Do you find particular voices more difficult to hear, male or female?

NHF 2
Eh no I do find some voices more difficult than others but I wouldn't have said it was because they were male or female.

Interviewer
When you started to notice the problem with your hearing how did that feel?

NHF 2
Eh....(long pause).... Eh I just sort of accepted it A neighbour upstairs at the time- I live in a flat- wears a hearing aid so you know I had heard him talk about his problem.

Interviewer
So you had experienced talking to someone who had a hearing aid.

NHF 2
Yes
Interviewer
Did he tell you anything about it? Anything to make you think about what it might be like to have a hearing aid
NHF 2
No I don’t have any concerns about it. I’m just coming up for something to work I mean I just have to accept it I don’t have any problem with it
Interviewer
What about your family, do they notice you have difficult hearing?
NHF 2
Do they….sorry?
Interviewer
Do your family notice you have a hearing problem
NHF 2
Ah…well my wife I think will know. My children are all overseas though they come and visit. We have a son and daughter in law. And grandchildren with us from Australia just now but no I wouldn’t say they particularly notice
Interviewer
You said your wife might notice, do you think she compensates for it, had she changed the way she speaks to you?
NHF 2
Yes she has yes
Interviewer
Who decided you should try a hearing aid, did you ask about it? or did your doctor advise it?
NHF 2
I did. I went to see my doctor first of all because I thought he could slot me in to a procedure where I would be seen and, you know he did the usual to see if there was any wax and he gave me some stuff to put into my ears Then I came here because one of my ears-my left ear -was particularly bad and although I had been applying liquid to my ear it obviously had not worked because the technician here used the vacuum thing and sucked quite a bit of wax out- and that made a difference.
Interviewer
You noticed a difference once that was done
NHF 2
Oh I noticed the difference straight away because it had been pretty blocked but I still wasn’t hearing well
Interviewer
So you decided to go ahead with the hearing aid?
NHF 2
Yes but I was just a wee bit curious- I had the hearing test before the wax was taken out and I realise that some of it is done through bone conduction but I would have thought it better to have done the wax removal before the test.
Interviewer
They didn’t repeat the test after the wax was removed
NHF 2
No they didn’t
Interviewer
I wonder if that’s maybe what they are going to do today when they assess you for the hearing aid?
Oh no I don't think so I thought I was coming for the fitting today. No the audiologists said I needed a hearing aid based on the results she had so I guess they can tell whether it's a wax problem or not. I mean I am quite prepared to accept that they (laughs) know what they are doing

Interviewer

So you are going to have the hearing aid fitted later on today, How do you feel about that?

NHF 2

I realise it is going to be visible but that doesn't matter

Interviewer

That doesn't bother you?

NHF 2

No not at all

Interviewer

You mentioned your friend has a hearing aid, have you discussed this with him? has he told you anything about wearing an aid?

NHF 2

No, no, but I know he has problem with his in as much as...when he attends a meeting, we are in a Probus club and when we have speakers I know that he finds that...listening to the speaker with the hearing aid is fine but when people start to talk and there's a lot of talking going on he finds that difficult.

Interviewer

If there is more than one person speaking?

NHF 2

Yes

Interviewer

It sounds as though you are open to giving it a go?

NHF 2

Oh definitely, yes, yes

Interviewer

Is there anything at all you are wondering about?

NHF 2

Well I am quite happy about it because I understand it will be digital so that's good. And I think I am probably happier to have an external one than one that goes inside although I know they are more expensive but I just think the external one is likely to be more efficient and should I also say that I had sort of in parallel....not by a deliberate strategy or anything but one of these adverts that you get through the mail for private hearing aids. That came in about the time I was here and I sent that off and had a talk with the private person and I talked about the treatment- I had mentioned it to him but the guy who came to see me and you know we talked about it and he said that obviously I needed to find out how comfortable I was with the NHS one first and that he would contact me again after a couple of months and we talked about various types that are available, mentioned one that I thought was quite interesting. He said that the majority of them you've got, once you've got the hearing aid you lose the ability to hear sounds naturally. I mean just when you've got it in it blocks the ears but there's a private hearing aid which allows the air in if you like to get in and some people find that particularly advantageous. It's interesting but I intend to give the NHS a full trial particularly before I think about a private alternative. Now that the NHS ones are digital- could be good for me.
Interviewer
And the fact that the private one might be in the ear rather than behind the ear, Is that a
consideration?

NHF 2
No in fact as I said I would prefer it, I just think- my background is in electronics,
radio, and it makes sense to have the microphone outside rather than wear it in
the ear.

Interviewer
Do you think your background knowledge has helped you because you know a little
about electronics and what goes on ?

NHF 2
Well I think maybe it has (laughs) Long silence

Interviewer
So is there anything else you would like to tell me about ?

NHF 2
No I think I was treated fairly promptly and the private guy who came to see me
was surprised that I had been treated so quickly. He had heard stories of people
having to wait a lot longer. I may have been given priority –I don’t know because
of the cancer. I don’t know but anyway I am perfectly happy with it.
The only minor thing was that the first appointment clashes with an event that I
didn’t really want to miss, for personal reasons I didn’t want to miss it and that
meant there was another month before I had another appointment which
surprised me a little because I phoned up immediately. Having said that I think the
time I had to wait was perfectly reasonable. The problems with the NHS is that all
these old people like us-there’s quite a lot of us…but other than that, no.

Well, thank you for your help
So could we start with a few wee questions?

Sure

Can you tell me what kind of work you did?

Well I am a joiner to trade. I worked with private contractors up until 1960 then I changed over to the government and I was a building inspector.

So was any of your work in noisy places or was it fairly quiet?

Well I was mainly outside or, well, travelling but at the latter end when I went to the government I worked inside and outside but not among a lot of machinery and mainly outside at the latter end housing schemes and schools that kind of thing.

What I am going to do is stop the tape for a second because I have forgotten to put the engaged sign on the door and I am worried we might be disturbed.

Oh okay

So can you tell me when you first noticed a problem with your hearing?

Oh about three years ago, I think it was probably getting bad before then but it only really started to bother me three years ago.

And how did it bother you?

Well when you went out- it depends where you are sitting- sometimes you can hear okay but if the person is sitting away from you, you can’t pick up what they are saying and you miss things. I don’t like that- they could be talking about me (laughs)

They could be offering you money and you would miss it (Laughs)

Oh I don’t know about that- its more takers than givers now (laughs)

So you missed out on conversations with your friends, how did you feel about that?

Well really frustrated, because you’re sitting there and you can’t hear and you’re struggling. I try to lip-read. I think that comes naturally when you can’t hear somebody, you watch their lips to see what they are saying.

Anything else you noticed?

Watching the television. We don’t have the telly on a lot we’re no one’s for watching the square box but I like the news and sometimes I can’t pick that up.

And is it important to you to hear the television?
Aye just the bits I want to hear

Interviewer

What about your family, did they notice you were having problems with hearing?

NHF 3

Well my wife did

Interviewer

And what happened when she first noticed it, how did she react

NHF 3

Well my wife wears a hearing aid, so she just said, "Well it comes to us all". I think that's how I feel - it just comes to us all.

Interviewer

So you have an appointment today to see about a hearing aid?

NHF 3

Yes

Interviewer

Did you decide to get a hearing aid, or did someone suggest it to you?

NHF 3

No I decided. I went to the doctor and asked him to send me in; they did a test at the surgery and said I needed to go to the hospital.

Interviewer

So what are your thoughts about getting a hearing aid?

NHF 3

Well (sighs) I don't know. If I have to wear it I've got to wear it, it's to my advantage cos I want to be able to hear when I go out.

Interviewer

You said your wife wears a hearing aid, have you discussed it with her?

NHF 3

No, she hasn't told me about it yet- but once I get it I'm sure she will keep me in line. She manages hers okay

Interviewer

And did you have any particular kind of aid in mind?

NHF 3

No I think it's a big one I am getting. I like these wee ones you see advertised in the papers but I wouldn't go privately it's a con. They tell you the price in these adverts and then- it's like going for glasses and the price is never the same once they get you in. There's no need for the prices the charge.

Interviewer

Does it matter that it's not a wee one

NHF 3

No like I say if I have to wear it, I have to wear it. I want to hear when I go out.

Long silence

Interviewer

So is there anything else you want to talk about today.

NHF 3

Well the only thing is I have a problem- I keep getting these malignant melanomas- see the scars- I've had a few removed from my face. I worked overseas in the war and never wore a hat and that's the result. I keep getting these. I've had one cut off from the top of my ear and there's no guarantee they won't come back.

Interviewer

And are you worried about wearing a hearing aid because of that?

NHF 3
No, I just thought I would tell you about it.

Maybe you should mention it to the audiologist just so she knows.

Yes, I will

So is there anything else?

No I don’t think so, I am happy enough.
Interviewer
Can I start by asking you a few questions...(subject nods) How long have you noticed you have a hearing problem?

NHF 4
Oh I don't know it's been years... I can't even remember. (long silence while subject continues to think- eventually subject begins to look anxious at being unable to provide an answer.)

Interviewer
you think it’s been a very long time?

NHF 4
Well it just seemed to happen slowly and now it keeps getting worse

Interviewer
you remember what kind of things you missed?

NHF 4
Well I used to turn the telly up and I thought that was normal, but my husband used to come in and say, “That’s far too loud” He's been dead for 14 years so it must have been longer than that

Interviewer
Can I ask what kind of work you did?

NHF 4
I worked in the mills in F It was really noisy there I couldn't hear anyone speaking

Interviewer
What about your husband, what kind of work did he do ?

NHF 4
He was a ploughman

Interviewer
So he was outside all day?

NHF 4
Yes I wondered sometimes if that's why the telly was so loud to him because he was used to the quiet.

Interviewer
Has anybody else told you the telly was too loud?

NHF 4
No I am on my own now but my daughter comes in every morning and she has never said anything. I can hear not too bad in my left ear, it's the right one that bothers me.

Interviewer
So you have had trouble hearing for a long time- what made you decided to come for a hearing aid now?

NHF 4
My daughter, I have just moved through here. She bought me a wee house and I moved through. Since I arrived she has had me at every clinic there is.

Interviewer
You have been having an MOT?

NHF 4
Yes,(laughs)

Interviewer
So your daughter thinks you need a hearing aid, did you not think you needed one?

NHF 4
Oh I knew I needed one but I wouldn't have bothered, I would have managed fine
Interviewer
Why would you not have bothered?
 HF 4
Well I was on my own and I didn't know if I would manage to use it.
Interviewer
What kind of things were you worried about?
 NHF 4
Well what if it went right into my ear and I couldn't get it out. Or if it was really big and
everybody saw it........(pause).......And what if it was too loud and gave me a headache
and I couldn't turn it down.
Interviewer
So you have a lot of concerns about getting used to it.
 NHF 4
Yes I hope I can manage
Interviewer
It sounds as though you are not looking forward to it?
 NHF 4
No I am not, I am fine the way I am, but I suppose it I could hear better I would wear it, if
it doesn't give me a headache or isn't too loud. I might be able to hear in company, just
now I have got to make sure I keep people on my left side so I can hear them. The other
thing I am worried about is if my hearing gets worse and I have to wear two.
Interviewer
What are you worried about?
 NHF 4
Well if my left ear gets worse will they make me wear two?
Interviewer
Well if that happened you could always gave a think about it and decide
 NHF 4
Well I suppose I could. I hope it’s no a big thing that people can see. I look bad enough
without that. I just got new dentures and my daughter says all I need now is a wig. What
if I don't have enough hair to hide it?
Interviewer
The hearing Aid you mean?
 NHF 4
Yes
Interviewer
Do you want to hide it?
 NHF 4
Yes I don't want people to see it, but I don't want a wee one In case it goes right into my
ear.
Interviewer
Maybe it would be a good idea to tell the audiologist about the things you are
worried about when you go in to see her.
 NHF 4
Yes, but I don't want to say anything stupid
Interviewer
You won't and she will be able to explain things to you.
 NHF 4
What if I can't change the batteries?
Interviewer
In sure she will show you how to, and your daughter will know how to
Do I have to pay for them?

No they are free

Interviewer

Is there anything else you want to talk about, either about your hearing or about the hearing aid

No, I don't think so
NHF5

Interviewer

Would you like to tell me why you came to get a hearing aid?

NHF5

Well I suppose it must be the case with most of the people who come in, I wanted my
daughter off my back because she is always saying to me," You didn't hear what I said
to you there" I am aware that sometimes now I don't pick up exactly- some odd words-
but usually in the context, I think, oh I know what that was- and equally I know my
television is up louder but I can't really say that personally I feel there's a problem

Interviewer

Have any other people commented on it?

NHF5

No not really, well it's my daughter but she said to me," You would be too proud to wear
a hearing aid" I mean she's not nasty or anything she's only concerned and I said," If I
need a hearing aid I have no problems about it, it's just that really- unless people are
speaking really slow -I don't hear what's going on and so on . I have been aware over
the last few months that there are more things, for example on the telephone sometimes
I have to ask people to repeat so I presume that I have some degree of loss compared
to what I used to have but whether I need a hearing aid or not I don't know and that's
really what I am here to find out.

Interviewer

So how long have you been noticing that you have problems?

NHF5

Well I have been waiting for two years for the test because I think the doctor thought
when I was chatting to him, you know, you're not needing anything but I would say yes
its been getting a bit worse in the two years, and my daughter has been saying "You're
not hearing that" "That television's too loud" and I have been aware that – she doesn't
say it like that but that the jist of it. My grandson, he's thirteen and I think now he
mumbles. Where before I used to hear him perfectly well (laughs) and maybe it is that he
mumbles or maybe it's because I think I am not going to say it to him again but really I
can't make out what he said.

Interviewer

Can I ask what kind of work you did, was there any noise there?

NHF5

No, I was a teacher so there was no noise, no

Interviewer

When your daughter first mentioned your hearing to you, what were your first
thoughts?

NHF5

Well, I had already noticed that sometimes I wasn't hearing:. . .occasionally.....and it was
only occasionally, I thought “Oh, I have gotten the wrong end of the stick here. I didn't
hear that. I probably am having to say to people “What was that you said?” I'm aware of
that more. And over the last four or five months I would say I've been more aware,
having said that I can speak with you and I don't have a problem at all.

Interviewer

So you are fine one to one

NHF5

One to one yes, and if I am looking at the person, but say Elizabeth had been standing
behind me and was chatting to me I may not have heard- she doesn't live with me or
anything it's just that she and her son, my grandson, are the people who would be
around my house in a casual way of speaking, and maybe not directly but saying odd
things and maybe I’m not ready they would say “You didn’t hear what I said”

Interviewer

When you started to notice you were missing things how did you feel about that?

NHF5

Oh it didn’t bother me, I’m getting older and I just feel that, I used to not wear glasses
and I can still see without them but it’s handier just to leave them on, so I have had very
good health so I think if my hearing is not what it was well that’s just getting older. If I
have to wear a hearing aid, but I just don’t feel that in general at this point in time that I
am needing a hearing aid. I mean that’s what I don’t know

Interviewer

And are you having the test today?

NHF5

Yes, that’s what I’ve come for

Interviewer

So on the subject of hearing aids, do you have any experience of hearing aids at all?

NHF5

Not really no, I have a couple of older friends who have them and they say they are a
pest (laughs) Having said that, one of them who died recently-she was 85- she couldn’t
have done without her hearing aid and another couple of people I know they sometimes
take their hearing aids out but they have them in at other times and find they need them
at other times. My brother actually, now I don’t think it’s a familial thing because I don’t
know of people in the family that have ever really had hearing problems. My brother who
is 20 months younger than me he was thrown out of a bus head first and lost a bit of
hearing so I can’t say that’s the same thing, he has a hearing aid but he says it’s a
nuisance too

Interviewer

Is sounds like most people you know have made negative comments about
hearing aids, how does that feel?

NHF5

Oh it doesn’t influence me, I am happy to try it and make up my own mind. I mean I
know that hearing aids are not the great thing glasses are but I will try it- if I need it, I still
don’t know that yet.

Interviewer

Did you have any thoughts about the type of aid you wanted?

NHF5

One of the small ones, I don’t want it to be seen (laughs)

Interviewer

Is that important to you?

NHF5

Yes, yes I think it is. I don’t really want people to see it.

Interviewer

Would the size affect whether you would wear it?

NHF5

(Pause) I don’t think so……… I don’t know……… I will just have to wait and see.

Interviewer

Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

NHF5

No I think that’s it, is that the kind of information you wanted?

Interviewer
Yes that was fine, Thank you
Can I ask you first of all how old are you?
I am 80
And did you ever work in noise?
Noise? Oh when I was younger I was a sewing machinist
So there was a lot of noise, was it a factory then? How long did you do that for?
I was just for just three or four years and then I joined the WREN’s I didn’t work in noise in the WREN’s
So there was no noise after that?
No
Okay. When did you first notice you were having trouble hearing?
Well probably when my daughter was at home on holiday and she said,” You will need to get a hearing aid because the neighbours are going to complain about that television”
and from then on it’s just been, no I’m not, yes I am you know? But I feel awfy I feel as if everything sounds here- kind of muffled sound you know?
And is that every kind of sound or just some?
Everything, my husband reads things out of the paper for me because my sight’s bad and he sits near me so I hear him. He’s no a very clear speaker (laughs)
Is that why you didn’t want him to come in, so you could talk about him (both laugh) Even my son said and that, when they come in, I have to say “What was that you were saying? I’m always asking what they are saying.
Are there any particular places you notice it is more difficult to hear? Is it easier to hear one to one or…?
When I am sitting one to one with you it’d no bad but when we are all out- we were in a restaurant for a meal when we are all together I’m just hearing the person nearest me and I’m missing an awful lot.
So how do you feel about missing things?
Well they might be talking about me (laughs) I just feel well I’ve got to this age I’ve done well you know.
How did you feel when you are not hearing?
I switch off and then I think “Oh dinnae bother” I get that crabby wi myself
With yourself?
Wi’ masefl, aye, and then I dinnae see right either so that’s double trouble(Laughs) My husband has a lot tae put up wi’
Do you know many people who wear hearing aids. I noticed your husband had one?
Uh huh, well I’ve got two friends, man and wife and I just said this morning, “Oh it must be terrible in their house, they are really both very deaf and my daughter in law wears a hearing aid- I think it was a childhood thing but I couldn’t really swear to that. I think she had an operation when she was young, the mastoid thing and she has always been troubled with her ears, you know.
So what’s your thought about hearing aids then if you know people who are using them?
I just feel, I keep saying this, I hope I answer the right questions, the right ways so I can get one because it’s annoying me, you know?
Sounds like you are quite keen to try it.
I feel like I’m talking to myself, it’s a funny feeling, you know?
So what you are saying is you are quite keen to try it?
Yes
Have you thought about which kind you would like to wear?
I did think, because I have these dark glasses that I have to wear sometimes even in the
house I wear them because it takes the glare away and I brought them just in case
because I heard about the ones that go in your ear and A-(Husband) has one and I
thought now if I’ve got they thick leg glasses and thingy bobs for the hearing aid it might
make a difference you know
Apart from that have you thought about wearing a hearing aid at all?
No as long as it works I’ll be quite happy, and A- gets on okay with his, he will help me.
He has an appointment here today to get his checked. We asked to get it done on the
same day because we depend on our son to bring us to the hospital. I don’t think it will
be hard to use. I am keen to get one because it will help me.
That sounds good, is there anything else you would like to talk about?
No, no I can’t think of anything
Dallas 1
Okay so we have started to record, I will just leave that there so it picks up your voice. So first of all can you tell me how you became aware that you were losing your hearing?

Dallas 1
Okay, ah, it was a good thirty….my son has just turned thirty three……… so it had to have been a good thirty two years ago that I became directly aware of my hearing impairment. Eh… I was in a position, working, that I could call in for repairs or things and we also, every time the receptionist took a break or went for lunch then the administration would take turns working her desk. When it came my turn I would go out to her desk and complained about the telephone. I couldn’t understand….something is wrong with the phone! So I had the repairman in three or four times every time I went it was my turn to go out there. So a peer asked me “have you ever considered having your hearing tested and I said “Because?” and he said “You’re the only one complaining” – “oh!-Okay” so I went and had my hearing tested, and they said,” Yes your hearing is going down” and I said “What caused it?” and they said a multitude of sins which I had all done. Too much medication, scarlet fever…..um….loud noises - well I’m in my thirties, loud noise is normal or they said it could be generic and okay? How do you determine? And they said…..well testing, and they gave me all the tests and said ….you know…..It’s gone, we don’t know what caused it and so it’s just a matter… we are going to give you one hearing aid switch it back and forth every other day so that one ear doesn’t get dependent on it only…so I did. Then I started meeting-my parents were divorced when I was young- so I then started meeting my father’s cousins and my mother had told me that my father had his hearing impairment from the war and he was in the navy and the loud missiles and guns and everything that it was there caused his. Then his cousins that were female did not go in the army or in the service and I started meeting them and I found out on his lintage through his mother, my grandmother that I never knew was had a sister and they both were deaf.

Interviewer
Right

Dallas 1
And the other sister, ah, had the cousins of my father they were deaf, they all had the same problem …I said “okay then and your telling me, ah, my sister is, my brother is and I am. My mother was and my mother’s sister, your grandmother was” I said, “ and my father?” and they said “Yes” and I said “so I got the gene” They said “yes” Okay, so that’s how we determined how the hairs that receive sound are deteriorating in my cochlea and um it has progressive every- well I think it is about a year, two years after switching back and forth I went back and had them tested and they said, “you need two”

Interviewer
Right

Dallas 1
So I had two in canal hearing aids. A year later, two years when I had it checked again…uh…. this one needs to be louder and it was progressive all the way and for thirty years now I am wearing two hearing aids, T coils on both ears and it is not going to get any better unless research, which they are doing, will come up with a
method. They haven’t told me whether it’s going to be like a cochlear type operation
or medication or what that will stop the deterioration and possibly start causing
them to grow back, so that my hearing will come back—probably to a degree it
might. But my biggest concern is that I have a son that just turned thirty three years
old and for the last—maybe ten years now—he says he only has 10% in one ear.

Interviewer
Right
So he’s got……..

Interviewer
So he’s got the gene too?

Dallas 1
And it’s possible that my youngest son….ah when he was in high school back in
2000 they tested him they said he couldn’t hear high frequencies so he may have the
gene too. So I am concerned of saving their hearing…ah.. More than mine because—
well tomorrow I will be 67 years old so….

Interviewer
Oh it’s your birthday tomorrow!

Dallas 1
Yes I am getting close to 70, people in my age, you know, the age level
they start hearing and we have a wonderful saying of “senior moments” and I can
excuse it that way. But my children have a whole life ahead of them and if I can
prevent them from getting to this point— I want to.

Interviewer
Mmm, so when you were told that it may be that it was genetic did you have concerns
then um about how it would progress—how did you feel at that stage?

Dallas 1
Informed
Good?

Dallas 1
(Nodded)And from that point on when I started learning that it wasn’t going to get
any better and they then said you need two—it was 2000 I think it was? Maybe 1998—
99 that I went in for my check up and the audiologist that had been taking care of
me for five or ten years she says, “now we can help you” and I said “hello? You’ve
been helping me, what does that mean?” and she became a good friend—retired now
but I said “Betty, talk to me” she said “I can’t get any hearing aids that are loud
enough for you anymore so I am putting you on the list for a cochlear implant which
would have meant two implants” and I said “No!” and she said “why not?” and I
said “because I do hear sounds “ and I said “and it’s my understanding, because I
have done research, that If that final line, if the implant doesn’t take, I will be
totally deaf” and she said “That’s right “ and I said “Then let’s wait until I go
totally deaf. Then I have nothing to lose— and a possibility I can hear again” So I
said,” no, okay, take me off the list I’m not interested” And she said, ”You know the
hearing aids that I have given you”— that was before T coils come around—she said,
”That’s the best I can do, they are as loud as they can get” I said “Okay” I then
went to college, back to college learned some signing, I said because— okay- I can’t
hear to understand so I’ve got to learn another method of communicating so I
developed an attitude and I’m going to keep it -because I couldn’t understand my
husband at that time and he (mumbles) so I said well if you want to talk to me you
WILL get my attention you WILL look at me you WILL and that was my attitude.
I had my ears tested and she said well I don’t think it’s an attitude she said you’re
deaf, you’re going - you are considered legally deaf now the tests and everything
showed that. “O-Kay” and she said, “but I would recommend that you learn
speech reading called lip reading then” and she said “because you’re good at it “and
I said, “okay”
Well we happen to have had at that time a big 32(?) inch tv big, I am sitting here
and that’s how I didn’t know I was teaching myself but I was learning. During the
newscast when the camera was right on the anchor person I am watching how they
are talking and I am learning speech reading. When they take the camera off I was
lost. So I said okay I don’t know what they are saying so I need closed caption so I
turned that on and was able to follow and that was the only thing that I really
watched at that time was the news because one, I was interested in the news and
two, because I was able to pick up and communicate and then when she said I
suggest you learn that better I then went back to my audiologist and I said “What
information is out there on speech reading?” and she pulled out her books and she
said, “Here is a whole video of tapes that you can study with” and so I got those and
played those over and over again and I was still practicing and became very
proficient at speech reading. I can sign. I read it better than I can sign it because I
don’t have anyone to practice with so you have to stop and think how am I supposed
to sign to convey what I am thinking and it takes practice just like anything so that’s
where I am today!

Interviewer
It sounds as though you have worked hard in your own right rather than having the
expert tells you what to do? Would that be right?

Dallas
I would recommend anyone that (pause) well I have to maintain the ability to work
and in order to really get across that- beyond the interview? This is necessary
because the person I am talking with to interview, she is looking at me or he is
looking at me. Okay, they haven’t a clue that I am deaf because I can speech read.
Okay If I hadn’t perfected that then they may have been looking at me like “I didn’t
ask you that question or, where did that come from?” They would have been giving
me body language like we weren’t communicating and in the US and Texas when a
hearing impaired or disabled person goes to interview they are to be treated an
equal to anyone else. Okay if you have another kind of disability it obvious, if you
can’t see your eyes are portraying that you’re blind. If you’re disabled, you are in a
wheelchair -something like that-but the hearing impaired or deaf person- you
can’t tell that unless you have never heard their voice then when they speak they
speak differently because they never heard the sound of voice, well I don’t have that
problem, ah so I would go to an interview sit there and talk, answer their questions
correctly like I heard everything they said and understood everything. Then I would
got on the job and (Unclear on recording) Then if I am expected to answer the
telephone I would have to tell them I need a booster, I need this because I am a hearing Impaired. That caused, even here, because I work for U- and have been, this is my seven years here. That caused a lot of conflict between the staff I was with and definitely with the director that hired me because in the initial interview I didn’t say “well should you pick me, I am going to need all of these assessments so that I can hear better because I am hearing impaired. By law I am not required to tell them and so when I got hired and they discovered that I couldn’t hear then I’d say yes it will cost you $100-200 to get a telephone for me, it’s going to cost you this much for that- that was coming out of their budget. They had not planned for that and they were not very happy to have to accommodate me, but it is by law something that I am entitled to and something that I need to maintain my position so I required them and so that’s been a barrier that people will have to confront and other people, not me, feel it’s their fault. And they feel like “I’m sorry” I’m not. I didn’t ask for this, this is something that came on me by the grace of god I and accept it. I attend conferences like this I belong to two chapters for hearing impaired that meet once a month One in G- which is south of D- airport and the other one in F- just west of D- airport and then I also belong to the national association and the purpose is to keep informed, stay on top of technology not only for myself but definitely for my children and you know this is something I want to do because while I am able, ah there’s a couple here that I have met two years ago at the same conference and I said to them, “why didn’t you come last year?” and she said she didn’t know anything about it till the week of and I said “Oh I am sorry if you and I had stayed in touch by email I would have told you about this in January” “January?” “Yes because when I get ready at my job to submit all of the days I am planning to take off for the year” I said “This is one of the things I want to be at so I contact the doctors here and I say when is your next one going to be? I wanna request the time off and they told me we are going to have it on May the 3rd. It came through Thank you! and I submit it, I could have easily gotten online and told these people and said the next one’s gonna be ….That would have been last year and you know it would have kept them informed I am now being asked where various things… and primarily with my tribe. I am native American and I belong to-I have three different tribes but I am only a citizen of one and that tribe is asking me now to give talks about my hearing impairment and I don’t prefer to just say “well I could tell them that it started here, that this happened and that happened and all this stuff and its well and done but I feel I get more out of it if I can say, “okay this happened but here are the people that you can contact to help you or the person you know who has a hearing impairment These are the things that you can do and buy or get that will enable you to be more functional in mainstream life”, and just like with that couple Texas is going to have their regional conference in October and WEBCAP which is the computer media by which you….are you familiar with webcap? Interviewer I’ve heard people speaking I don’t know a lot Dallas 1
Okay What it is, is that sprint corporation and yulecap(?spelling) which is the captell telephone company, they went together and they did this about three or four years ago and they came out with a method of a sprint relay and you can get on your computer and a relay operator will talk to you and type to me and we can communicate but you know you are talking to somebody else so often when I am reading you know it says “tell her” “sir” If the relayer is male or female you know it wasn’t acceptable and a lot of my friends don’t want to mess with it because they don’t want a third party listening to our conversation. Okay this. Last march the two corporations again went together and they have been working on this system and they came out with Webcap. Webcap is using the computer again. You register on Sprint relay and then when you want to- when I want to call you I get on my computer and I put in the telephone I am going to use and it can be any telephone and then I put in your telephone number then I say place the call. They call me on my phone first and I pick it up, then on my computer monitor comes up my telephone number then it has picked it up then it says place call and it picks your number and they start ringing it. You pick up the phone and say hello I say Hi! You hear my voice I can hear you if I want to by holding the receiver up but if I don’t and I just want to read what you write I can just turn it so that the speaker part of the phone is there in front of me and I can read because this relay person cannot hear me but they hear you and I think its voice activated? And so then I repeat it and it goes on the computer monitor so I am reading what you are saying to me and you don’t know that person. So it makes it more private although unless you know it and I like it better , I do, and my friends are aware of it and that makes your conversations a lot more pleasant.

Interviewer  
So is that- I am thinking back to when you said how you found out at first that you had a hearing problem. How did it feel to go from someone who has hearing to someone where people are saying to you “I think you have a problem” How did you feel when they said that to you?

Dallas 1  
Ah that was okay, like I said as soon as he said “you are the only one that’s complaining ““Oh!” It was like- oh you guy can hear on the phone up front and I was the only one that couldn’t- obviously that tells you something is wrong with you and I immediately made an appointment and went and had my hearing tested just like they had requested and then that was informative for me. Actually – and I have been asked this and thinking back growing up I was very attractive, I’ll say beautiful, person and I ran for Miss Universe but in that time teenage, pre-teen ah twenties when I had the beauty, all this body I could hear -not real good -but I could hear, I didn’t know I was hearing impaired and I would hear people make comments about me someone would say “oh she’s pretty “ “Yes but she knows it” -no I didn’t , and they’d say “she’s stuck on herself” I would hear people talking about me and I would hear these negative statements about me and it bothered me and for a long time I was trying to please everybody- that’s part of what you grow up into and it was very frustrating, anxiety, all of the things that happen in that age level and being attractive its almost double and so I have to learn that it doesn’t
matter what you look like or who you are you can’t please everyone. That’s a lesson
that I had to learn but it was stigma from my appearance so when I became hearing
impaired I don’t hear those statements any more (Smiles)
Of course I don’t have the beauty either (laughs)

Interviewer

Oh I don’t know about that I think you do!(Both laugh)

Dallas 1
But I mean you know my self-esteem and my confidence and everything is better
because I don’t hear someone saying “oh she is stuck on herself” or “She thinks
she’s pretty” or all of these little things that I can’t control so you know in one way
the hearing impairment had become a blessing toward me! (Laughs)

Interviewer
So it’s almost been a positive thing?

Dallas 1
I am able now to, in my own emotional state, accept what I want and I don’t if ah,
you know something happens between us and I say,”well you need to look at me”
and I tell you that I need to communicate better and you don’t respond- that’s fine-
I don’t let it bother me because I feel like I have given you the ball and you dropped
it. Well I didn’t drop it so that’s your problem

Yes

Dallas 1
Yeah it’s not mine anymore because I can go on you know ?and feel good about me
and that makes a big difference even with my two children. In the coping session we
had this morning one of the girls said, “I have a four year old child who gets
invited to parties and I don’t want to go because I can’t hear”. and I thought that’s
sad because the child is missing out and uh and I (pauses) injected I started my
hearing impairment a year after my- or became aware of it- a year after my oldest
son who is now thirty….. Has just turned thirty three…. Um… when he was year
old. Okay before that I was a lazy mother, and you know as children have to learn
to crawl they’re right by you and they are in the same room and they’re confident
and they’re safe and all this stuff but then you need to go into the next room and
you get up and walk out and suddenly they are aware that my security has gone and
they will cry or whatever, Instead of me going back into that room and picking
them up and bringing them in with me I started clapping (starts to clap) I would
just go like this and they would come crawling into the room where I was. Well I
would do that all the time, if I would go into the other room and they cried
I’d…(claps) Well they are just crawling so I told them in the coping class I said I
think those of you who have had psychology and are aware of Pavlov’s dog I said
that’s what I did. I did this, my child came to me I said my son just turned, on May
the 7th, thirty three years old we can go to a mall and say,” I’m going over here,
okay I’ll meet you in the food court and we’re gonna have lunch” or something and
I will go there and wait and then I see him on the other side of the food court
coming in and he’s looking around and I go (claps) and he turns and he looks at
me. He comes over to me and maybe other people have heard me clap too and he’ll
say. “I hate that!” (laughs) I said but he’s thirty three years old and I started that
when he was this little (indicates size with hand) and it still works
Interviewer
Still works
Dallas 1
And I said uh that’s another way that I learned to cope and I said when they were in their teenage years the house that we had their bedrooms were on the other side of the house. The living room, kitchen all of these were in the middle and then the master bed was over here and if they had friends playing or whatever and I’d be in my bedroom and I can hear their TV and I thought if I can hear it with my hearing impairment it’s too loud over there and so I clapped I said here comes my child I said.” Can you hear your TV?” and I said – they’re super children- and they said, “Mommy you didn’t want to hear that?”

“NO” (laughs) so they would go back and to the other side of the house and they turn it down and then I am comfortable knowing that they are not damaging their hearing but I said that that was my strategy, I didn’t have to get up out of bed, walk across the house and tell them “TURN DOWN THE TV!” I said I’d clap and they’d come in like a normal boy and I’d say, “Can you hear your TV?” - yeah they can hear so they can hear their TV and I know that if I hear it’s too loud so that was some of the coping skills I’ve learned

Interviewer
I’m just watching your time- oh its quarter to one already - Can I ask you? When the idea of hearing aids was first introduced how did you feel about that- about wearing hearing aids
Dallas 1
Ah I’m good … are you saying that? – my attitude about my hearing impairment as it has deteriorated has been (pause) not sad… not… because I told you about the comments that I used to hear that I couldn’t control. It has been more like a focus on my children to help them and then ah within the last ten years when this was getting worse it became aware to me that you know your children aren’t the only ones that can benefit from what you are learning and uh the equipment that you are aware of that you have there’s a world of people out there I think the United States now are stating thirty million are known I believe, but there are maybe ten twenty more thousand or a million people that are out there that are in a state of denial or have not let it be known that they have hearing impairment- well my oldest son is one of em because he only has 10% in one ear he doesn’t wear a hearing aid he’s not ready to do to that .He knows it’s going to come and I have talked to him about it he says,” Mum my friends will make fun of me” and they would because he would make fun of them(laugh)People! So he’s not really in a state of denial it like I can hear on this side so I’m going to cope by moving my head or my body so that when my friends or whatever are talking I can understand them and communicate with them that way. Uh the day will come and he knows that and so I thought well not only my children but the more I get involved with the chapter and the associations the national association I’m finding that there aren’t enough people out there that are willing to educate. So I thought maybe that’s my role in life to positively, like I said, when I talk I don’t talk about it for me I said okay this happened this is what I’ve done, this is what you can do, and these are the sources that you can go to. Like with this couple, I told him ah the
national meeting in Reno Nevada next month is a fantastic conversation...ah
conference and I brought them the conference programme booklet and everything
from last year that I went to and I said see all of these things and they have all these
things going and they have, they have signers all of these and I said it was the best
one I’ve ever been to and I said because it didn’t matter where you were there was
a method being utilized for whatever way you want to communicate if you like
signing then a person is standing up here (indicates) signing like crazy, If you want
to read it here’s a person up here using ?cart and there’s a big screen with all the
words and I said if you want to speech read you can sit in front of the speech
readers I said there’s no reason why you couldn’t be informed and I said it was
beautiful. So that is more or less my position in life now is that sharing and helping
gives me gratification

Interviewer
Can I ask you.... because we are coming to the end of your time, can I ask you one quick
question? From everything you have told me today you have had a good relationship
with your audiologist which seems like an equal relationship, like you both work together
well and you have done a lot well actually you are very positive about having a hearing
prob. well I wouldn’t call it a problem because that’s maybe the wrong word to use ...
but you mentioned earlier on about the disability act? Just your first reaction........ would
you consider yourself disabled?

Dallas 1
Disabled? Yes. I mean obviously I wouldn’t be wearing these and having
(interruption at door)
This whole system cost $5000 If I wasn’t disabled I wouldn’t have it on. I’m grateful
for my tribe because they bought it all for me
Interviewer
Oh excellent
Dallas 1
I have a chair pad which cost $250 just for that alone for the telephone it actually
then goes to the t coil I can’t afford this but thank god my tribe will provide it for
me. Now as a Native American ........actually this isn’t to do with this you can turn
off now.(laughs)
End of interview.
Dallas 2
Okay D so we are ready to start. If you just talk in your normal voice this will pick up. So first of all could you tell me a wee bit about how you found out that you had a hearing problem?
Dallas 2
Well this is…. (sighs).. this has been coming on for quite a while C. Um I have a terrible problem with allergies and sinus infections and through the years, sometimes as a young child I would get tonsillitis, strep infections and then as I was older my children would get the infections that I would too, and I am allergic to penicillin so this would go on and sometimes my ears would get infected, totally blocked and my ear drum would burst and so it’s been an ongoing thing. Then about… I don’t know… nine years ago I think it was I was doing workshops in F- and the hotel had not been used in a long time and that musty stuff and I was immediately sick and had to fly back to D- and we landed in A-, changed planes and my ears, I felt my eardrums burst and I got back home with an infection that would not quit. It was about three months and I lost my hearing 100% and then the doctor was amazed that I got my hearing back but I had a loss in my right ear. It wasn’t bad enough to pay attention to it so I putzed along and everything seemed okay I learned to accommodate and cope with it and then (sighs) oh….it was two years ago- no It was last year ah same thing, infections, fluid filled both ears and I saw in the paper the C conference and I called and I got into the conference and I was again totally deaf for about three months until it cleared up. Well each time this right ear had lost more and more hearing and that was when I would say Oh I’ll get hearing aids, get fitted with hearing aids and I’ve got a sense of humour and about myself and so the mis-hearings in the different things with my family -and we have certain words that trigger that I have misunderstood in the past – well it isn’t funny anymore or it’s just my friends and my neighbours and family say when are you going to get the hearing aids? And there’s is No earthly reason why I haven’t. I think I just keep thinking, well they are going to come out with something newer. The ones I really want are the P- with the microphone However someone will say why don’t you just go in and buy the $900 ones at B and I’m thinking Well…. so it’s been procrastination that’s it!
Interviewer
So do you think it’s because- or it isn’t because of finance do you think it is something about .....umm....this is not going to fix the problem?
Dallas 2
No I have no concerns whatsoever about wearing the hearing aids or wearing the microphones, I mean it’s not a matter of pride. It’s simply a matter of ….well I think I can still hear ah quite good you know with my left ear I have good hearing with the left ear. Or I will say please sit on my left side that’s my good ear or you know people I know doing workshops, I still do workshops and the people in the workshops I have learned when they ask questions I will simply say mmm help me understand your question better what was that again? or when my back’s to them if I am writing on a flipchart - because I facilitate – I don’t lecture I facilitate I want to get their thoughts down okay? Well I say I am writing on the flip chart and my back is to you I won’t hear really what you’re saying because I am
concentrating on what I’m writing so wait until I turn around and face you, you
know, so all these little tricks that we come up with but really they aren’t tricks
they’re reasonable and… this is my allergies it has nothing to do with what we are
talking about and I’m going to have to go and get a paper napkin pretty soon The...
so then I have …..a lot of my consulting after the workshops and people come in
for a one on one so I have .. where I meet them …ah it’s an office downtown. We go
into my office and I invite them to sit which is to the left of me . So I have my left ear
and sometimes we are sharing some information they have written because I’m
editing and giving them suggestions and then if I want to do more talking I’ll turn
my chair slightly so I’m looking at them and my left ear is still getting it and I keep
thinking well I’m hearing all right I don’t need the hearing aids but then oh! when
I am in one of these studies and I have the hearing aids…. oh my gosh

Interviewer

You notice the difference?

Dallas 2

Oh the hearing that I’ve lost! just unbelievable and of course the tests have shown
that

Interviewer

So as time’s gone on you’ve learned to cope?

Dallas 2

Yes!

Interviewer

I mean you can continue to live your life without having had the hearing aids?

Dallas 2

Oh yes! I go to concerts I go to plays and I’ve learned you know so if I don’t hear
everything that’s said in the play, lot of times it’s a play, that you’ve ah it’s one
that has been around and you’ve read the book or you can just tell by the actions
and whatnot, but when we went to the music hall last year we had the infra-red
(gasps) oh my! it was like… I couldn’t believe it and I was in a study, their (A-)
study earlier this year ah through C and P high school put on production of Miss
Saigon- you cannot believe that high school students were that talented and could
handle something with that much emotion and I was, we were up in the balcony
and I had the hearing aids on uh! I heard everything- without them I would have
missed so much and I said to Dr C I was kidding her and I -well they’re going to
Hong Kong – now it’s maybe you all will be going over to help C to help set
something up I said can I go along as one of your subjects and she said only if you
get your hearing aids

(Both laughing)

Interviewer

So there’s a bribe there?

Dallas 2

Cos it’s been a year now and I’m still ….(gestures)

Interviewer

How do you feel about the fact that professionals focus on hearing aids, because you’ve
worn them and then you’ve gone back to coping without them -and coped without them
As professionals we tend to focus on the hearing aids How do you feel about that.
Dallas 2
I’m not sure if you’re saying as professionals you mean in the audiology field? Or
as a professional myself in my field which I not Audiology?
Interviewer
Well I mean do audiologist tend to think you should have hearing aids
Dallas 2
Of course
Interviewer
But obviously you’ve worn them and you’ve gone back to being without them and you’ve
got your own coping strategies how do you feel about audiologists saying you need
hearing ads when you think you are managing without them?
Dallas 2
Oh I think they are 100%...the audiologists?
Interviewer
Mm hmm
Dallas I believe they are 100% right in feeling that way and encouraging me If they
weren’t encouraging me knowing my hearing loss I wouldn’t respect them as the
professionals they are and I would think they are in the wrong field!
(Laughs)
Interviewer
I’m so glad you said that!
(Laughs)
Dallas 2
And I’m not doing this for brownie points I mean I really and truly feel that way
because I feel the work that I do on my profession if I didn’t believe in it I have no
business working with people and encouraging them to do the things that I am
encouraging them to do but the fact that so many of them DON’T well that’s their
choice I’m opening the door and it’s their choice to walk through. Well they have
done more than open the door for me they have loaned me the tools and everything
and where I can really tell the difference is ah when I am on a guided tour when
I’m on a bus, ah last year in China one of the guides, I think it was when we were in
Tokyo she had the microphone with the big head you know and held it in front of
her mouth and I would ask her if she could lower it and people picked up who were
in the know “You’re hard of hearing aren’t you?” and they said “Well you’re lip
reading even though a lot of audiologists know that people don’t lip read as good as
they think they do Last year here S was my mentor and whenever she was talking to
me and I, she’d either put her hand or a piece of paper in front of her mouth
because she would know I was lip reading and so it doesn’t work all the time and
then here in Dallas this year, recently, when I was in the A – that’s a four week
study that they do and I had the hearing aids and my friend and her woman’s club
group we were sitting midway back in the bus and I could hear everything the tour
guide was saying because I had the hearing aids and I’m going on another trip in
the middle of June and I’m like if you don’t get those hearing aids before this trip
forget it you’re never going to get them. So after this conference now my goal is
within the week after this is through, next week I have to make an appointment and
get the hearing aids
Interviewer

Do you think - obviously the C centre’s been giving you a lot of support

Dallas 2

Oh they’re wonderful

Interviewer

Apart from hearing aids because you’ve only had those on loan, what other support have you had from C that you’ve found helpful what kind of things do they do that you think would help

Dallas 2

(Long pause) ... let me. Last year with C, I mean I have five children you know? I carried them I birthed them (laugh) I raised them and I have grandchildren and I have these momentous things that happen in your life and very... what should I say? You don’t forget it’s either happenings that cause a major illness or something that... last year when I was at C I happened to see that piece in the education section of the Monday paper and I called and they didn’t even know it had been in the paper so Dr T called me back and talked and it’s when I had the ear infection and so I was totally deaf in both ears and one of the coping strategies was I would carry a pad and paper even when I would go to the store or go somewhere I’d say I’m hard of hearing I can’t hear anything could you when I ask for something could you please write it down and they treat you like your mentally deficient but it works Then I get to C - and they still laugh because I faked my way through registration because I could see them and we were in smaller groups so we were in the meetings I mean in the morning and at lunch and the break room was the little kitchen there and okay I go in there and there’s some people and they are talking and all this that and the other and Dr T said we should get into the classroom and of course I sat where I sit now, right in the, and she has this mic so she is talking and I can hear everything because I am reading her lips not hearing her - then they starting passing the microphone around the room. Well now I couldn’t see the lips like that I turned around and said “Dr T I can’t hear” and so she was “oh” and she ran she got me the headphones - well I could hear! It was like - oh my gosh, oh my gosh I can hear! And through all like she was saying if there’s something that you are missing if you are having problems let me know. She said we weren’t ten minutes into the programme last year when D was going (gesture) so it’s like I am totally deaf and I checked out being between totally and profoundly deaf with the fluid in both ears So you can imagine I mean they were my godsend. People during the week were coming up to me and saying oh you should have seen your face I know the feeling because the same thing happened to me when I lost my hearing and got the hearing aids so then she let me keep the hearing aids and they waited till my hearing started coming back and it came back totally, well not but to where it was normal for me you know and ah they retested me, reprogrammed the hearing aids, and let me keep them another two weeks and then I still didn’t order them (Laughs) So what my feeling from C is they are a gift from heaven

Interviewer

It almost sounds like there was no fuss no special “oh... we have to do something” they just knew what to do.
Dallas 2

Exactly and um in listening to the others peoples stories C… (Long pause)…. Losing
my hearing to me as not something momentous, horrible that I needed to be angry
about or one thing and another and hearing some of these peoples stories where they
lost their hearing in one ear and they were upset they were crying, they were angry
with everything I don’t know if it’s simply me but times with the sinus I’ve lost my
voice. Well my profession, I mean I’ve been a professional speaker and seminar
leader and I do one on one consulting and I facilitate workshops so if I can’t speak I
can’t work. Now if I can’t hear I have a real problem but I have learned I can’t do
the workshops as well although I still do them and with the one to ones I can say to
people I am having difficulty hearing can you turn so I can see your lips and I
managed to develop a rapport and people have a sense that I care about them and
am really interested so they work with me and I have been driving down the road
by myself and I say, “okay lord you took my hearing away. I don’t know the reason
for this but there must be a reason and I can still talk and I can still see now I have
friend who can’t see and they can’t drive and they can’t do this. Now I lose my
voice you take the voice away “and then I say, “okay lord I can’t hear I don’t know
what the reason is but please let my hearing come back and so I haven’t
experienced the anger and I know it was maybe two years ago the ear doctor, I
know the right name but I can’t remember right now who I was seeing, thought I
had a tumour and because my hearing loss, different things because I thought I am
going to go and get the hearing aids and then I had the hearing loss and I had the
audiology test, and what his tests were he was sure it was a tumour and he had me
go for an MRI. Thank god there was no tumour. Well then it was last year at the
clinic, ah the C they were doing all my tests and everything and they said there was
no indication and there shouldn’t have been- they were trying to be very polite and
not upset me but you know that wasn’t …. So that’s essentially, here I am, another
week at S and enjoying all of the contraptions in the whole thing

Interviewer

Would it be fair to say that you work well with C because you trust them?

Dallas 2

Trust them? I just look at them and like heaven and Dr T and Dr C and S was my
mentor last year and I felt like she was a daughter you know, and I knew G slightly
last year. He has me this year and I trust them implicitly and for me there is
absolutely no reason not to trust you know? Sometimes I might trust too easily?

But sometimes I’m very sceptical and you make mistakes in judgement but I’ve
worked with people in my profession I was a seminar leader for FP and CT who do
things all over the world… ah most. The majority of my work is with people who
have been downsized and so I’m doing career decision workshops start your own
business, active retirement and job search skills so you’re in a situation where
people ..ah when Dr H was talking yesterday I would be a perfect counsellor for the
people because I have done this with people in really stressful situations and so
even though I like to talk I’m an excellent listener and people sense that I care and
its true- I do do. Not something you can, you can fake and so it could also be I’ve
seen so many people with so many problems that are so mindboggling and how are
they ever going to resolve them. That for me not that it as you know, troublesome
bothersome when you can’t hear anything and I never thought about the danger involved. I was driving and people would say, “D you can’t hear sirens” Well neither can people who have their radio turned up, no way they can hear sirens either and ah so I just really oh ah I have started to withdraw from family events. Ah some social situations I go to but then I rationalise it. I say well I am really happier at home reading this book or really happier home doing something else and I love people I love meeting people. However I’ve reached a time where I like my quiet time too and I really do like my quiet time however sometimes- like I just came back from Michigan which is where I ‘m from and was my brother in law’s funeral my sister has the four kids married, 11 grandkids and some great grandkids and I was there and my 52 year old daughter and 22 granddaughter were there and it was... the whole time and that was wonderful and in a situation like that I don’t hear everything that is being said and some of the people In the small group, the men especially well, they just withdraw Well I don’t know if it’s that they want to be the centre of attention or they have control issues – this is anonymous right? (Laughs) Interviewer Yes Dallas 2

No but in listening to them they really need marital counselling and it’s not the hearing loss, although that contributes to it, but it’s the other. so what I did like it was the whole family I mean I love them all and they love me then like one of the younger grandchildren, five years old and I haven’t had this big (gestures) so she said here are people all around and there’s conversations going on and you can’t begin to hear all of this so you don’t need to feel left out and I had H and she was standing here by my knee she was looking at this (points to t shirt) and spelling it out so I was telling her this is the Equest my granddaughter was in so I find that even though I avoid some situations when I am in larger crowds and I used to do this when I had full hearing I would look around and see who seemed the least comfortable and I’d go over and start talking to them and then draw them into a group well I’m doing the same thing now only maybe it’s with one of the children so I’m happy with that (laughs)

Interviewer Good- do you want to have a drink of your coffee ?

Dallas 2

Well I might consider that (laughs)

Interviewer Nice coffee

Dallas 2

It is very good. So I don’t know if this is helping you but this is my story

Interviewer Can you think of any positive aspects of losing your hearing

Dallas 2

Any positive aspects of it? Oh my gosh yes. I have a real good sense of humour. My name is French, my father’s name when I divorced I took back my maiden name.
My mother was Irish and the Irish have a wonderful sense of humour— at least the women (Laughs) and a strong faith and so I have a strong faith and a wonderful sense of humour and sometimes my brain thinks real weirdly from other people and I see humour in places here other people don’t and when people get angry because people don’t understand them, people get angry because I don’t understand what you said. I have had more funny things happen and I was kidding so I said just think when I get my hearing aids and I hear everything you say all of the humour and fun we are going to miss out on and they say you’ll still keep us laughing when you’ve got the hearing aids but it was like ah 4 years ago I sold my home and I moved to active senior living- 55 + active seniors not assisted. So we get together for breakfast or coffee during the day the groups will get together and sometimes I mishear what’s being said and it is so funny but we are 55 and older - well I’ll be 75 in august and we have people in their 80s and their 90’s so I am definitely not the only one with a hearing loss and we have things that happen that we laugh …and with the family, so positives …some of the positives… I think you really sense people who are… you get a sense of who people are because of how they respond to your not hearing them which is really, really interesting. My grandson was sitting at the table one day doing this (touches her nose ) and I said H what’s the matter with your nose? But I said it nicely and he was 13 at the time and my seven year old granddaughter was there and my daughter in law and he said something and I said how in the world did a pit bull bite your nose and he’s looked like where’s she coming from? My daughter in law said, “He said he’s picking a pimple on his nose.” (Laughs)

So I mean the humour, but some positive things, it helped me know myself better - how I cope with things and how I look at things and how there are some things that I accept this isn’t my doing and it’s a higher power doing it so I have to learn how to live with it. and I can really tune myself out when I want so I don’t know if…… (long pause)….positives I’m not thinking positive but I don’t know if those are positives? I do think one of the things it does; it helps your other senses develop as part of a coping. Although I’ve had strong intuition and this had been something from childhood and I have a daughter and four son and at one time they were all in their teens at one time so if you don’t have a mother’s intuition you’re in trouble!

Interviewer

I can imagine

Dallas 2

And it’s something that developed even before I had the hearing loss and when I’m working one on one with clients it just seemed that there was- not with all of them - but there was a large percentage of ? would be made I’d ask the right questions and with most of them and bring out the things that had been bothering them I’ve had people say, especially men “I’ve told you things I’ve never told anyone else including my wife” Well they are in a time of stress, they have lost their job and so I don’t know if that has developed that sense even stronger

Interviewer

So some empathy?

Dallas 2
Right yeah I’ve always had the empathy but even more so. Well in 1976 I was 43 years old I had a cerebral haemorrhage and the doctors didn’t think I would live 5 minutes more and I did, so after I said through the years things happen and you just learn there’s a higher power whatever it so if I could reverse ? I think I keep thinking that there has to be something stuck in my ear that someone can pull out and I didn’t have to have a hearing aid… (laugh) …you know? Like there was a cork in there that somehow got misplaced so maybe I’m in denial you know ?Elizabeth Kubler Ross said anger, denial, bargaining depression and acceptance I think I have skipped everything and I am simply in denial and acceptance at the same time

Interviewer

I would say exactly the same thing

Dallas 2

Yes I’m in denial and acceptance at the same time. Although I know I can’t hear I still don’t feel I need to have the hearing aids

Interviewer

Do you think having hearings aids on permanently making the decision to wear hearing aids would be like another step that your maybe not ready for yet? You are maybe ready to accept that you don’t hear but not ready to accept that you are a person who wears hearing aids?

Dallas 2

Well accept that I don’t hear and I know that I don’t hear and I don’t have a clue why I’m not …. like I said its procrastination and I keep thinking they are going to come up with a miracle cure. They are going to come up with a miracle hearing aid that’s as good as this that I could buy at the dollar store I don’t think it’s going to happen (laughs)

Interviewer

No

Dallas 2

No, what is interesting I that E asked me if I had talked to her dad about the advantage of having the FM and you know who I mean?

Interviewer

Yes

Dallas 2

And so yesterday at lunch I was there talking to her mom and dad and G came over and she said so what are the advantages and so I said you know this and all the stuff and G said you’re telling it better than we do so it is not that I’m not for them and encouraging other people because I’ve seen how much it had enhanced my life and you know- this is my allergies because there’s only one eye doing this - and what I’m praying is it’s not going to go into another infection. We went into the reading room yesterday and all the older couples are sitting and reading and I’m going to be 75 and they wear this powder this whole aura and the room was filled with it and I said G -I can’t use this room I will be sick. Well he figured with the door open we’d be okay -and it wildflower in T so… well what other questions?

Interviewer

I think that was all the questions I had so unless there anything else you wanted to add?
Dallas

Well as far as having C I think…. I didn’t even knew C had opened a branch in R until I read it in the paper last year because let’s see Charles my youngest son is 42 so he was about 17 so that what how many years ago? He was in high school maybe he was 16/17 and my father in law had a real strong stuttering problem very, very strong even until he died in his 80’s and Charles had started stuttering and he’s the youngest of the 5, really bad and I was attending University at the time as a student and I saw a thing about C and about the clinic and I made an appointment at the downtown C for him and took him in and he had a totally comprehensive hearing test. It was absolutely marvellous and at no cost which is unbelievable. It was wonderful and they had a special programme and he could have been in the programme and he stuttered he stuttered badly but there was no way he was going to go to the programme and what is interesting is that he does not stutter anymore he has stopped so I knew of C from way back in – he graduated -this must have been 1980 round in there when I took him and I've been in the toastmaster, not for years but the C centre downtown has a toastmasters group the patients the clients are in toastmasters so I had friends you now with hearing impairments and seeing what they can do and then like I said when I arrived here last year when they were testing me Dr C said, “Have you tested her for fluid in her ear ?” and she said “No” and so she did and she found the fluid in the ear so I was between totally and profoundly deaf last year when I started there well you can imagine when they put these headphones on the others said I lit up like a Christmas tree and then they would say it as so wonderful to see your face because we knew how you felt because that’s where they had been 2 years or 5 years or 20 years before

Interviewer
Sounds like a great place

Dallas 2

Oh it wonderful and I’ve been in other studies for them any time they have a study and they need somebody for it I say call me in after all you’ve done so much for me I want to give something back to you

Interviewer
I’m going to stop this now so you can have your coffee

Dallas 2

That would be nice.
Dallas 3
Right that’s it.
Dallas 3
Alright.
Interviewer
So if I just leave that there that should be ok. So basically I just wanted to ask you a few
questions about your hearing. Can you remember how it felt when you lost your
hearing?
Dallas 3
No because I was a toddler. A little toddler. No I don’t remember. My mom does
because she said that I was sitting closer to the TV. And that’s how she could tell
there was something wrong.
Interviewer
Right.
Dallas 3
And I wasn’t hearing her from the back when she called me. That I wasn’t
responding.
Interviewer
Right. And you don’t remember a time where you did hear?
Dallas 3
Erm not completely normal. There was a drop, a dramatic drop in hearing ten
years ago.
Interviewer
Ten years.
Dallas 3
And that. That I do remember.
Interviewer
Ok.
Dallas 3
Especially when I had my. When I had my hearing aid off. I’ll put it in. and I’ll hear
a bird.
Yeah.
Dallas 3
And that’s when I’ll say wow because I used to be able to hear that unaided. That I
do remember.
Interviewer
So how does that feel?
Dallas 3
It makes me kind of sad. Because the. Before it was more of a loss of volume but
now there’s a loss of clarity.
Interviewer
Right. Right.
Dallas 3
And that annoys me. Like even just the test we just took. I know the difference
between a test now in the last ten years and one in the 1990s. When in 1990 it was
just volume.
Interviewer
Right.
Dallas 3
Now it’s a case of not being able to hear consonants either the beginning or the
end ones or the you know.
Interviewer

Does it bother you or make you bad about it getting worse?

Dallas 3

Yeah. It does. It does bother me that it might get worse.

Interviewer

So a bit of worry in there?

Dallas 3

Yeah. Because people tell me as you get older your hearing gets it deteriorates more.

Interviewer

Ok. Can you tell me in your own words what kind of effect it has on your life. And sorry I'm going to sneeze. Sorry. Can you tell me how it affects you having this hearing problem and worrying it might get worse?

Dallas 3

How it effect my life if it gets worse?

Interviewer

Well how does it affect your life on a day to day basis?

Dallas 3

Well without the aids I've found. For instance, in the classroom situation, if I'm sitting in a classroom I can hear the person, the people right next to me. And if people have loud voices I can hear them. But if it’s regular conversational, I can hear them I just can’t make out what they are saying. Even with. Even with the aids. And I'm the president of the organisation and I've found that I'm get very nervous at meetings. Because I'll say something people ask questions. And I really, I don't know what they're saying.

Interviewer

Right.

Dallas 3

If they turn to talk to one another. I don't hear it. So I've noticed my anxiety level has gone up more.

Interviewer

Right.

Dallas 3

Erm.

Interviewer

Since your hearing got worse.

Dallas 3

Yeah. There’s always been. There's always been a certain amount of anxiety about it. Before there was more anxiety about telephones.

Interviewer

Right.

Dallas 3

Now there’s more anxiety about sitting with people. Erm and about my battery going out.

Interviewer

Right.

Dallas 3

Because the difference is like day and night.

Interviewer

Yeah. So you’ve always got to be aware of making sure you’ve got batteries and things.

Dallas 3
Yeah. I mean there are times when I'll go some place and I'll. I'm already running
er running late. You're halfway there. I realise I don't have batteries and I turn
around and go home. And if I arrive in a half an hour late so be it.

Interviewer

Uuhh. Yeah. So you've learned to cope by sort of organising things in a specific way.

Dallas 3

Right. Umhum.

Interviewer

Right. So do you find that you can control your anxiety and what helps you control your
anxiety?

Dallas 3

Well it does help to know that I have a pack of fresh batteries. That if it goes out.
And my hearing aid gives me and I'm assuming since this is a newer one it does
the same thing. But it gives me plenty of warning. So knowing I have a fresh pack
of batteries as soon as I start to go out I just pop another one in. and that does
help to control anxiety.

Interviewer

Right. So you control things.

Dallas 3

Right. Because I just thought of this. The other thing that bothers me is the idea
especially after 911. Because I was in DC. Because there's being somewhere and
if there's an emergency they make an announcement.

Interviewer

Right.

Dallas 3

I need to find out what's going on. And if it's something like a 911 where you need
to get to an exit. You need to do this. That I may not hear what's going on. And
that does. Is kind of frightening.

Interviewer

Right. So that kind of brought it out?

Dallas 3

Yeah that's another anxiety. The situation that before the recent dip. There was
some of that but now it's stronger. So there is a sense I have to depend on other
people.

Interviewer

Right. Ok.

Dallas 3

Now. But even on the subway I find the same thing now. A guy gets on and they're
announcing something will it be this stop or the next stop or are they stopping
now? I have no idea.

Right.

Dallas 3

And that. Er that does create a lot of anxiety.

Interviewer

It's. So it's almost as though it's your hearing there's been an effect on your
independence,that you almost need other people to help.

Dallas 3

If I'm on the bus alone I would have to go up to the bus driver and ask him to
repeat it.

Interviewer

Ok
But er yeah. I have to be able to either ask him or someone nearby.

Right Ok. So and do you find that people do help? Do you ask them?

Yeah. They're pretty good. Now I have to admit if I have to in some public situations I won't ask them more than once or twice. Unless. I'll just try to figure out from what I did hear. I can figure out something there so erm I think for me there's still that I know I hear people saying let people know you can't hear etc. and I can do that sometimes but I think there's still. And I don't know where I got this from. I didn't get it from family. But there's still this sense of if you let people know that you're handicapped. It's a weakness to a certain extent.

So erm. I'm there's still some reluctance. Like, I'll try to do as much as I can on my own. But if there's something I can't get. Well I let people know that I don't hear. Like people that I first meet I didn't even say anything. And because my hearing aid is the same colour as my skin then most people don't notice it hearing aid is the same colour as my skin then most people don't notice it hearing aid is the same colour as my skin then most people don't notice it.

So I don't say anything and most people. Unless somebody stands to my left and I absolutely can't hear anything from my left ear so you'll have to. Please stand on my right-hand side. Erm but I don't just volunteer.

I guess so. Yeah But er it's not that I've had any bad experiences with anyone. It's like er like I've been like this from a kid. I don't know. There's no one around me who ever teased me. Or made me feel helpless. Erm. My mum does sometimes. Because she'll. Because she worries.

You know because she'll say can you hear here? And yes just yes. You don't have to keep saying it. Erm I don't know maybe when I was a kid. Maybe it's just that being a grade-schooler. And the way kids do tease. And having that maybe it was better not to say anything because kids would tease. Maybe that's where I picked that up. That reluctance to say anything. Erm all my teachers knew of course because my mom told them. So I always sat up front. Yeah I do have some of that.

It's interesting that you feel you know that you tell people that you're handicapped. Do you feel that you're a handicapped person? Is that a label that you don't want to have or you don't feel applies to you.

You know I've never. I've never seen myself that way. And it was. Up until that huge dip.
I'm fine. Yeah. Except that I couldn't hear from the back. I got along fine I went to. I travelled in France. Went to Spain. Didn't have any problem. And er I never thought of myself that way. And er I met people who are blind. And I thought of them as handicapped. But you know. And I think I still kind of have that attitude.

Interviewer

I don't see myself as a handicapped person. Why would I act in a way that a handicapped person would? Yep, yeah.

Dallas 3

In fact even now they have this great organisation that helps disabled people. I think the not the acronym but it stands for rehabilitation of something and even now I just. Even back the way that I get my hearing aids. And if it weren't for them I'd be buying stuff from magazines.

Interviewer

Right

Dallas 3

Erm so I'm very grateful for them. It's still slightly puzzling to me. It's like you get, to a certain extent I get a certain dispensation for being handicapped. And I'm slightly puzzled about that. It's like I understand it. I just don't know if I see it as a stigma or.

Interviewer

It just doesn't seem to quite fit you. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dallas 3

Yeah. Yeah. And at the same time I'm. If I took the hearing aids off I'd be in a world of trouble. So I guess I'm think the way I did before, before I had that dip.

Interviewer

Yes you've not caught up with what's happened then.

Dallas 3

Right exactly. Yeah.

Interviewer

Uuhh. Can I ask you a wee thing a wee bit about what's helped you? Because, obviously you've coped really well with the technology, and you have coping strategies. What kind of things do other people do or don't do that really help?

Well it does help if my friends out walking if they say am I on the right side can you hear me? And that does help because it, it is kind of relaxing to know that they know I have a hearing problem if they mispronounce something. So that is kind of helpful. For instance I went to a very noisy restaurant with a friend and it was Friday night which made it even noisier.

Interviewer

Yeah

Dallas 3

And we had to speak to each other but it was hard. And when the waiter came over I could hardly get what he was saying, because he was addressing me. I thought it was very gracious of my friend the way he stepped in. and he did it without making me feel as if you know I'm just completely helpless and weak. And that was. I do find it very helpful when I am in a situation where I can't hear something. If somebody steps in and helps me out. It helps me in a way that is kind of gracious. Then I don't feel as though something is wrong.
Yeah. So it’s almost as though there’s a difference between having to give your independence to somebody and somebody being able to work with you. So you can disclose things as you trust them and they can work with you.

Dallas 3

Exactly. But yeah there’s a big difference. As opposed to somebody who just

Interviewer

Yes. Yeah

Dallas 3

Saying I can’t hear very well can you repeat that? I get yelled and I get mad.

Interviewer

Yes.

Dallas 3

So yeah. There’s a there is a difference.

Interviewer

Mhm. Yeah.

Dallas 3

I’m trying to think if there’s anything else people do? Well one of my friends always insists on watching movies with the subtitles. And so that does help.

Interviewer

Yeah.

Dallas 3

In part it kind of helps both of us. Because in that way I don’t have to turn the TV up to 60.

Interviewer

Yeah.

Dallas 3

So that way the volume is comfortable for him. And at the same time I can hear. Because I noticed earlier some people were talking about turning the TV off completely and just leaving that. I want to hear as much as I can. So that way I can hear.

Interviewer

Yep.

Dallas 3

But I can also rely on reading also.

Interviewer

Yeah. Do you think that’s something as a society we could do more of? I’m thinking of audiology in terms of hearing loss. But if we start to think about the fact that people do everything differently. so for example in an airplane. Not everybody is a, is a small size. So why should some people have to ask for a bigger seatbelt? Why not make them bigger? Do you think if we started to think more widely about starting just doing things in different ways? Rather than just relying on them to just be assertive and ask for things all the time do you think?

Dallas 3

Yeah I think it would, for instance if you went to the movie theatre and they actually had either pictures of the devices there so you could remember and say oh yeah. For so many years I haven’t had to use any of that. That it doesn’t occur to me. Until I sit down and think gosh I cannot hear a thing. And sometimes I’ll just struggle. And sometimes I think if I remember oh go to the front and ask if they have a device. If they, if they had pictures or something to remind you. Or if in
their ads in the paper if they put something in say oh we have a loop system or
something like that I think it would make things simpler.

Interviewer
For everybody. Yeah.

Dallas 3
Yeah. I think for everyone. And also I guess just generally if people would try and
not mumble. Or talk with their hands you know covering their mouth.

Interviewer
Yeah. Yeah

Dallas 3
Just the regular things. Yeah. I don’t know how you get everybody to do that.

Interviewer
Maybe. Maybe more Deaf awareness programs.

Dallas 3
Maybe yeah. Maybe something as simple as having classes in schools. You know
at each level. Then all kids go to. They have to go to a sex Ed class. Why shouldn’t
they go to a disabilities awareness class? Erm because kids are generally very,
very open.

Interviewer
Yeah. They love to learn.

Dallas 3
They do and they love to help. You know that can make a difference with a lot of
people being able to hear their grandkids. They pick this up in school. And then
they think oh when I talk to grandpa I need to stand up over here. So I think
classes like that would help.

Interviewer
It’s not about hearing aids it’s about the whole package?

Dallas 3
I think it’s the whole thing. Yeah. If they talk about that. If they talk about people
who can’t see well. And I can see when you talk about hearing if you talk about
people who are hard of hearing as opposed to Deaf.

Interviewer
Yes.

Dallas 3
Erm that that will help. And I guess the same thing with people with sight. I think
you know people can go completely blind. But I didn’t know until last week that
people who you think are completely blind, they are blind but that doesn’t
necessarily mean that they can’t see.

Interviewer
Yes.

Dallas 3
So there are things that you can do to help them to visually see. So.

Interviewer
So everything’s on a continuum really isn’t it?

Dallas 3
Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer
Rather than I can hear and you can’t it’s a range. Yeah

Dallas 3
Exactly.
So maybe that’s how we need to start thinking.

Dallas 3

Yeah. I think that would help. I think.

Interviewer

We’re just coming up to the time that we need to finish. So is there anything else that you want to say to me?

Dallas 3

Erm. You know what crosses my mind? Erm I often wonder about doing something like this globally. Because I think I’m lucky to be in a first world country. Because I often think to myself god what if I’d been born in Egypt? Or Burma? I’d be sitting in a corner somewhere.

Interviewer

Yeah.

Dallas 3

You know or in the street.

Interviewer

Yeah.

Dallas 3

So and I know in a lot of cultures handicapped people are seen as useless and so I guess I wonder sometimes if there’s some way to have global awareness. Or someway maybe to get some of that technology to third world countries.

Interviewer

Yes.

Dallas 3

Both for people travelling. Because they’ve got a part that would not want to travel. Because if I got some place where I can’t buy batteries. I’m not going to spend six months in Burma if I can’t buy batteries.

Interviewer

Things like that yeah.

Dallas 3

So something that would make it easier for hearing-impaired people to travel places.

Interviewer Yep.

Dallas 3

As well as maybe some way to get some of this technology overseas. Because I’m sure some place in Burma there’s somebody who’s got the same hearing loss. And our lives are completely different. I mean they can’t even think about going to school. I do think about that.

Interviewer

Yeah. Maybe it’s something first world nations need to work on.

Dallas 3

Right. Yeah.

Ok.
Interviewer; right we’re on. And that should be able to pick up from there. Right so just to start off can you tell me how you lost your, or how you became aware that you’d lost your hearing?

Dallas 4; well can you ask that again?

Can you tell me how you became aware that you’d lost your hearing? How did you realise?

I think I lost a lot of it when I was a, when I was a child. Er I tried to think back on when. What major event happened? And my dad took me to a ski shooting range with the shotguns and things and I was wondering why everybody else had ears stuck on their ears and I didn’t. And when I went home I couldn’t hear for a day or two. And it came back. So I think it happened then. I probably realised that something was happening when I was young.

Right

And as I grew older I had difficulty in the classroom environments. I didn’t ever want to sit up in the front of the room. I missed a whole lot going on in the classroom unless the speaker was a man who talked loud, or somebody who could project back. I think it was early on in Grade school, in high school and definitely because I realised I had a problem. Er but I didn’t do anything for that until I was about er 55 years old. So I went through life with this problem of saying what? Huh? What did you say? And er my mom got hearing aids which was the moment of maybe I ought to look into that and maybe that will help me. And I was in denial. I said nope won’t help me. Nope. I’ll get on without them, I’ll adjust. But it’s just obviously now I realise I never adjusted I just got worse.

Can you remember the kinds of feelings you had going through college. How did it feel having that problem?

Well it’s er I realised I had that, that problem and I thought I needed to do something. My coping was to try to get closer in the classroom. It was up front. So it was the feelings that I had this problem were there. But I didn’t have enough initiative to go. So I guess at that point it didn’t seem to bother me enough to do anything about it when I was in my twenties.

Right. So in your fifties it bothered you more?

Yes. It er. Well er at work I think I got worse and I was sitting in meetings and I couldn’t hear. Even if I was close to people. With all the side talks, I guess I call them sidebars that go on with people around me and I’d have to say would you take that outside I can’t hear what other people are saying and I got tired of doing that so by then the work environment got so bad I needed to do something. So that’s why I when I started to investigate in.

So when it started to have when you noticed it had an effect on your life.

Right I knew it was affecting my life but I was. My confidence was so that I didn’t do anything about it until I got to 55.

Right.

And er. And I regret that now, obviously. It’s when I see what it can do for me and how it can help me.

When you. When your coping strategy was without hearing aids did other people say to you why don’t you do anything or did other people notice you had a problem?

Erm yes. obviously because the family did. My family would tell me. Er but when the people at work started telling me it became more and more obvious. Er and then I. at that point it became ok I have to do something.

Yep.
So er. People were. People were telling me and the more people that told me the 
more I realised I’d better do something about it that time.
Right. So they were sort of reinforcing it?
They were reinforcing the fact that I had a problem and that I better do something 
about it.
So how long have you worn your hearing aids?
Well this would be my seventh year.
Right. Ok. Sorry I’ve just asked you to give your age away. I’ll keep that a secret. So how 
has life been with hearing aids? How would you describe living with hearing aids?
How would I what sorry?
How would you describe living with hearing aids?
Oh how would I describe it?
Uuhh
Well er it changed my quality of life.
Good.
Well er obviously I now can hear my grandkids
Uuhh.
I now can hear people who talk really soft. My whole quality of life actually 
increased. Even to the point where I can watch a TV now and I almost have the 
same volume as my wife but I still use closed captions because I got used to it so 
for a while. But I still have problems in large groups.
Ok.
Er when we went out to dinner the other night. I was trying to pick the volume. But 
er it really was frustrating in a large group. Even with er you know the devices 
sitting on the table, directional, non-directional. and we’ve tried different types of 
it. And er it’s one thing I’m not sure I can totally overcome.
Ok.
But other than that I think I just want a new telephone system. One that works with 
my hearing aid telecoil, and I can just pick it up. And the telecoil is so close to my 
ear that I can get amplification through my hearing aids with my button pushed for 
t-coil, and er the clarity was very good and so that’s another step in the right 
direction of coping with my problem.
Right. Ok.
With the technology today, and it’s improving and it continues to improve. As 
technology changes hopefully I can improve it a little bit more. But it’s much 
better, obviously much better.
Yeah. What about the things, like the other night at dinner, the things you said are 
frustrating the things that you can’t change? Or so far can’t change?
Well erm I still have a problem with certain word recognition, and all the silent so 
the silent consonants in words. And er I had to figure out a way to cope. And 
that’s bothersome because I still do bluffing.
Right.
I think I heard the word, and I have to, I have to say repeat that say it again. Do 
it... Do it... because I know that bluffing doesn’t work and I look like an idiot when 
say.... when I say the wrong response to those. Or something like that. And 
there’s certain people I still can’t understand very well because they talk real soft. 
People who emphasise their points by trailing their voice off are so hard. You 
know I’m sorry I missed the whole point of that because you trailed that thing off 
into a whisper. And er I lost your point so could you repeat that and just talk 
normal?
Uuhh. Yeah.
I see. But obviously the thing we learnt today is that you can't change people. You have to change to try to adapt to them. So erm so that's a whole thing I have to try. I have. I've learnt a lot about coping here. Various methods to try it out. and I need it because maybe I can overcome some of these problems. Maybe I can't. So do you think that, that coping with hearing loss is more than hearing aids?

Oh definitely.

Uuh.

Absolutely. Especially the things we've learned this week. Yeah, some of the... some of the... It's just over all. Even when Mr H- today was talking about well hearing aids are just a minor part in a whole process of rehabilitation. And I think it makes a lot of sense. Because there's a whole lot of things involved.

Yeah.

And er on my part and on the people's part who I live with and er the people part that I don't even know I may be able to you know adjust to them.

Yeah.

So it's er coping is probably the thing I have to work on. It's probably the thing I have to work on now. Having the latest technology in my ear and realising it isn't going to do the magical 20:20 as they say. And so I have to do something else. I must sound like I'm repeating everything we heard this week. But I've I just heard it and it makes a lot of sense.

It makes sense. Yeah. You're right. I think a lot of people are starting to think ah there's more than relying on my hearing aid.

Right.

Just one question and then I'll let you get your lunch.

No that's fine no problem.

Having had a hearing loss for quite a long time

Yes.

What would you say are the positives and negatives of having a hearing loss? If, if you can think of any.

I'm trying to think of a positive for hearing loss. Er except I don't hear crickets.

Right.

And if there's a cricket in the house, it don't bother me. Um I can't think of a positive for hearing loss.

Right.

Er it's all basically a negative thing. That you know just not on my part, on everybody else's part dealing with my loss. So no I can't think of anything positive that ever came out of my hearing loss.

Ok. What kind of things would you say are the mos?, obviously there's some negatives then, but what things would you say that these are the things that really affected me?

These have affected me in this way?

Erm. I turned off music.

Ok.

Er I used to listen to music, but now it used to drive me crazy because that's all I could hear was background noises but I couldn't hear the person sitting across from me, so if somebody turned on music it would drive me crazy. I would want to go well to a place where I couldn't hear it any more. And I had a lot of friends that turned on music whenever I went over to their house. And I'd say well I'd basically tell them well you just put me out of the conversation. Well I might as well go home. But I didn't really say it all the time. But that's part of the. That's part of going out, into a noisy restaurant. Going out into a nightclub. Er a place in a bar. It probably turns me off. I avoid those.
Yeah
Er and you know that’s the one thing, just music, but the noises that go with it. Yeah. Yeah.
Er the constant chattering, In that setting I think we used this. The worst case scenario was a cocktail party where everybody talks louder as they drink and drink it gets worse, things like that. That’s the things that really bothered me or talking to small children. I understand that I have a problem, and so when you try to you know you can see the frustration in their faces when they try to you know repeat something four or five times and I’m not getting it because they’re not using any coping skills to help me. You know and other things I think people thought I was antisocial because I was going out less and less... ...and I got to the point where if I couldn’t understand the conversation that was going on I’d just tune out. I wouldn’t even pay attention to those people any more and I’d be thinking or doing something else. I think those things were a real negative with my hearing loss. Now hopefully now with my new hearing aid and some things I could turn that around and do them. I don’t know we learned a lot this week. I learned a lot this week to help me do all this stuff. So if I talk to you next year at this time I might be able to say you know S- did wonders. You know this information they gave out should, everyone should have access to it and help anybody who’s got a hearing loss.

Yeah. Yeah. You maybe have a point. Yeah. Maybe I’ll email you in a year and find out. Is there anything else that you’ve experienced that you want to tell me about?
Well no not that I er not that I can think of, erm. I know I’ve, I’ve got some people at home now my father-in-law especially who’s got a hearing loss, who is kind of in denial. He got a set of hearing aids
Right
And they’re turned on occasionally. But he doesn’t wear. He plays with the volume control. With mine on it drives me crazy. And so I take the remote from him and say go and put your hearing aids on, and I get grr.... And you know I can see where people with a hearing loss will er..... me it’s not just me with a hearing loss. It’s others and I just want to grab them by the shoulders and say put the hearing aids on and learn how to do some of this stuff. You know because you’re killing your wife, you’re killing me with this volume stuff. And now I’m a proponent for why don’t you do something? -because you can.
Do you think dealing with hearing loss then, it’s not just about the person adapting and coping? It’s about other people doing the same thing? Because what I’ve noticed this week is I’ve been around just for over thirty years working with the technology to improve. but I’m exhausted this week because at a dinner table. I’ve never been out socially with a lot of people who use different technologies at the same time. So I’ve been constantly thinking who am I speaking to have I got the right mic on, am I looking the right way? Whereas if it had been a family member that could be quite tiring.
Yes
And I guess it’s ok to say to the person you have a hearing loss you need to adapt. But it’s almost like other people need to learn how to, how to perform in that situation. Right, well that’s something, with my father-in-law I’m starting to learn the other side of this now. And yeah it is hard. Yeah it’s, it’s tough, and he’s 70 he’ll be 76 and he’s going to reject this technology. He’ll say I don’t need this technology, I don’t want it. It’s too complicated. He’ll have a hundred and three excuses for not doing this.
You now that’s you know. Now that I’m on now that I can turn around from the other side and say look at me we need to work together on this thing. And I’d love
to get him to fix this. But it’s L-’s dad and L-’s dad probably doesn’t have the patience to sit down and try some of this technology.

Yeah. Uhuh.

You know he’s one of those guys if he does it he’ll do it boom, boom, boom. And he won’t want to touch it any more.

Yeah.

And it’s er it’s tough on both sides of the hearing loss.

Yeah I think you’re right. And I think maybe for people like your father-in-law, if audiologists provided shorter versions of this. Somebody comes in and fits a hearing aid.

And if somebody came in and gave this, maybe that would be more beneficial.

Er I haven’t met his audiologist. And I don’t, I don’t know anything about, I think it’s a her. I don’t know anything about her and what she said to him and how that influenced went, but I’d like to go with him now.

Yeah. Uhuh

And L- would like to go with him now and sit there and what he doesn’t know to ask, we can ask that stuff. Er as Dr H_ said I maybe be able to embarrass her into looking at some of these things that she should be doing that. And you know. I’m sure that all the audiologists in the world are able to do what Mr H- said. Dr H- said that maybe for some reason they don’t keep up with technology. Who knows we’re all human nature, they’re all kind of different. So it, you know. I’d like to see if, if his audiologist, you know would have all these options available. because you know from past experience you know you go in as a patient and you don’t know anything about this field. And now I feel like I’m armed with a little bit of information that I would like to go and say what about this. What about this. What about this. What about this. What about this. You know I’m going back to mine who is part of the C- centre in downtown D- and ask her why she chose the dual head, dual headset t-coil earphones for me when I should be using a neck loop instead of headphones because I don’t want these things on my head. I would rather have a neck loop and hook up to my phone instead of headphones and it would have been you know it would have been. You know I could have got one have got one of those today. And now I’ve got a headphones set on my voucher that says I can only get what’s on my voucher. And I wouldn’t wear his sets. And I guess we didn’t discuss that. And she just wrote it down and I’m going back to her now and saying you know why did we do that? You know why did you do that? I didn’t understand what the program was for this. That she could fill this form out and I would get a voucher for specifically what she said on here. Not just a general thing. I thought I had 350 dollars to spend on equipment and I’ll say hey I want one of those, I want one of those and they said no it’s not on your voucher. You can only get one of those. And you’d get a couple of things here you probably don’t want or need.so it., I have some…. even though she’s from the C- centre I’ll go and ask her why did you to me?

It’s interesting you saying why did you do this to me? because it sounds like being informed and working together.

Right

Is what seems to be coming across to me is what people have got from this? That there’s no expert saying this is what you need. Its two people working together, to sort it.

Yeah.

It has to be because if she’d said she was giving headsets to me I would have said I will not wear them because I do not like headsets, and especially with my hearing aids. I don’t know how you do a headset that works with a t-coil in your hearing aids. I don’t know does it go over the top of this?
Yeah it would sit on here.

So I no…. I wouldn’t do that. but yeah. That communication didn’t take place and it
should have.

Yeah. Yeah. Well . I’m going to stop this now and let you get your lunch. Because we’re
you’ve only got 15 minutes left.

Well I’m not in any hurry. I’m willing to go if you want to go.

But what I was going to suggest was that I found this really useful. What I was going to
suggest was that when I get home I’ll. I’ll type this up. And I’ll send it to you by email

Ok

And if you look at it and just make sure you’re happy with what’s there. If you think at
that point of anything else you’d like to add. You know if when you get home you think
oh I should have told her about whatever then please add that to it.

I will do that.

And if I get home and think oh I wish I’d asked him about that then I can send you some
questions if you’re happy to.

That would be good, if you would want my email address.

Yeah. I’ll need to get the form from the other room. To say it’s ok to use this.

I didn’t put it on there.

Yeah. I’ll get it and you can add the address.

Ok

Erm if that’s ok. Because I sometimes go away and listen to these I start to think of other
things. Or I interview the next person and I think oh I wish I’d asked H about that.

Right. Well I. yes you can ask me a question and I’ll give you an answer.

That’s fine.

And er I don’t know proof read what you have.

Perfect.

And add anything that I can think of.

Excellent I’ll stop this just now then hang on.
COPA 1
Interviewer
So if I just leave that there it will pick up our voices. So first of all. Can you tell me a little bit about how you first noticed that you've got a hearing problem? What made you think you've got a problem hearing?
COPA 1
Erm. I think it really started with tinnitus.
Right
My mother had tinnitus. And erm I didn't understand what it was when she had it. Maybe twelve years. But I started getting this hissing sound in my ears. And erm I found when my grandchildren spoke to me it was like they were mumbling, and if they turned away from me. Now it seems if anyone turns away from me. I can't hear what they're saying. It's a mumble.
Right ok.
I'm not deaf, I'm dull of hearing. That's what I'd say about it. And if people are loud I think wow their voices are loud. But they can be muffled you know? I am in two walking groups, and there are two people that I particularly think about. Who are friendly with me, and they’re talking to me on the bus wherever we're going for our walk. And I think I don't know what they are saying. I've got to ask them what was that? Because they turned away from me when they were talking. They've got to….. and I'm always… I feel…. I never know which ear, Because I've got tinnitus in both ears. But it’s a different sound. I think this is the worst ear for tinnitus. But I don't know if that’s my better ear for hearing.
Right. Ok. Maybe it gets in the way.
It gets me a bit queasy. Do I go that way? Or do I go that way? You know?
So it’s things like erm maybe talking in groups where there’s maybe background noise and things like that, that are difficult for you. Than talking to me one to one.
Yes. Uuhh. It is things like that, but I find watching TV they've always got music on in the background. Someone’s talking. I think why did he do that? It is most irritating. Because I find sometime I put the actual subtitles on. But they're not very good.
No and then you looking up.
I know it's bad enough wearing glasses. But erm I'd. I'd say it was before I retired. I retired in December 2003. It could have been about a year or two before that I think. I got sent to L- P-
Right. Was that because of your tinnitus?
Yes that was because of the tinnitus.
Right ok. So what happened when you went to L P? What happened then?
Well I got this Asian doctor. And erm I couldn’t hardly make out what he was saying. I was thinking as well as having tinnitus, I'm deaf as well. This kind of thing running through my head. And then he said to me do you work in a factory?
And I said no, what a strange thing to ask though, but afterwards, I was listening to an article on the radio. And I could see what they mean. People wearing earphones all the time. Well I was a GP telephonist for 5 years and then I came back from the house and went back to it for three years. So you know I was a telephonist for a long time. And they say wearing earphones. And they were actually in the interview on the radio the interviewer said do you mean I'm going to develop tinnitus? And he said you probably will. And I think you hear these disc jockeys and I see all these kids going about with things in their ears and I feel like saying don’t do it. Don’t do it. You're ruining your ears. It's just oh.
But there’s not enough information out there. Or maybe kids think it’ll never happen to
them.
Yeah. They would just ignore it anyway. You know. But.

So what was the outcome of your visit to L-
then?

Oh yeah well this Asian said come back in a year. This Asian doctor. So I went
back in a year’s time. They looked to see if there was any improvement or if it got
worse. And I got another doctor and I think he did all the hearing tests again.

Because I’d already had the hearing test. I had the hearing test. I remember it was a
Sunday. I remember it was a strange thing. I had the hearing test on a Sunday.

Because I was so far bang. And then two or three months later I saw this Asian
doctor. He said to come back in a year. I think they did the hearing test again. And
then I saw this other doctor and he’s more or less said well you know there’s no
cure for the tinnitus. Erm Maybe a hearing aid will help. Erm I’ll give you an
appointment to get measured for hearing aids. So keeping in mind this is L –P-
and I lived at T-, I’ve got to get about three buses there, or I take the car to C- R
and get the bus up. And all this carry on. I just find it such a nuisance and I got up
there and they said yes we’ll just make an appointment for you to be measured.

And I said sorry I said I thought I was coming to be measured. And they said oh
no, no, no, you’ve been given a five minute appointment you’ve got to come back.
And I thought oh forget it. And I was just so disgusted. As I said it’s about the
hassle and I said no. I mean if it’s not going to. I mean the doctor more or less
said well it’s not going to help you but we’ll give you this anyway. So that was it.

I’ve never been back.

So it didn’t really inspire confidence then?

No that was me. Er well I’ve been in my house two and a half years. That’ll be
about two years ago, maybe.

So when you went about the tinnitus were you did it come as a surprise when they said
you had a hearing problem? Or had you already suspected that?

Well I’d suspected it. But you know just as I said we go to walking and some of
them have got hearing aids and one of them will say, “Oh this doesn’t work
anyway and I don’t think I’ll bother because as I used to go to classes for signing,
you know deaf. Erm I remember one of the lecturers saying because not the
signing language. We got told about being deaf. And they were saying that when
you have a hearing aid it just amplifies everything, not just the person talking to
you. It’s all the background noise as well. So sometimes they’re not as good as,
as you know, as they should be. So that kind of put me off and I thought well you
know I’ll just. So I’ll just see. But even to my daughter I say don’t mumble or don’t
turn away from me when you’re talking. And she gets a bit irritated you
know.

Your way of coping is saying to people you need to look at me. How do you feel about
doing that? Do you do that routinely?

Erm I don’t. I. I. as I said I’ll do it to my own family but I wouldn’t say it to anyone
else. If we’re out walking and that I’ll just say what was that? If I’m putting my
head to them and that. Erm I wish I could say to them look. I have said to one of
them, who’s an ex nurse so you’d think she would know. But even she doesn’t.
She kind of turns away and she mumble. And I have to say what did you say? So I
tend to say what was that? What was that? All the time. it really irritates me.
(talking over each other.) having to ask people to repeat it.

Are there any other things that you can think of that you’ve started to do? Or stopped
doing since you’ve noticed you’ve got a hearing problem? Are there any other things that
you do that help?
No I don’t think so. It’s not erm. Well the only, only. I’ve took a little part time job
because I was waking up in the morning thinking oh what am I going to do? So I
took a part-time job just a Thursday and Saturday morning. And erm it’s a
receptionist in an optometrist. But I’ve been there just over two years past July.
About a month ago I said you’re going to have to trade me in for a younger model.
I said because I said I’m really finding it difficult to hear on the phone. I said I took
a man’s. a man’s details down. And he was standing right in front of me. He says
said I’m going to a party but she said I’m going to a chiropractor. I had said at this
time in the morning going to a party? She said no and I could feel the whole bus
laughing at me. But I er I pick up things wrong. So in a way that’s one of the
reasons I’ve given up this job. Not the only reason. I was getting a bit cheesed off.
But that was a good reason for giving up because I’m picking up wrong details,
you know?
Do you find there’s other things that you sort of give up? Your social life? Are there any
sort of things you don’t go to now because they’re sort of more difficult?
Well I. I think the theatre. I wanted to go and see. There’s a play on in St S–, I’ve
been since the last two or three years. And they’re really good. But I was going to
go this year but I thought I don’t think I’ll hear it.
Right.
I don’t think I’ll pick up. I think. Because when my sister came in. we went to see.
Oh what was it my niece had got? Oh the grumpy old woman. I remember at the
time saying what was that? What was that? I didn’t. it was too far. And if the
people talk fast I’ve had it. You know? It’s just a mumble to me. So I have in a way
given up the theatre a bit.
Yeah things like that yeah. Do you find when you go out, do you? It’s hard…. When you
go out for a meal or something would you tend to make sure you were sitting in a certain
place? Or are there places that you might think oh lets not go here? Because you know
they’re better. Have you started to do anything like that?
Oh yeah. I meet my friend most Fridays and normally we get lunch. And I’m
always saying oh no I’m not coming back here it’s too noisy. I think what was it?
Was it the Bella Italia in Frederick Street? I can’t I said let me get out of here you
know it was boom, boom, boom. There was wee Irish girls sitting, and they didn’t
tend. This is what I find really. I find if people are loud I find really hurts my ears. I
can feel them like boom, boom, boom. I feel if I go to I don’t like noisy places. I
was away for the weekend, last weekend. Up to D– and they have this entertainer.
Who played the accordion and told jokes. And I thought. You know I couldn’t even
talk to my friend. And I was saying to Annette. I was saying you know I can’t hear
what you’re saying. and she says I know. Why do they do this? People just want to
sit and talk. They don’t want to scream at each other. But that just I, I, I try to
avoid things like that. I’m so glad, I kept leaving thinking is he going to finish at
eleven. He’ll finish at eleven. Ten past eleven he was still playing.
So it’s a relief when it’s quiet. You can hear things like that?
Oh yes, yes. And yet I was told by the doctor, up at L _P_ always to keep the TV or
the radio on because that gets rid of the noise of the tinnitus, which is true. When
you’re talking and not thinking about it. You don’t think about it. It’s a bit like
toothache; you don’t think about it you don’t hear it. But the minute you think you
hear it. Like the other day I stopped and all of a sudden my ears just went brrrr.
This loud tinnitus. I got this really loud buzz in my ear. But er yeah I suppose it
has, when I think back, you know. It has made me avoid certain places. You know I
don’t like going to the cinema, because it’s too loud.
Yeah
That is oh.
So let’s talk a wee bit about hearing aids again. I mean obviously, you’ve heard
something’s about them, from either people who’ve had them or from your classes. Do
you think that has influenced in a big way whether you would wear one or not?
No. I’ll. Er it sounds a bit vain but I wouldn’t these that stick out. And they’re
saying you get them so you don’t see them. That they’re in your ear but they’re
only a pin prick and the like. So erm I would wear one. I really I just I don’t think it
would help.
Right ok.
I don’t know. But I just think. I think that doctor on L_P_ basically said you know
we can give you a hearing aid. It was more a less we’ll give you a chocolate, we’ll
keep you happy. You know? that sort of thing. But it was as if it’s not going to
help you. And I thought why am I going through all this if it’s not going to help
me? So I just feel it’s something I have to live with now.
So that’s interesting. How you’re feeling given your experience. Do you think it’s
important how it’s put across to people (COPA1: oh yes) whether it’s going to be
useful?
Oh yes. I mean as I said that doctor more or less said it’s not going to help you
but we’ll give you one and therefore I thought, what’s the point of wearing one?
And I mean I’ve got psoriasis and it’s everywhere. And I thought I’d psoriasis in
my ear. That’s why I thought it was causing my tinnitus. And he said you’ve got
little. You’ve got psoriasis of the ear but not enough to make you deaf. Because I
was of course I blame my psoriasis for everything you know? But er, no, I can’t.
How do you feel you cope? I mean you’re talking about theatre and church I mean
cinema. I got the c’s wrong. Erm did anyone discuss with you, using other ways of
hearing, without using hearing aids?about how to communicate in different situations? Is
that something you’ve had any information on?
No
Would that have been helpful for you?
Erm. I would imagine anything that would help me, I would go for it. It’s really why
I’m here. Because you know if I can help in any way with the research, then I’m
more than happy to help.
The reason I ask is that we all seem to think if you’re hearing starts to go, the automatic
thing to do is get a hearing aid. Erm where as there might be other things out there for
when someone’s not ready to wear a hearing aid, or the hearing aid doesn’t help or
whatever. So that you can sit in a certain place in a restaurant or certain devices you can
use in the theatre. Would it have been helpful, at your appointment at the hospital to
have been able to talk about other things? would you have been interested in that?
Oh yes. I just feel they were so busy. You go up there and the place is bursting
with people and they obviously don’t have time. Because they’ve only got ten
minutes and then they’ve got another patient. And that’s the impression I get
anytime I go, most times I go to hospital. I’m diabetic. I’m on that, er it’s not
exactly W-. But it takes place at the W- er I think it’s E- University doing a project
and they picked so maybe diabetics. And they were doing different like they did a
memory test and they did a what was the last thing I had a liver scan and they
asked me if I would come back in June, for another scan. But you feel you got
more time there because you they’re interested in you as part of the project. But
when you a patient it’s a case of in and out sort of thing.
So part of good service would be someone who’s got time to listen to you and sit and discuss things.

Yeah I think so.

And things like that rather than just giving the person a hearing aid……..

Yeah, yeah. Well that’s what I felt with that doctor when he said oh a hearing aid’s not going to help you but well it was like you know, we’ll keep you quiet sort of thing. But I thought no, no. and then of course when there was the mix up of sending me for a fitting and then it turned out that I was only going up for an appointment for a fitting, I thought oh.

So what’s the point in coming back then?

I just thought oh it’s. Did you think when you were going for that appointment you it was going through your mind did you think I wonder what’s going to happen? I wonder what it’s going to be about? Erm when you were going in for that appointment what did you expect to happen? What were you ready for that day?

Erm I really don’t know. I. well I was expecting to get fitted with that hearing aid that I didn’t want anyway. I mean I think I was against the hearing aid to begin with and, and there was such a mix up that I thought well I don’t want one anyway. So you know sticking a hearing aid in your ear that was it. I thought right I’m not going back. So I’ve not been since.

Did anyone ask you if you wanted a hearing aid?

No

So you didn’t want it. They were giving you it. So it was kind of a mix a mix up there.

Yeah, yeah. Obviously I would love something to help my hearing. But at the time it was as if. I think they were saying really my hearing wasn’t that bad. But and it’s not. I don’t think my hearing is bad.

Right

I’m dull at hearing. It’s this, you know the noise.

So it just depends on the circumstances then?

Yeah I can go really loud. So I think turn your voice down. So I really don’t want. It’s not deafness it’s dull ear. Does that make sense?

Yes it does. What I’m. what I think you’re saying is that you know that you’re hearing is not as it used to be

No

But it’s not what you would class as bad enough for you to be saying I need to do this. but you’re aware it’s affecting your life in some ways.

Yes. Yes.

So some kind of help. That would help with that.

Oh yeah. I’ve been more or less told no you just live with it. Tinnitus, you live with. Dull hearing you just live with. Deafness, yes we can give you a hearing aid. That’s the kind of feeling that I got from that interview. Not interview. That appointment with the doctor.

Right. So it’s almost like. It’s like you’re on a journey but you haven’t got to the point where hearing aids are going to be effective. Have you any sense of when you’ll feel you’re at that stage?

No I don’t want to think about it.

It’s all maybe and I don’t need to worry about that now. What and this is just purely asking you to think about this because there’s no straight answer, what do you think might make you think I might need a hearing aid? At what point do you think that might happen?
I think when I really don't think of myself as deaf. I always say I'm not deaf I'm... dull of hearing. I think when I got... when I become deaf. I'll think about a hearing aid. But I really I don't think I'm deaf. Well and. Yet my daughter will come in and say that television's a bit loud is it not? And I go oh I thought it was ok. and I go to her house and I'll say to one of the girls put the TV up. Because I can't hear it. But they do. I think they have it slightly quiet well I think. So maybe it would be true to say I'm going deaf now. But I don't I really don't think I have my TV on loud. No.

Because it sounds like you know. How it sounds to me is like you're saying deaf people wear hearing aids. I don't see myself as a deaf person. Therefore a hearing aid isn't right for me. (COPA1: yes) and when I see myself as deaf (COPA1: uhuh) it will be. (COPA1: yeah) does is that what you feel?

Yeah I think so. Yeah. Because I really. I, I, i'ts this non-clarity if you like. It's this you know. Excuse me. That's what's erm I feel. Yeah. Yep. If you could make that better. Anybody that could give you some advice that would be a help?

Yes.

Because I'm just wondering if, looking at services, whether you're. I'd imagine there's lots of people like yourself who are aware of their hearing as well. But who aren't at the stage where they need a hearing aid. And I'm just wondering whether what might be useful if, if it was possible to have an appointment at the clinic that wasn't focussed on getting a hearing aid. But was focussed on communication help. Or you know advice on how to manage when things aren't as clear. (COPA1: yeah) is that the type of thing that you would be? (COPA1: yes) If that had been available would you have gone for that?

Oh yes definitely. Uuhh

Yeah. So rather than focussing everything on fitting hearing aids focussing on, on what we can do to help.

I know one of the lecturers. I used to work in E_'s T College.

Right.

And erm I still have a lot to do with them unfortunately. Er one of the lecturers was saying he had tinnitus. And he got he got something to put in his ear. And I said oh I was really quite excited. But he said oh it's rubbish, don't bother. Oh thank you. So I was kind of up there and then I was down there. So I never bothered. Not that I was offered anything. I wasn't offered anything at the L- P I got nothing there at all. Erm I was quite excited to see for about ten seconds. And then he just went it doesn't work. And I thought oh well that's that. And I never bothered.

It's interesting though. Because I think we're often influenced by other people's experience. You know. (COPA1: yeah) So if somebody says that doesn't work. We think oh shame I could have got something there.

Yeah. Yeah. You know I wasn't even offered it. I think if I'd been offered it, I'd have taken it. Because I keep thinking it might not have worked for him. But I keep thinking it might have worked for me. As I said my left ear is much worse than my right ear. But it bothers me in both ears. in both ears.

Right. Ok. does it bother you a lot?

Er yes. I. I mean it's different when I'm on the bus, or talking to anybody. It's when I get home. And I turn on the TV and I've got this, and I thought it was one afternoon last week and it just all of a sudden got louder. It was like all of a sudden as if a drill got in my ear. And I thought oh for goodness. And that was with the TV on.

Right

But the doctor had said to me keep the TV or the radio on all the time. Which I do. I mostly have a noise in the house.
Because it is a bit of a distraction isn’t it?
Yes.
That’s right. Yeah. It was just as I said. I mean I can hear it right now. In my ears. In that ear it’s not so bad. That ears not so bad. But it is. It is annoying. It’s just irritating. It’s not sore or anything like that. It’s not stopping me from getting on with my life. But I have got. It does kind of hinder you in a way.
Do you think it contributes to the difficulty hearing? The fact you’re trying to listen through the noise.
I don’t know. I’ve never really thought about that, because I would say that the.
The tinnitus started before I was aware that I was saying what was that? What was that? You know? And funny enough when I used, When I was a telephonist and I’m talking way back in the fifties. I always wore my hearing on this.... my left ear which is the worst ear. But if I’m on the phone I can’t hear in that ear. I’ve got to use this one which is strange. Having to. I mean I’ve never worked it out. But I contribute maybe, maybe I’m wrong. As I heard on the program that was on the radio when I heard about disc jockeys and things like that having earpieces and thing like that. And I had an earpiece. And it was always on that ear. And the tinnitus is definitely worse in that ear. I still can’t figure out. But if I go what was that? Or do I go what was that? I really can’t commit.
You’ll be looking for that later.
I know. I think I’ve tried. I think it depends like if we’re. Tuesday we go. Our day out was to L- and I was sitting in the bus. And my friend was on the right-hand side. And as I said she’s talking away and I go what was that. And I’m always going what was that? So eventually.
So you’re just trying to get closer to people. Yeah. But it sounds as if you’ve sort of developed ways to cope. Just to try to watch people and try to keep away from background noise. You’ve developed ways of doing it yourself.
Oh yes definitely. I don’t like noisy places. Uh. I’ve said before oh we’re not going to those places because that noise is, which kind of, they must be saying to themselves well I don’t see any difference, which kind of. But I find if it’s really noisy and all the tables are full and they’re just yapping away like yap, yap, yap.
Can I ask you something? Going back to the hearing aids again and not wanting a big one. If you got to that point again I’m asking you to think if you thought I have a hearing problem now I need a hearing aid. Would the, A t that point would the size or the shape of the hearing aid have an impact on your decision?
No if I needed it I needed it.
If you needed it.
That’s the way I look at things. It’s like glasses. I mean I’d love to wear contact lenses. I’d love to have laser treatment. I even went for the laser treatment. But they turned me down because of my diabetes. So I mean I’ve tried contact lenses. I spent two hours getting them in and I think three hours getting them out. I was going no, no, no I’ve got better things to do. So I mean but I wear glasses because I have to. And it wouldn’t matter the size of the hearing aid I would wear it. You know. It would help me.
So it’s not really about the size. It’s about the fact that you’re not in the place where you think it’s what you need.
I mean I wouldn’t like to wear a big hock off thing in my ear. But I’m not that. I mean I would wear it. It like glasses. I mean I know people that go about. I mean my friend she’ll go about I’ve got to wear my glasses. Just keep them on your
nose. But I. I mean I could. I can see everything quite well without them. But I like to have everything clear all the time. So I just keep them on all the time.

And that's a perfect example of what you're talking about. You know when you need something you use it. When you don't need something. You know you don't need it and you don't need that at the moment. So that's really helpful. That's really. It's really answered my questions that I needed answered.

Good.

So I'm going to stop unless there's anything else you wanted to say? Is there?

No I don't think so.

So I'll stop this now.
Interviewer

Ok so if I just put that there. It’s recording so I just want to make sure we’ve got the level there. Yeah. Good level. (end of first recording). That’s better. I’ll just sit that there. And then it will pick up both our voices without having to worry about raising them. Ok?

COPA 2

Now am I ok from here?

Sorry? Oh yeah you’ll be fine from there. Yeah. So first of all what I’d be interested in knowing is whether you think you have a hearing problem and if you do, how you became aware of it.

I think the first time I realised that there might be something wrong. I used to go every once a month to visit my younger sister in Bathgate.

Uhuh

And she’d be sitting on the couch and I’d be sitting on the seat, just slightly further from where you are. And I know she’d got a low voice and that but I used to have to strain to hear her.

Right

That must have been about the only occasion that it impinged on me then. You know.

Uhuh

Then er you know in the last eighteen months or something. I think. I go to church on a Sunday at Nazareth House because I just live just a step away you know. And I found that the priest with other people around me although I could hear every word he said I was not hearing things.

Right

You know he would do a joke and they would laugh. That kind of thing.

Yes.

Or I could hear his voice. I could hear his voice. I couldn’t hear what he was saying though.

Uhuh. Yeah. It just wasn’t distinct enough?

I er often on the phone, depending who’s on the phone, I’ve often asked them a to speak clearer, or to slow down their speech. Er some people I can hear.

Yeah.
You know it depends on their er I presume their I don't know er scale of clarity you know.

_Uhuh._

That they're doing. And I er I mean I can hear things but I can't distinguish.

_Right._

Exactly what, what they are saying. It's like that.

_Yeah. So some voices are better than others?_ Yes. Oh definitely yes.

_Right. And how long would you say you've noticed that? What when you first noticed it with your sister?_ It's probably about 3 years ago. Something like that. About 3 years ago I would say.

_Right. Has that got worse or is it just about the same?_ No I think it's about the same. It's not. I don't think it's deteriorating.

_Right. Right. Ok. So you mentioned the phone there and speaking in conversations. What sort of situations do you find you need?_ Well of course it's the proliferation of call centres and that you know when you pick the phone up and somebody wants to sell you something.

_Yeah_ You know and their accents a bit foreign. You know. And they usually speak quick.

_Yes. _Uhuh._

I noticed that. I've noticed that on radio too. I er know that some of the people that are there, especially if they're not artists er you know in the entertainment side. But merely er in the interviewing and that sort of side. They speak very, very quick.

_Uhuh right. Right. Yep._

_And I means I've got to hang on to sort of hear what they're saying._

_So would you say if a voice is known to you it's easier to understand and hear their voice?_ Well that's my sister. I don't get it.
Yeah and you struggle with er yeah. Yeah but is it more difficult if it’s a new voice? Er or is it accent that’s more of a problem?

Yeah er the er accent is a problem.

Mhm. What about when you’re socialising with friends? If there’s a few of you round a table or at a meeting? How do you get on there?

I, I don’t, I don’t think they er I don’t think if I am unable to actually like sitting speaking to you and there was somebody over there. I think I would be able to hear them. You know I’ve not got a difficulty with that you know.

So you’re ok with more than one person yeah?

Yeah.

Do you find? Do you find that you’re changing your behaviour in anyway? You know you mentioned struggling to hear your sister do you find that you tend to go nearer people now or?

Well what you got to do is sometimes you say yes and nodding and that when you have nae understood the question

Uuh. Yeah.

But you obviously not. You’re not making a real faux par by doing that. You know what I mean?

Uuh. Yeah.

It’s just a sort of yes comment or you know a, that’s good or something. And that often I haven’t heard a sense of what’s being said.

Ok. And what why do you do that rather than ask them to repeat it?

I er I er I don’t know I don’t know why I don’t. Come to think of it. It’s probably it’s probably something in the back of my mind that’s where it’s revealing a defect.

Right. Uuh. So it’s easier just to go along with it.

It’s easier to go along.

Right. Yeah. Uuh. I just. And would you tend to do that all the time or would you judge that sometimes it’s more important and you would ask people?

Oh aye I would ask people to repeat it if I thought it was important or if they acted as if it was important.
Yeah. Uhuh. yeah. Ok. So that's how you change your behaviour. Anything else? Have you changed anything in your social life? That you do differently now you've noticed you've got a hearing problem?

Not er not really. I mean I er for instance usually with the er. I'm the treasurer of the er Bonnyrigg and Lasswade seniors forum.

Right. Right.

And er we now, the secretary and myself now do a program on a Sunday. 5 till 6. On the local radio. Black Diamond you know?

Uhuh.

And er speech becomes then. I do a news desk item on it on my own.

Right uhuh uhuh.

Things that might be of interest to er aged people you know.

Uhuh.

It tends often to be health wise you know. But that not always but. We do a selection of records and that and Bill, the apprentice he goes round. He does film shows and that so he gets clubs and he gets them to request a record. And er to tell the story of why they've requested that special record. And all that sort of thing.

Uhuh

It lasts for an hour erm 5 till 6 on a Sunday. So, so that possibly speech wise I don’t know how I can put this. Erm I felt that when I was at school. You know I stayed on and got my Highers you know at school. Er and I think there was an emphasis at school, secondary school, about speech and vocabulary and things you know. And er I feel myself pulling people up about using prepositions that made no sense and you know there was, there was an emphasis on speech and how you spoke. And of course when I started at the Inland Revenue, coming from Bathgate and having to work in Edinburgh. You're interviewing at the counter and that you had to speak plainly.

Of course.

Not that I. not that I was ever unplain sort of thing. But you had to be er so that they would understand you and not be sort of the dialect. The sort of West Lothian sort of dialect that you were used to and had been sort of brought up with.

So you find that if people are sort of quite clear in how they speak, do you find that people now are sort of less clear in how they speak? Or even a wee bit lazier in how they speak?

Yeah I think so. I think there’s a. because there’s a fashion in language isn’t there?
Yeah

I mean everybody uses the word absolutely now instead of yes. Absolutely instead of yes.

Uuhh

Or this moment in time instead of now.

Yes

Its fashions in talking.

Why use one word when ten will do? Yes

It’s the fashion. That, that, er I don’t know somebody somewhere they’ve used it and it gradually went to you know general use in the language.

Mhmh. So do you find that if people in some ways are making language more complex, because obviously it’s easier to say now rather than at this point in time?

Yeah well I think they think it’s smart. Do you know what I mean? Er er that to do that you know.

Do you think that makes it more difficult for somebody with a hearing problem because they’ve got to get all those words?

Yeah I think so. I think so. You know er you. I. and I think that er if you’ve got an ability to sing you usually speak better.

Right.

You know because you’ve got to er. Singing is a form of enunciation isn’t it?

Of course yes of course. So some people may naturally speak more slowly and more clearly but er so there maybe some truth in this some people mumble?

Yeah

And there’s communication there’s a two way thing.

Yeah. I mean I can hear my wife saying that the grandchildren are still mumbling. You know because they tend at that age you know 7 and 9 at that age to mumble a bit.

Yeah. Mhmh. Yep. Maybe in the sort of early stages of, of when people start to notice a hearing loss erm I’m just wondering if that might be a bit less obvious if you know people were clearer in the way they spoke.

Oh I think you would you would hear and you wouldn’t realise that maybe you were starting to, to er to have problems.
Because there seems to be such a variety of sort of putting people in boxes, you know? But I er I presume I could see about a dozen boxes.

You know at different levels. Different stages of clarity and things like that you know.

Yes. Yeah and that’s quite an interesting concept. Because I’m just thinking about  
trying to put hearing loss in boxes, you know I’m a wee bit hard of hearing, I’m I’ve got a  
bit of a hearing problem, I’ve got quite a hearing problem. You know but people are  
usually quite far down that, that list before they’ll say I’m deaf.

But I’m just wondering if you know we got that, that line alongside the of people who are  
very clear speakers right up to the people who mumble. And maybe where the two lines  
meet er it makes the difference between whether people hear properly or not.

And it’s sort of an interesting idea. I hadn’t thought of that before. On the subject of  
social events are there any activities that you used to do that you find you don’t do now,  
or you’re less enthusiastic about doing?

No well, well er erm. I’m a bit restrained now in socialising, because my wife three  
years ago was registered as having macular degeneration.

So she’s on the blind register now you know. And unfortunately it er. I mean one  
of the things was she used to read a book a day from the library. You know.

I mean she gets talking books now of course there’s few sources for sort of  
obtaining the books. So I’ve got to run the house and sort of do this. So it sort of  
restricts my social activities. Although we er we have just odd things like er  
through the er I’m a member of the Bonnyrigg and Lasswade er social club and  
that you know. So we have the odd outing and that. My wife used to be very  
sociable at one time. I mean we would have a party at the drop of a hat.

Having said that it was all, most of it was on our giving.

It wasn’t often we were on the other side. That the guests that often invited us out.
Right so you were doing all the work.

Doing all the work but so you know that. I was never a social person in the sense I was nae a pubby man to start with.

Right uhuh.

It never. It wasn’t an attraction to go and stand at a bar and go and drink or something you know. I mean finishing work I might go in and have a pint with somebody but that was it. But then I’m a whisky man so I’d rather sit and have my whisky.

Have your whisky.

Have a have a glass of whisky. So. No I. I was very keen on golf. But I haven’t played in the last twelve months because of I had high blood pressure. I mean I’m now regularly and possibly for the rest of my days on Warfarin. You know and I keep getting tested every fortnight or a month to check a level.

Right. Right uhuh.

Er but having said that I mean we’re not all. I mean I’m 83.

I wouldn’t have said 83.

So that er you know I think I’m doing quite well.

Uuhh.

I mean my genealogy doesn’t allow me to do that because I think the eldest person was probably on both sides of the family, was probably one aunt who died when she was 83 but everybody else succumbed before that.

Right so you’ve er broken the rule book then. So excellent.

Yeah I think so. I think so.

But you haven’t sort of adapted any of your social activities because of your hearing.

No. not really no.

That’s good. So you haven’t been to see anybody? You’ve sort of noticed there’s a loss of hearing but you haven’t been to see anybody?

No

Any idea why that is?

Er I didn’t think it would. In a sense it doesn’t impinge on my day to day life.
Yes. Yep.

I mean some of the things like going to see my sister maybe every once a month or once every six weeks or whatever motor through to Bathgate. I maybe miss a bit of what she's saying and that. Or going to church I'm maybe not hearing every word that's being said and that. Having said that somebody from the congregation gets up to do the reading and that and some of them I can hear perfectly well.

Yeah. Uhhh.

You know?

Yeah.

There's a gap. I mean it all depends on a the clarity of their voice and the volume that they use.

Yes. Yeah. So I mean at the moment it's almost if you were think of a 100 percent perfect situations, a lot of situations that are manageable sort of.

Yeah, yeah

But there's a few where there's just a wee bit of an intrusion. But not enough to do something about it?

See what I don't know is does it stay like that or does it get worse? I don't know.

Yep, yep. It's er just supposing over the next year or two, it er and obviously we haven't tested your hearing so we don't know anything about it. But just supposing it did get worse do you think you would go and seek help then or do?

Oh yes. Yes.

No hesitation there. No, no. and er what kind of help would you expect to get? You know if you're doctor was sending you to a clinic to be assessed, what would you anticipate to happen?

Well I might get some instrument to er to ere r you know what I mean. But I don't something in my ear that doesn't bother me.

That doesn't bother you. No. no. so if somebody was to suggest a hearing aid it wouldn't be a problem?

No problem.

Yeah. Are there any other sort of things you think you would like help? Would you sort of expect like somebody to work with you or would you expect to just be given the hearing aid and then just be able to manage it on your own?

No. Well I mean if somebody who is expert enough and has the you know of sort of being able to advise you. I would say otherwise. Yeah.
Yeah. Make use of advice. Yeah. So if somebody was to say for example you know we have erm classes on particular things particular skills. Do you think that would be useful?

Yeah.

Right. Going back to hearing aids again. Just erm. If people don't have hearing aids they hear stories about them. Have you any experience of hearing aids at all?

Er I er I think I had a he’s dead now but a brother in law that er. I know he used to say that on a one to one he was fine but when he was in a number of people and that, that was just. He just lost the pace then, you know what I mean?

Uuhh. Yeah.

And others would say that oh they suddenly got a lot of whistling in their ear or you know. And I don't know if it was set or you know. Or any availability to set it higher or lower.

Yeah.

I don’t know anything about hearing aids you know.

So just stories that you've heard about people managing with theirs. Has that influenced you at all these stories?

No. no. no. I mean I'm talking probably a number of years ago too. And there must have been advances. I mean there's advances in all these things since then.

Right. Aye they've certainly changed over the last few years.

I suppose the miniaturisation has affected these things as well.

Yep. So do you think that there's some benefit in having one that goes in your ear rather than having one that goes behind your ear?

Yeah well I'd think so.

Yeah

I've noticed the adverts. You know just in sort of looking in the Express and that. You'd see an advert that say oh this thing can go right inside your ear and nobody knows.

Yep. Yep.

But it wouldn't worry me if it was something on the back of my ear

So you mentioned earlier on about just saying yes to people. So you don't have to admit to a defect. And I'm just wondering if that would influence you if you had to wear a
hearing aid. Would you be looking for something that people couldn't see? Or would you be happy to wear something that people were aware of?

Oh yes. Aye.

Yes right.

As I say if you only have to do that when your 83 when there's only about 7 of us.

Yeah that's true. You know but I understand what you're saying. at the moment it's sort of like there comes a point in your life where you might decide there's a problem. But at the moment it's sort of there's no need to because I'm fine.

There's no need to because I there's no err great err affecting me.

Mhmh. Do you have any concerns about using the services? Or getting a hearing aid?

No.

No?

No. but erm I've er got a great faith in the er service in the country you know. Er I think that started from the fact er when I was 38 I had an er operation, quite frankly I had an ulcer believe it or not from when I was the age of 14.

Right

I can remember at school at my desk me bending over to try and ease the pain.

Ease the pain right.

And then I went to. After I'd been a year and a half working in the afternoon there in the office sometimes I could practically tell by the clock when it was going to start you know. And then I was in the Marines for three years. And food there that didn't help any. Not that I'm complaining. It was good food. But it wasn't what I should have been having.

It wasn't what you should had yeah.

And then when I came out and I haemorrhaged in the morning.

Oh dear.

It was the er the morning that the American president got assassinated.

Oh really?

Kennedy That morning

So you do remember what you were doing.

No I'll not forget that. I ended up in the Royal. And they certainly looked after me for a fortnight. You know. Or what ever it was while I got it done. And then later
about two or three years. I think it was two or three years later. I was starting to
you know thingummy again. And they weren't very keen to do it

Right

You know to do a partial gastectomy.

Right

But er I sort of so I said. The consultant said well lets see the surgeon then. The
surgeon said well. I said well I know a number of people who did it they never
looked back. He said well er it's not it's not quite a hundred percent you know.
Well I'll take the risk I said. And I'm glad I did because it sorted it out.

Oh right so. Well it's good they were able to fix it. but er well you mentioned trust there.
Do you think that's important if you're, if you're working with somebody that you trust
them?

Oh yes

If you have that relationship with them

Of course.

Well

(someone else interrupts short whispered conversation with interviewer then
leaves room)

but it's funny I was just thinking there of the reason. I don't know what started me
off thinking there. And I thought. You know it was something er review your life in
a sense and er.

Mhmh. Yeah.

I think it was because my er one of my granddaughters just started this
psychology thing they have at Glasgow university. She just started last week and I
thought that's great. She's got. But I wonder if I'd gone to university and taken
medicine, as one of my classmates did. A friend of mine. She er turned out to be a
professor of ear nose and throat. you know.

Oh right I should know him then.

(unclear)

uhuh

I just think what life would have been like if I had. And then that lead me on to
thinking about. I'm digressing at the moment.

No it's ok.
And then the next thing was when I joined the marines of course. I had initial training in Umsten in Devon. That’s the base. And when you finish they must review you. And they must look at your record. I was hauled in before the colonel. And he said look at your record C. He said I see you’ve got you’re high living certificate. You know I think you should go a move or two up. To the officers training. Well why I’m saying this is because respective of doing heavy training route marching and that, I could go and box rounds and thingummy. No problem. Don’t ask me. and I just felt that it was because of my tummy again.

Of course.

And er you know that they’d thingummied me on that. And then on a later occasion one of the inspector taxis and the district inspector called me in and he said oh I’ve been looking at you. I think I’ve been doing you injustice. I’m 40 by this time you know what I mean. Er I think I’m doing you an injustice C. I think you should do full training. We’ll allow you to do a three year course and you can be put in charge of a district. Of course I’d 5 kids by then.

Right

And I thought oh. I had three oppor. I’m I’ve never really regretted it. but I had three opportunities that I decided how to go.

Yep

Because that was something to do with family. My mother was with me earlier. So I felt again that a going to university would have been a problem money. I know you get a bursary and that. But it still would have been a problem.

It still would have been a problem.

Aye and it was the same thing with going to Officer training.

It’s when we get to these branches in life where we take a different direction depending on our decision.

Well at least I got the opportunity. You see I can always remember at school one of the things that from I don’t know I think I was about three or something. But I can always remember my mother saying whatever you do in life you are not going down the pits. You are not going down the pits she would say. I remember. It was hammered into me. you know. Until I became you know.

Yep. I’m not going down the pits. Yeah

And that was it you know. And the funny thing was I never I never felt. And I’ve said this to people who said you must have had a hard life while serving and your mother. I never felt that I was in anyway you know. I felt that I was I felt like I was privileged. In a sense. You know.

Yep. Yeah.
But I was tops of the moors to start with you know. And then I got my Highers. I mean you know you were in a school where in West Lothian of course. It was maybe secondary school in West Lothian. Which took all the cream from all the schools. It was maybe the first two or something you know.

Yes

So you go into a school of twenty. A class of 25 and you are in there with the best in the area. The whole area of West Lothian. Which took all the cream from all the schools. It was maybe the first two or something you know.

Yes

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Yes

So you go into a school of twenty. A class of 25 and you are in there with the best in the area. The whole area of West Lothian.

Yep. Yeah
And you were taught with that. You know that was the sort of standard you were taught with.

Yeah.

Some of the teachers I think wouldn't have passed a psychology test. But I think you maybe did it in spite of them.

Aye rather than because of them.

So but aye. I felt privileged in life. Yeah

Yeah. Interesting. It's interesting to know. It's often when people like yourself are contented with how life's gone that they take things in their stride. And they don't get stressed. And maybe that's why you're at 83 and you don't look it.

Well obviously. Obviously. I mean aye I loved. Er I mean there's lots of things in life I've loved. I've loved golf you know. And er I had the best job in Scotland at one time. You know round at Drumden Hall and er I worked in London provincial district 23 which was when you went on your computer they were able to bring up the work from London. Instead of sending staff down there. You used to have to transfer staff. A hundred and fifty resigned because you could nae live anything with that. So they brought the work up and did these big districts. So another inspector and I we were members of Tamahoy five minutes away

Oh yeah I've heard of it. uhuh.

Two courses. And er sometimes on a day like this at twelve o'clock the phone would go. Or I'd ring him. We'd get the clubs in the car. Down to the canteen, we'd get a bowl of soup and a roll for about ten minutes. Jumped in the car and we'd be down there about half twelve, when you know nobody was going out. First seven holes and that brought you back to the thingummy. And back to the office

Back to the office.

We made up the time but we never. So nobody could complain you know what I mean.

yes

We would have an hour anyway for lunch so we maybe had half an hour extra.

Yes. And then work on.

And I thought life doesn't get any better than this.

You probably worked better after doing that.

Yeah. We thought you had to catch up.
Well Mr C, I think. Well you’ve answered all the questions I wanted to ask all the areas I 
wanted to talk about. Is there anything else about your hearing that you think I should 
have asked you about that I haven’t? any thing else you want to tell me?

No not really. Not really.

Because that’s been really useful. What you’ve given me. it’s been really helpful. So if 
there’s nothing else about your hearing what I’ll do is I’ll switch this off. If I can find the 
off button.
And we’re off. Right sorry now carry on.

What, what I’m fed up with I have to say pardon? (Interviewer; mhm) or if I’m driving my car and I drive a sports car and it’s, it’s fairly, you’ve got road noise and things. And pardon? I’ve actually got (interviewer; yeah) to kind of look at them and I’ve got to tell them you need to speak up stop mumbling if I don’t see their mouth (interviewer; mhm) I don’t understand what they are saying. (Interviewer; right) and it’s not that I’m profoundly deaf, (interviewer; mhm) it’s just there’s been a background noise and I’m no... and I mean even at work pardon? What did you say? (interviewer; mm mhm) And they say it again and I’m picking up one part but not the second part or the third part and ... the guys must feel like parrots because they’re saying everything two or three times to me and I don’t think I’m deaf (interviewer; mhm) I just under certain circumstances (interviewer; mhm) I don’t hear them or sorry I do hear something (interviewer; mhm) but I don’t hear it clearly enough (interviewer; right) that’s, that’s my .......

But what I, my opinion of my hearing is sometimes this goes into, like I’m speaking into a pot, (interviewer; right) a big drum thing (interviewer; mhm) and I use a nasal decongestant (interviewer; mm mhm) and it helps it (interviewer; right) so I don’t know if my hearing problem is something to do with sinusitis (interviewer; right) or whatever the, the, the (interviewer; right) thing is.

But it just happened; I don’t know it was my wife that said are you going deaf? Am I? (laughing) I don’t know! But I mean my father was like that, my father’s brother was like that. (interviewer; mhm) I mean we used to have to roar at my uncle John like (interviewer; mhm). I mean really have to roar at him (interviewer; right) and then he would say why are you shouting? (interviewer; mhm) Because you would try to go to an octave that he would hear and then (interviewer; yeah) it was maybe just that his confrontation was with you (interviewer; mhm) and why are you shouting at me? (interviewer; aye) It was just one of these things. But er I’m actually getting a bit fed up of saying pardon (interviewer; mhm) and what did you say and it, it’s annoying.
Yeah... So how long have you been doing that do you think?

... I would say ... the best part of five, six years plus, possibly, possibly. But decidedly ... more so in the last two or three years. (interviewer; right yeah) And I just to be honest put it down to mobile telephones (interviewer; right) but whether that’s... because I think my left ear’s my good ear. (interviewer; mhm) But I don’t know if that’s the case because this is the one I’m always, (Interviewer; ahuh) I put my telephone up to. I don’t know if it’s habit or whatever but er that’s tha that’s what I think (interviewer; mhm) but erm proper people like yourself may find that it’s my right ear that’s my best ear, (interviewer; mhm yeah) I don’t know, I don’t know. So over the last four or five years you’ve noticed

Decidedly yes

So is it particular things that you noticed? You know did you notice it was maybe just some things you had trouble with?

Well like say having a conversation with you, I’m not having a problem with that at all. (interviewer; mhm yeah) But if there’s a background noise I’m beat. (interviewer; mhm) I mean if there’s a back, like the road noise off my car, (interviewer; ahuh) I’m really, I really struggle. (interviewer; ahuh) I cannæ hear, if there’s music on. I kinda have to switch the radio off to listen to what somebody’s saying to me. (interviewer; mhm) And that’s and sometimes I think I’m saying the wrong things because I’m hearing something and saying yes no whatever. (Interviewer; mhm) and sometimes I’m saying the wrong thing. (Interviewer; right ok) it’s only because I’m getting fed up saying (interviewer; aye) pardon? Because every time I’m in a car and someone says something to me I have to say sorry I didnae hear that what did you say? And it’s annoying for me; it must be frustrating for them as well! (laughing)

So do you find just say sometimes you say aha right do you just say that?

Aye fine aye and I’m not really sure that’s what’s been said. (aha) Which is wrong but I mean it just I feel that people must be getting fed up of me saying pardon? In fact my wife the other day, erm I think last Thursday or Friday or something, she says I feel like a parrot because I mean she’s in the general office and I’m standing and I’ve actually got to physically go near her and say I did nae get that what did you say? (mhm mhm)And there’s
in the general office there’s my ex-wife there, one of our secretaries opposite her and one there I mean it’s not a big office (aha) and I’m not picking up what she’s saying. (mhmm) And it’s not that she’s speaking softly it’s just as soon me if there’s background noise (that’s it) I’m beat I’m beat. So how do you feel when somebody says something to you like oh I feel like a parrot? How do you feel? Er (laughing) like a wally! Because I mean because I was actually thinking at one time you know it was habit (interviewer; ahuh) but it’s no that’s when I realised that aye I do have a problem because a lot of people just say ey? For the sake of saying ey? And I know there is certainly something just no right here. Because I saw a doctor… D- somebody at B- hospital two or three years ago … oh I can’t remember his last name. S-? D- S-?

That’s the one! David S. I met the. In actual fact I’ve just done a job for him and it was he who recognised me. And he gave me a test and come up with the thing and yes I’m going to have a problem but the strange thing about that is he thought I was ok at the minute but then he gave me a brochure for hearing aids! No thanks very much! No opportunity missed!

But that was it was really just I think for conformation and to see. I dinnae particularly want a hearing aid. (Interviewer; mhmm)

But if I’ve got to have one I’ve got to have one. I would rather be able, vanity’s coming in here, I would rather be able to hear what people are saying to me. But where we’re having this is fine (interviewer; aye cause it’s a quiet room) I just I dinnae have a problem I mean it it’s not a problem but when there seems to be a background noise, a radio, whether it’s my mind going away listening to I don’t know but I would really be struggling if there was three or four people in here (interviewer; mhmm) and you said something I would have to say pardon, or excuse me or what did you say?

So when… you said you had a hearing test done a couple of years ago (COPA3; mhmm) and that was ok but at that point did you think that before you had the result, did you think you had a problem hearing?

Yes

Right ok
Aye because but at that particular time I was putting it down to my sinuses again. I mean ear, nose and throat they’re all connected I believe (interviewer; aye) and when I use my decongestant as I was told to do before I flew or anything because of these headaches that I was getting (interviewer; oh yeah) I was certainly doing that and then on Saturday I had this just like I was speaking into like a big hollow erm and it went away. I bent down and it went away! (interviewer; right) I mean I just knelt on the floor and I heard it going click (interviewer; mhm) and it had gone! And that was fine but I went home put some decongestant up my up my nose and it’s been fine since. (interviewer; fine since then) but what I would like to know is why that happens because to me I’m thinking my ears are full of wax and there’s something (Interviewer; in them) but I don’t according to my own doctor I don’t have waxy ears although I think you’re supposed to have a certain amount of wax in your ear but it just.. I mean as said you and I it’s fine here but turn a radio on and
You’re lost.
I’m beat. 
So the kinda history been over the past four or five years you’re started to notice it but everything was ok on the test and then you’ve sort of noticed it more and more It’s getting, it’s certainly getting worse aye. So what kind of things in your live you mentioned at work what other kind of things in your life do you think it’s starting to affect or it’s having an effect on? .... Well... it’s really just the basic con the basic it cuts down your conversation with somebody that’s in your car because you dinnae want to talk in case they answer and I don’t hear what they’re saying (Interviewer; mhm) and so it cuts down conversation I mean if I’m going anywhere in the car I can go two and three hours and I’m simply not saying a word (interviewer; mhm) because if I talk and they talk back I’m going to have to start saying pardon and that’s just something I’ve just had to accept erm and at the moment or even yesterday erm going across to F- we were driving down a wee lane and I was in a different car but I was aware of keeping saying to C- pardon what did you say sorry could you look at me when you’re speaking (interviewer; mhm) because if, if she was turning away
that’s me I’ve, I’ve lost it totally (interviewer; mhm). Now I put that
down to my concentration (interviewer; mhm) or is it just bad
hearing? So whether it’s background noises or that I have a
problem with it I’m not really sure
Yeah. So do you find it easier just in a situation like that rather than
trying to cope with the conversation it’s easier to withdraw from a
conversation?
Yep. Definitely, definitely.
Do you find yourself doing that a lot?
Aye
Right
I do aye if I go to erm an institute meeting or whatever and
there’s three or four people I’ll try to speak to one person
(interviewer; mhm) because I cannae really... I don’t know if it’s a
point of fact focussing or whatever but I just don’t hear what a
lot of people are saying. It’s fine if I’m standing besides
someone and they’re just talking away but if that person said
something I didnae get that. You know I just don’t know
Yep yep so it’s kinda affecting um interacting in crowds as well.
Oh aye. Definitely
How good is that relationship to your friends and family? I know
you’re saying you’re having trouble keep from laughing here
(laughing) My daughter’s fed up with it my daughter’s totally fed
up with it. You get some... it’s the same with them it’s, it’, it’s
there’s I’ve got two wee grand kiddies, they’re lovely people and
if they’re running about and my daughter’s talking or my son-in-
law you can I just don’t hear what they’re saying now I...
Honestly be thought I was me it was an old age thing it’s just one
of these things that happen blahblablah but I dinnae want it, I
want to be able to hear because if S- and A- are out there
bouncing balls or. I’m hearing the ball and all the rest of it and
the kiddies making a noise but my concern (unclear) but I’ve got
to say to A- what was that? Or whatever and there’s a .... I would
rather to be fair I’d just rather just go along to see them give
them a wee cuddle and leave because to have a conversation...
and my wee granddaughter. I mean yesterday it was father’s day
and I come down and wee A--pie was sitting at the breakfast bar
and she said something and I said darling I didn’t hear you and
she said och it doesn’t matter. So you see even and I would have
loved to have known what the child said to me but och it’s alright it doesnae matter and I thought oh well Missed opportunity. And you cannae grab her by the throat and say get on with what you were saying. (laughing) Not really allowed that No I don’t think that’s permitted. No it’s erm and these are the kind of thing you’re right it’s a missed opportunity. I mean there could have been a nice wee conversation for my granddaughter and I there and I’ve missed it totally because I didn’t hear what she was saying Mhm yeah So I’ve I think maybe the tap was running or something Right And it’s gone and it’s gone forever and it’s just the way so Yes yes that’s right yeah. So it’s kind of close relations as well as work Yes oh aye. Och my work I don’t mind if I don’t if I hear them or no but certainly when my when my ex-wife turned round and said you’re really getting lost and of course it was a joke in the office when this form came in and what did it say about it hearing what is it for the elderly or something Aye the erm the older person’s agenda That’s it That’s at fifty Of course this is a big joke an older person’s agenda (interviewer; aye aye) this is great fun and so I’m going away here and I say, I said to D-, D-’s dad this morning mind I’m going away to that university place today oh at what time? Blah blah blah blah and he says something else and I said what and it was maybe obviously a wee smart remark (interviewer; right) but I didn’t hear it (interviewer; uhuh) and of course he was sniggering and everyone’s (interviewer; aye) and I’ve, I’ve missed it. (interviewer; uhuh) I’ve missed it totally. I’m missing the wee (right) because I like to be quick and get back with something (interviewer; ahuh) and I’ve missed it totally and it annoys me. So it’s like their in the joke and you’re not Aye and it’s about me and I would rather laugh at me as well. But uh no you do miss a lot I think. As I say it’s… I mean even... we
were on the golf course D- and I last Tuesday and even a wee bit
of wind (ahuh)
That’s it.
I was walking up the fairway with D- and this other guy… haven’t
a clue, (interviewer; mhm) haven’t a Scooby. There was oh aye
hmh but if I’m really honest I don’t think I knew what the
conversation was about, haven’t a clue. As I say I don’t think I’m
deaf at all but everybody else seems to think so.
Right (laughing)
Yeah getting sick of it now.
So up to now what kind of things helped? You’ve obviously found
some ways of coping with it like no speaking in the car (COPA3;
well) so what other kind of things have you done?
Well nothing apart from making sure that I’m facing the person
(interviewer; mhm) or I’m standing close enough to them that I
can if there’s any background noise that’s away but so that I can
watch them anyway. I cannae lip-read obviously but just so that I
know that they’re speaking to me (interviewer; mhm) and I can get
their, I can grasp most of the conversation but that’s that other
than that… trying to make sure that I’m close enough and facing
them you know?
Mhm yeah and a wee bit of avoidance
Oh a big bit of avoidance
Big bit of avoidance
Big bit of avoidance. Right
It was interesting what you said there cause you went to see the
doctor you said he tested your hearing said you were ok then he gave
you a brochure for hearing aids
That was that that was I mean he might to be fair I’ve got a
dreadful memory. For exactly what he said um … and when I
was when I was asked. When I asked to go to B- to make the
appointment this Dr D-S- came out and took us in and he did
very no as high-tech stuff as what was done here but the ear-
phone was on and I had this dadadada and I had to look at him
and all this kind of thing and he was talking about. In fact I think
I do have a… in fact it all stemmed from the well-man clinic
(interviewer; right) that’s were it stemmed from. I was just trying
to think why I got involved in it (interviewer; uhuh) and it came
from the well-man clinic. That’s why I went back. And he actually
gave me this chart thing I’m sure. I might have it somewhere that you to have a wee look at. I should have thought to look it out. I don’t know whether I still have it, whether I shredded it or not. About... just at that minute there my ear went pop.

And there’s... it’s like... singing erm not singing erm... what’s the word I’m looking for? A squeally kind of thing in my ear it just it just...

Like a wee pressure change? Is that what it’s like?
Possibly. But..... like possibly one of your hearing you know how you have that wee kind of note that you goes through that just happened the now there.

Anyway I’ll start to sniff and it’ll probably cure it but er. No when I went to see that guy I’m sure he gave me the graph and at the moment he says you really don’t need a hearing aid but in the future you possibly will. And what he put it down to was possibly high pitches with tools and things that I’ve worked with all my life. (Interviewer; right) without ear defenders of course because I’m mean that’s only something that we’ve recently realised that there is a problem so ear defenders have been. I used to buff and grind in a small confined space with eye protection but not anything over the ears of course. But that was... what was that? But if I still have it I’ll bring it in for you, once I’ve looked it out because someone I shredded all my stuff. Everything seemed to be fine, my cholesterol was a wee bit iffy but everything else was fine. But the hearing was a problem. But that was just an initial thing which is why I went back to see him.

So you went to the follow-up and it was ok?

Yeah but it was good that he gave me the brochure for hearing aids though.

Aye totally. You kept that filed away. Did you. Is that what you expected to happen? Or? You know when people go along to clinics they don’t know what’s going to happen. I mean what did you expect?

I don’t... I honestly... I mean I knew I would get the hearing test of some description because a long, long time ago I was put in the room, the sound proofed room at the S- J’s hospital

Oh right ahhh.
and... now I don’t remember why that was... I don’t know if it was because of headaches or whatever honestly it’s a good ten years ago. At least ten years ago I think. And I can’t remember why I was there. But I seem to remember being in this big room with a guy and it was just nothing as sophisticated as you but it was wee beeps, bigger beeps and this kind of thing. So... don’t I honestly don’t remember why I was there.

Nothing to do with your sinuses was it?

I’ll tell you, you’re right. I’ll tell you what it was because it was something to do with that. The... the, I can’t remember the guy an Asian doctor put a thing up my nose and down my throat. (interviewer; ahuh) Would that be? (Interviewer; Ahuh) It was maybe a follow on from that. Certainly.

They were just checking you it was ok. Was it ok then did they tell you?

If they did I dinnae listen. I dinnae hear them. (Laughing).

That’s very apt!

My biggest problem to be fair, is I do not pay attention (interviewer; right) I, I find it difficult. My head’s always at my place of work. And I really dinnae, up until now I have nae taken trouble. (interviewer; yeah) If I feel I’m fine I’m fine. Erm but over the past two or three years my eyesight has gone as well and that’s, that’s a huge problem for me (interviewer; oh right uhuh).

That’s a huge problem it is. It puts me... it makes me depressed. The fact that I’ve got to ask one of the staff, like my son what kind of head is that? Is it a Phillips or is it a Torrex? because unless I’ve got my specs -and I’ll put them down and forget where I’ve put them. They were on my head today and I’ve lost them in B. They must have fallen. And I’ve never noticed, (interviewer; ahuh) I’ve never noticed! And it’s, that’s how stupid I am. I mean I put them. I used to have five or six pairs of specs. One in this office, that office, one upstairs. But... I can... I can read that just now. But later on today I won’t be able to.

So as you get tired.

I couldn’t cope. It’s all because I got an eye full of sawdust.

There you go that’s one of those things. But erm but no it makes me withdraw a wee bit from conversations. See I mean when you go to... I’d actually... when I had a partner, we would go out and, maybe to a party or whatever and I would sit there and not enjoy myself because I could hear the music but people were talking.
to me and… I just, it was, it was dreadful. It is dreadful because I
canna hear what they’re saying. If there’s a big background
noise that’s me (interviewer; yeah) and my pals speak to me I
haven’t like I mean I have not got a clue what he said. And it
could be something like would you like a drink and I…. nothing
and it’s because everybody else has ordered then I realise what
he’s said (interviewer; yeah) but I mean it is. Because they’ll be
thinking the man was speaking loud enough. But I prefer not to
go.
Right, right
And my partner and I have split up now. But I didnae, I never
ever told her the reason why I didn’t like going to these places,
because she would never have understood.
Right
Because, her, she’s got radar ears. But she would never have
understood why I did not want to go. She thought it was just
because she would cast up the company blah. And it’s got
nothing to do with that. It, it’s to do with me. If I’m sitting at a
table with ten or twelve people, I cannæ get involved in a
conversation because I don’t know what’s, what the
conversation is about. (Interviewer; ahuh) And it’s I would rather
not be there. It’s as simple as that. I would just rather not be
there.
And did you ever tell people that?
No
No. any idea why you didn’t tell them?
Maybe the vanity bit. I don’t know.
Right
I really I felt that I didn’t have too much input in the conversation
anyway.
Right.
It was maybe just lots of different reasons to be honest.
(interviewer; mhm), but maybe if I heard more erm. because I can
blether like a budgie to anybody.
Right.
I used to could. (Interviewer; ahuh) and like I say it’s fine if I’m in
an, if I’m in an office or peace and quiet like this and it’s not a
problem. Possibly your good self and maybe another two or
three and we’re. Then I think it would be fine. But if yous were
going to have a conversation och I’ll just not bother. (Interviewer;
uhuh) batter on. Because if I mean I would love to be able to get involved. But you’ve got to listen and you’ve got to know what everybody is saying because you could put your foot in it big time. (interviewer; yeah) Because people could say I did this or I didn’t do it, and you could say why did you not do that? Then they say but I did do it. Oh right. Because it’s happened before you never heard the didn’t or the did. You just didn’t differentiate between the two, whether that makes any sense to you or not I dinnae.

It does aye.

Does it?

It’s interesting because you were saying there you used to be the type of person to talk to everybody

Oh aye.

Do you find that as you’re noticing a problem with your hearing that you’re changing, as a person?

Oh yes, oh yes unfortunately. I’m becoming… not a recluse, that’s not fair but I would rather not go into company. I would rather sit on a one to one basis with somebody. Or and just like this. If you and I just now were going for a lunch and there was music playing and you were speaking to me and you were. Forget it. (interviewer; mhm) I would know you were talking to me (interviewer; ahuh) but there would be words I would not hear. It’s as simple as that. And then you’d go. You would understand because of your (interviewer; aye) profession. But people get fed up; I imagine I would get fed up if someone keeps going pardon? all the time. And think there’s something wrong here. And I would rather just, just step back to be fair. And that’s, that’s how it is. I mean I mean I’ve actually walked down the main street in B- and nipped into a shop because I didn’t want to get involved in a conversation because we would all start to laugh and joke and (interviewer; ahuh)... and the same when we go to. I’ve got two or three pals that we meet we go to The C-, which is a wee restaurant in B-. That we meet now and again. We go to have our breakfast. There’s background music playing, we’re having a carry-on. And we’re away to seas. And there’s myself, K-, young -, G-... and they can... I’ve lost it. (interviewer; yeah) I have just lost, I, I’m not quick enough. (Interviewer; mhm) if, if for want of a better word, I’m just not quick enough to grasp all the conversation (interviewer; mhm) and I’m missing some
(interviewer; aye) and that’s when you think well I’m getting old here. (interviewer; aye) and it’s maybe no the fact that, well I think it might be a contributing factor but, I think there must be a way that I could get back to grasping all of this. (interviewer; yes uhuh) but what that is I honestly don’t know.

Yeah. And nobody’s kind of. I notice when you have had a hearing test, it’s not specifically because you think you’ve got a hearing problem and you need to go for a hearing aid and go for a hearing test. It’s been a kind of by-product of

A by-product of something else, yes.

But have you… has anybody said, you know apart from when you had your hearing aid brochure. Has anyone said well this is what’s happening and given you some sort of tips for getting used to how you can do different things?

No, no.

No. So, if you. If you go into a restaurant or something like that no one’s ever said to you about or do you do this automatically find a particular place to sit that might be better

When I go into restaurants there’s no one. Well to be fair, over the past two or three years it’s only ever been the two of us anyway. So it’s a matter of you sit there.

Yeah, yeah

But even at that. There’s. there’s. if we’re in an Italian or a Chinese restaurant and there’s some kind of I’ve actually got to physically. I’ve got to listen; I’ve got to struggle to listen.

Yes

I’ve got to try and. I’ve got to try and whatever they’ve said I’ve got to try and think what the answers going to be to make sure that I don’t get it wrong because I have got it wrong on a few occasions. And it’s embarrassing to be fair.

Cause when you’re saying that you’re looking really tense. It’s almost like every time you’re having a conversation it’s like if you cause tension it’s not worth it.

Oh aye. Definitely. Oh absolutely. It’s, it’s. I mean this is great just now it’s perfect. I’m enjoying this because this now I can hear you. And it’s not. It’s fine. But don’t put any loudness on cause that’s it beat. I mean. And honestly I have, you’re right, I have boys come in and I’m really, really struggling. And nine times out of ten I’m what? And I’m conscious of that now. Uuhh
I dinnae lead with my right ear. It’s my left ear. And it’s probably
my right ear that’s the best one.
Well when we do the assessment we’ll tell you.
But it is just annoying you get huh? Pardon. Now I mean and
that yesterday was just a classic and I thought och you know,
with my wee granddaughter. Och dinnae bother because even
the wee soul was getting fed up.
Aye.
She doesn’t want to repeat herself. It doesn’t matter.
Yeah, uhuh
And she does nae mean it doesn’t matter because she’s being
rude. It, it maybe wasn’t that important what she was saying
anyway, but I really. I thought that’s not fair. I would like to be
able to understand what the wee thing has said. Cause she’s not
a baby. She’s eleven. So erm. Her speech is perfect but I just
cannae hear her.
Yeah.
Because, because a tap was running. And it’s not as if a tap like
it were Niagara Falls. That was another thing when I was at
Niagara Falls a couple of years ago. I was with an old couple 75
or so and we sat and had a chat. And what they were saying I
hadn’t a clue, maybe they were speaking Italian or something,
because of all the background noise.
The background noise ahuh.
And it is it’s annoying. It’s frustrating. And it’s getting worse.
Uuhh. Yeah.
It’s getting worse
So you’re noticing it affect your life more than it used to?
Oh aye definitely. Definitely.
Yeah. Just hold on a minute I just want to check that’s still recording. I
just had this awful feeling that I’m going to look down and it’s stopped
recording. So have you, you’ve been coping with it so far what are
you going to do now it starting to get worse are you thinking about
going any help? Are you thinking about maybe what would help?
I honestly. Oh. The only thing I could have possibly done was
gone to my own doctor and said look I need to maybe go to a
hearing specialist or whatever. Or go to the thing like
Specsavers. To say I might need a hearing aid. In which case
you get one of those big massive things that go over your head.
But I would like to think. I would like to think that if I do need one
of those things I could maybe afford to get something that’s not
go ing to be a big huge thing.

*Mhmh*

And if that’s the only thing that’s going to do for me then fine
that’s just one of those things. that’s the vanity bit.

*Right, right.*

Cause I mean I still think I’m thirty. And I’m not.

*Right.*

No, no. I mean I would nae know, other than my normal GP
where to go. Apart from as it would happen to be this Dr S- turns
out to be the good friend of a friend of mine.

*Right*

So I maybe would have got that guy involved in it again through
the B door, or avenue. But erm you see all these adverts in the
paper. Which I really don’t think is a good thing. I’m not saying
the H- is a bad thing. but I mean you see all these wee
microscopic P- hearing aid things. surely these cannot be
suitable for everyone. They must do damage. They cannae be
100% good for everybody. I mean I read. I just picked up one of
the new things for your ear for my mobile phone. And the first
thing it says to you is please make sure the volume thing is at
it’s lowest part before you put it in your ear and then you can
adjust it from there. Now that tells me that someone somewhere
has realised this because it has nae been in any of the rest that I
had. But just. I mean I got one on Saturday and that’s the first
thing I read. Please make sure when you switch it on, put it on
it’s lowest volume setting then attach it to your ear. And then
follow it from there. Just keep pressing the plus button until it’s
at a comfortable volume. But these hearing aids that I see
advertised I don’t think. I think they just stick it in your ear they
adjust it then that’s you maybe. That can only be good for a wee
while surely? I mean I would thing it could get progressively
worse. But I’ve got my. My sister’s husband. He’s got two
hearing aids. And when he doesn’t want to listen, well he just
turns them down. But there are some times when he turns them
on, it’s like me and my sister are just roaring at him. And she’s
not, I mean she does roar an awful lot of the time. She’s. well he
just turn’s it down until he’s got some kind of level over both his
ears. But I mean he’s eighty he’s entitled to have hearing aids.

*Right.*
But I mean it is. It makes me. I certainly think over the past couple of years, I’ve got more withdrawn. I don’t even. I mean when I go to a wedding I don’t even. It’s just kind of hang back and then if there’s people wanting to talk they’ll talk to somebody else and not me. Yeah I mean as long as I’m up against them it’s fine but as soon as there’s anything in the background that’s me I’m lost I’m totally lost. It’s interesting you saying there. He’s eighty he’s entitled to hearing aids. Do you think maybe somewhere in your mind you’re maybe thinking it’s not time for a hearing aid yet? Possibly. Possibly. Yep It’s. like I remember my dad. My dad, when he reached the age of sixty. He just couldn’t accept it that he was getting to an age of sixty. and I possibly would be the same. I mean I dinnae feel, I dinnae feel fifty eight. But mentally I’m not fifty-eight. My body’s telling me I am. But mentally. Oh yes I know what you mean. I realise I’m not. But erm. It’s erm. I don’t know what the. You see a lot of old people with hearing aids you begin to associate that’s when you’re going to have one. It’s like part of your life. It’s like somebody said you’re going to have to get false teeth. Oh good. I don’t want to get false teeth. It’s not. It’s not an occupational thing that says at the age of sixty, you must have false teeth. I dinnae want them. I’ll try to keep my teeth for as long as I possibly can. I dinnae want false teeth. I mean my nephew. Stop having Mars bars and Irn Brus for your breakfast. Your teeth will drop out. I’ll get a set like my mother’s. it’s the culture that he was born, brought up in. it’s. my mum had false teeth, my sister had false teeth, so you’ll get them. So he’s got them. And I dinnae want them. And I’m lucky enough so far that I’m in that position that if they drop out in the next ten years I’ve not done bad. But my mum my mum had all her teeth. My dad had all his bottom teeth. It’s. there’s not a reason why you cannae keep all you teeth. Erm and it’s just like everything else. Nothing you can physically do to prevent your hearing from going, maybe with the exception of maybe if we had had ear defenders when I was the age of fifteen and we had of been
educated to use them. Then fine. But even with ear defenders. I mean you can still hear somebody speak. But it just takes away the sharpness of noise. possibly the bit that does most damage.

Yes, yes uhuh.

And erm that’s the extent of my knowledge as far as hearing goes.

But it’s interesting that you say that. Because I’m just wondering if it is maybe all cultural? I wonder if maybe there’s a cultural part in that you’re aware that you’re not hearing properly but you haven’t made that connection. That it’s maybe time to be thinking about a hearing aid. Of what’s maybe more in the future.

Well Christine if I’m in the need I’ll get one. It’s just one of these things. if I need it, I’ll get one,because I would rather be involved. It’s like maybe the gooseberry thing. because I know that’s happening. I love to have a laugh and a carry on with people. But over the last three or four years I’ve just not done it because I’ve maybe not going to be if I’m having a carry-on with that person and there’s something over here. I’m not going to be able to. It’s just and you think och I’ll not bother. And, and I don’t. I just don’t bother and it’s. it does. It’s a silly thing to. And I mean I never would have thought of that until you actually brought it up. That I don’t. you’re right. That it does. It does make you withdraw more. A simple thing like not being able to hear what the person behind you has been saying. And that’s probably. You’re right. You’ve probably made me realise that that is what the problem is. I’m not as socially active because I’m embarrassed by the fact that I cannae hear. That has. You’re probably right. Thank you.

Sorry about that.

No, no.

You’re supposed to be coming in to get talking and I’m talking.

No not at all. Because I mean what you are saying is right because you have saying what you have. I mean my life has changed and I’m not the guy that I was. And I mean I don’t go anywhere now. I never go anywhere. I mean I’m far too old for discos now and all that kind of thing but there are places you can go. You know with a friend even down to the pub or something. I could go in for a drink and I do go in the pub. But I wouldn’t know what the conversation would be. And it’s pointless me going. And I’ll just be sitting there. Like a, I’ll be a
bit of wood. I’d be as well as a bit of wallpaper. Because I cannae get involved in a conversation. Because I don’t hear what people are saying to me. It’s alright if I start something. Blah, blah, blah. But if when somebody comes back to me. It’s all I didnae hear that sorry pal? I’ll not bother. And it’s not the first time I’ve not answered somebody and they’ve said what do you think? What about? And I’m embarrassed by it. And I’m sure that they are as well. So I just withdraw and that’s it.

Right. So what kind of things do you think. I mean apart from hearing aids, which I kind of think everyone thinks I’m losing my hearing I need to get a hearing aid. What kind of things would help you? You say you went along to the clinic and say I’ve got a problem. I mean you find out you have these tests and find out that you’re ok so far, I mean you’ve not had one for a while. But I mean when I’m out and I’m in background noise and things like that I don’t hear. What other kinds of things would maybe help to you to manage that kind of thing?

The confidence somebody possibly like you’re good self saying that ok this isn’t a problem but here’s what you’ve got the problem with, with background stuff. We can either do this or we can’t do this or you’ve got to live with this. I mean to know what you can do and what you can’t do. The reality of it is, is there something that can be done for my specific problem. If there is what is it? And we’ll just say it’s a machine or an operation. Somebody, like yourself would need to say well the advantages are you’re going to be able to have a hundred percent hearing but there’s a gamble there. Or if you have this little machine and you’re going to be 95% there. That’s fine then you’ve got the choice. But for somebody to tell you exactly what the problem is and if it’s old age well I’ll accept that. If, if. and if there’s nothing that can be done fine. I’ve just got to live with it and I’ve just got to keep going the way I’ve been going. , because you do get into a routine with what you do. Honestly, with you saying that just now. Well a wee while ago. about deaf culture. That is that is exactly and that is probably why nobody I dinnae go anywhere now,because like I said, my partner and I split up about ten or twelve years ago. But C-‘s had a lot of friends, you know birthday parties. You go yourself and that’s probably the reason because if somebody was sitting talking to me it would be pointless. It would be pointless
and that’s you’ve hit it on the head. That’s right.

So it’s more of it’s easier to just not go in to the parties and things like that than to say to people look I cannae hear you.

I honestly don’t think I realised until our conversation how. Why wouldnae go. I don’t think I’ve actually put my foot onto it. Like what’s it matter if I don’t go? They’re not my pals. So but, now that you’ve suggested that. It’s, well you suggested that. It’s how it’s exactly why I think I’ve not gone. Because all these parties and things they have background noise. They have people all blethering and if somebody’s talking to me I dinnae want to have to keep saying to them pardon, what? What? That it can’t be. It’s not any fun for me and it’s certainly not any fun for whoever you’re trying to have a conversation with. I mean because it’s you never ever get past the one thing. it’s so.

Interesting so it’s the one thing. because it sounds like if you were going for help. What would maybe be the one thing would be someone looking at the choices and as you said looking at your particular problem.

Well I think. I don’t think. I think it’s a very exact science and I think everyone’s hearing will be different. So I think that’s why it’s got to be an exact science. Because I would think if there’s somebody who’s got a loss after me came in for this they would have a different problem. And it would mean maybe a different. As I said I don’t know. Somebody said to me and they keep saying go and get your ears syringed. But I’ve asked the doctor. And the doctor says your ears aren’t needing syringed. Because I mean I had a friend who had his ears syringed and he says he could hear the grass growing now. But maybe that’s the case. Maybe it is that he’s got a different problem to what I’ve got. It’s just one of those things I suppose. Like you’re teeth and your eyesight the way you look and all the other things about us. There’s millions of different problems. Maybe some of them can be cured in an instant. It might just be that my problem is a sinus problem. I don’t know. I mean it would be good to know what the problem is, is it a sinus problem, is it a hearing problem? Yes it’s a hearing problem. This is what we can do. This is what we cannot do. We can make it better or you’re better off just leaving it alone, just in case we make it worse. That would be fine. To have the choice and then to know would be
good. As long as you dinnae tell me in funny in funny language
and fancy names and Latin and all this.
Tell me like it is.
Tell me with your (unclear.) End of story.
So what you want is for somebody who sits down looks at your
particular problem offers you whatever choices are available and lets
you be part of that choice and you want it in plain English.
Oh yes.
And this is what’s happening
People. I mean you get. I mean I had the problem with my knee
but my doctor, who’s a friend of mine, a very good friend of
mine. Who tells me what it was and I was like I don’t need this,
what is it? And he referred me to B-. Because that was another
shock I got I went into B- hospital. I went up to the desk and
says can I have a word with a consultant, I’m quite prepared to
pay for it. I says I’ve got a problem with my knee. We don’t have
an accident and emergency, she says. And I say well it’s not an
accident and it’s not an emergency. I just want to be seen. And
you’ve got to by a GP get a form for them to fill that’s not a
problem and referral. I faxed her or text her whatever they do
these things and within a couple of days I met this Dr M- I think. I
only had a look at him. And he said oh it’s basically the fluid.
The sack of fluid thing that protects your knee is gone and it got
infected, it’s dadadadada. And erm they can cut it out. It would
take 25-35 minutes, told me the rough cost. Do I need to have it
done? He says no, no but you’ll need to probably never be able
to kneel on that. That’s fine. When I need it done, I’ll have it
done. But I’ve got the choice.
Yes.
I don’t have to have it done and it’s not making me limp and it’s
not very sore at the moment. It was very sore at one time. But
now I know how to keep off it and I’m not having the same pain.
And that’s fine. But I do have, I did have the same choice of an
operation but I chose not to have it which was great. And I can
go to the hospital and I’ve actually achieved something. I know
what I can do and what I can’t do. My limitations. So that’s fine.
That’s all there is to it.
And it’s almost like taking control back to your life. Because you’re
deciding
Oh yes. Yes. I mean I actually came out of that place feeling
happy. It cost me money. Cost me a lot of money to get to see
this man for twenty minutes. But he was great. I mean, one of
these people, like yourself. Who knew his chosen profession,
occasionally would go blahblahblahblahblah. Shows me his
knees, I've had the same kind of problem. It's more like a
glorified form of housemaid's knee.

Right

But he went away on the fact that tell them all, all, all. My doctor
was in he said. And when I was speaking to my doctor on
Saturday, I was doing a job round a mate's house. And er how's
your knee? And I said well I cannae kneel on it. He said well I'll
get you a kneel pad. I said no I don't need it I kneel on my right
knee. I don't need to kneel on my left knee, I can kneel on my
right knee. And as long as I don't do that I'm not going to have a
problem. So I just don't do it. It's as simple as that. And that's
maybe easier than the hearing aid. Cause I mean that's
something else if I'm going to kneel do, I'll do it on my right
knee. Not my left knee.

So you've learnt to adapt?

And I'm not going to get married again. So I'm not going to kneel
as much.

So that's sorted then.

Sorted.

Saves you a load. It's interesting with you saying that because that's
the same type of thing you were saying with your hearing. It might be
that going into a clinic a hearing aid is not what you are going to
need. And what I'm hearing you saying is that what you want from a
clinic is almost them telling you the options and it might be that the
option is that they just tell you how to manage in noise. Or, or check
what your hearing is like in noise etc. and like you say, tell you what it
is, what the options are and leave it to you to decide.

I mean that's right. I mean that Dr S- said if you're put a set of
hearing defenders on ear defenders on sorry. In the work when
your going out. Which to be fair I did that for two or three days
because I got these nice wee models and things. and I thought
they're not doing me any good. But I, I used to take a set on
holiday with me because my partner snores. And I don't sleep
when there's any noise at all. And that's the bit that. Any noise I
cannae sleep. Somebody snoring or grunting. That’s it finished, I’m wide awake. Yet if they were in a room full of people. I wouldn’t hear them snore. You see what I mean? And the silly thing is I can hear everything but like I said if there was music or any kind of background at all, that’s me beat. That’s me beat. So maybe by taking all that interfering noise away I’m fine. You can hear whether you want to hear it or not.

Aye I’m fine honestly. I mean uh I don’t know if there’s och, if there’s a strange thing. because I know when I was a youngster. I mean two and three years old. I had operations on me. And I think it was for runny nose or runny ears. Like earwax or something. Did you know have a look and see there was scarring in That’s right I remember that yeah. That’s why yeah. Cause I remember my dad had sinus problems and ear problems and so have I. erm and that’s because I came off a flight Majorca about ten years ago. Had a terrible, terrible headache. Erm went to my GP er. Quite concerned er. sent me straight away to the W. Had a, some kind of scan and a lumbar puncture. They were actually going along the lines of it was some kind of brain tumour. Right. At the back of his mind, he felt it was sinuses. But he wanted to be sure. Which is fine. Mhmh

When we got the results back. Erm because I had this lumbar puncture, I was going to have a headache for a week anyway. Until the spinal fluid regenerated. Right.

And Dr M- who was my doctor at the time,says I’m awfully sorry for that. You don’t need to apologise for it. You could have saved my life because of this lumbar puncture. She says lumbar punctures are a painful thing. are they? Because I couldnae tell her. Because the doctor that did mine, I never felt a thing and that is the gospel truth. A young lad. He was just superb. And when I had gone into the hospital the guy had said I need to stay in. and I said well I can’t stay in. well but you need to. And he gave. Like you was talking about your clinic, he gave me the options. If indeed this is a brain haemorrhage you’ve got a 70/30
chance of surviving the first one a 50/50 chance of the second
one and a 70/30 against you of the third one. I had to take that
chance. I had the option. I had to sign myself out of the hospital
because my mum was dying. My mum knew that I was there
every night. Although she didn’t know what time of day it was
she knew she’d seen me. And I didnae want my mum worrying
that she has nae seen me. So I had to sign myself out. But I had
to be back in that clinic for quarter past ten the next again day to
get my lumbar puncture.
Right.
So I did that. But there again you see. I did have the option. Erm
because if it was a. because apparently these things can happen
very quickly. You can have one two. I don’t know these things.
but according to this doctor 50/50 chance, the second time
because if it was a brain tumour, I’d be down to a 50/50 chance
and then only 70/30 against me. But I still had to go home and
make sure that my mum was... Make sure my mum wasnae
worried about no seeing anybody because although she was
very high on morphine she knew.
She knew when there was somebody there.
When it was children. Well myself and my sister. Aye we were
there. And that that was the surprising bit. And erm this is the bit
that I’ll never ever forget. On the 22nd of November at 22 minutes
past 2, my mum died. My headache disappeared. My headache
disappeared.
That’s incredible. And did they ever find out what it was?
They reckon it was just sinuses. So every time I was going in an
aeroplane I was taking splitting heads. I was suffering a sore
head for about six and a half hours coming back from Canada,
but as soon as I landed a cup of tea, a couple of aspirins. It had
gone. And what happened in the hospital there when I came
back from Australia. This male nurse says to us, before you fly
again, take decongestants for about a week. Because my
sinuses apparently were blocking and this is where all the
problem starts. But these are some. These are one mother of a
headache. I’ve never. I’ve never felt pain like that in my life. I
wouldn’t wish it on anybody. It’s just dreadful.
And how’s your hearing loss when that happens? Does your hearing
change?
Oh aye. Oh aye. It goes worse.
Right. So you’ve got a sore head and you cannae hear what’s going on.
There’s continuously this drum. As if I needed to keep going
(sniffs) to clear the mucus or whatever. But it just wouldnae pop.
You know how you do all these things? it just wouldnae happen
for me. It just wouldn’t happen. And I always felt if. It felt if I
could just stick in a cotton bud and have a pick it would go.
But it doesn’t.
But it doesnae and the other thing that I found. And I found I
used to love to swim. And I don’t swim any more. Any water
goes in my ear, that’s me. I’m done. I’ve got. And then I can lie
on my pillow and think there’s a river coming out of here. And
it’s just a wee bit of dampness. But I suppose that’s the thing
with your ears.
It feels more yeah.
Yeah but I don’t swim any more because if my head goes under
water that’s me out so. And I’ll you know I’ll water ski. Year I’ve
loved water. If I go into Majorca I go into chest height and I go
out with my hair dry. And that’s not how I swim. I mean I don’t
swim properly any more because I’m frightened of my ears. And
people say you can get these wee things but I would still be
frightened to put them in. in case it leaked or whatever.
Something happened.
You know? Aye. It’s the same with these. These blue tooth
things. like I said I just I bought one on Saturday. I feel very
uncomfortable with it. But it’s something until I get my car
properly set up. Well proper. which it has. To be fair it has got it.
But it means taking the sim card out of your phone and all that.
So this will do just now. I mean this is different because I can
program the blue tooth thing straight in. whereas I’ve actually
got to put the sim card into the thing because that’s not a blue
tooth compatible. I mean it’s actually got a phone in it. But erm. I
ah. But there’s a lot of things, sitting here talking to you is good.
Because there’s a lot of things that I’m now aware of that I’m not
doing because of my ears. And that’s socialising and a wee
thing like going for a swim. I mean if I was going to the
swimming baths I would never dive in now. I would walk in. it’s.
and when you it’s strange when you actually think about these
things now. But I never thought of that, four or five weeks ago,
when I was in Majorca. Why was I no swimming? You know and
because you’re aware of the fact you just dinnae do it. You 
dinnae do it. You go in. and you go up to your chest and you go 
for a wee swim. You come back out. That’s all. I mean I’d have 
swam. I’d have swam all day.

So your actually, you’re making adaptations in you life that you’re not 
aware you’re making. Until you’re told.

That’s right aye.

Until you talk about them. Do you think that’s a thing that would be 
good? Do you think that’s a thing tat would be helpful to people? To 
know that to actually think about what they are doing?

I quite sure there’s lot’s of people. They’re maybe not as stupid 
as me. But I’m sure there’s lots of people who maybe dinnae 
realise what they’re, what they’re avoiding. Until. Honestly. I 
mean this is great because I mean that’s two or three things that 
you’ve said that and you do no know me. But you’re right. What 
you’ve said is exactly correct. I don’t do this because of that. 
And I said myself I don’t swim because of I dinnae want the 
water in my ears. I didn’t want to fly again because I didn’t want 
the headache. But I needed to get away. So I mean I’m pumping 
sinex and things up my nose for seven days before I went. You 
know taking sinutab. You know all these things. and I was fine 
both ways which means that’s what I’m going to have to do. But 
I won’t go on a long-haul flight again. Because I just, I do not 
want these headaches. I dinnae want a problem. For the doctor 
and the hospital they said if I do have a problem, it’s an 
operation of some description. But what that is I don’t know. Or 
if he did say I was nae listening. Because even if I even when I 
was getting discharged the guy had me on this bed and he’s 
taking this sample out of my arm and he was talking to me. But 
there were people in the corridor.

So you missed it.

I don’t know what he said. He maybe told me to go back in a 
couple of weeks. I don’t know. I just did nae hear him. And I did 
nae. I just I didn’t want to keep saying pardon? What did you 
say? Shout louder because as I said there was noise in the 
corridor. And the guy’s up my nose, like a dentist. He’s got his 
hands down your throat and he’s talking to you. And if he’s 
looking for an answer he’s.. it’s not happening. But erm Even at 
that crikey even when you’re in the dentist it’s ..... and my 
dentist is a car fanatic. And every time I’m in the chair. And I’m
into motor cars and every time I’m in the chair. And he’s zoom, zoom and he’s talking about motor cars. Every time I haven’t a clue what he’s saying to me. Because I mean it’s alright for him. I mean there’s this thing (suction noise) going on. And I don’t know what he’s saying and when you’re finished. One of the lassies was says well what time will I see you? Where are we going? You’re going to come down and have a look at my car. So I was. I was nae aware that that had been arranged. But she just says what time will you be round tonight? And that’s fine. Erm I could have missed that. And the man would have thought well what kind of plonker is this? It’s like you know. But you’re kind of thinking on your feet. There’s something I’ve missed here.

Well he’s saying well what time will you be round at? And I thought well I’ve obviously arranged something and it’s been in that conversation. What are we doing? You’re going to come down and look at my car. So I. I’m kidding on I’m stupid. And I just I didn’t hear that part of the conversation. Right, right.

And I’m sure there must be dozens of people, hundreds possibly. Just like me.

Do you think it’s in some ways more acceptable to be seen as stupid than to be seen as having a hearing problem?

Probably. Erm. I just. He’s not paying attention. Or his mind’s somewhere else. And you get away with that when you’ve got a business. Folk will say where’s your mind? Och I’m thinking about that job out there. Well we were saying this. Ah right ok. because I’m going. I’m going on Friday to a business meeting. Erm I’m retiring and my daughter and son-in-law are taking the company over. Erm it’s going to be a gradual handover. And hopefully I’ll be finished, semi-finished this year. Er and I’ve got my IA fees, my accountants, my er, well she’s not my ex wife, we’re still married, my wife, my son-in-law, my daughter and me. And I’m dreading it. We’re going to this D- hotel in S- Q-. And if in the dining room there’s background music. They’ll just have to keep talking until I understand. They’re just going to have to. Because I need to know exactly what’s being said to the letter and if I miss it they’re going to have to. They’ll need to say that again. I need because this is something. It just. It’s not my future. It’s my kid’s future. And I mean I intend to take them
down the road. I mean. It’s going to be difficult because I’ve been running it for thirty five years. But I intend to hand it over. I’m semi-retiring in such away that I’m not going to feel guilty about taking a day off, because that’s what I do. I actually feel guilty about being in here. because my guys are back at work. And I mean I’m not really worried about that because D-’s father, he’s running the show and I mean he’s more than capable, more than capable. But coming away I’m thinking should I have taken this on or no? But if it helps me. It might help others as well. So, so why not? I mean.

And it’s been really, really good. I mean some of the things you’re talking about are just the kind of things I wanted to know about. You know what if it’s the position you’re in when you’re noticing a problem and you’re thinking about doing something, what’s going to help? But am, am I actually really helping you? Because I mean. Because I don’t really think I can help anybody apart from repair their cars for them. You see it’s just this negativity thing I’ve got because I’ve only ever been shown the one thing my whole life. And it was to repair crashed cars. I don’t have. There’s nothing else that I know that I can do. I can’t even swim any more.

Right. Uhuh

There’s but I. I wouldn’t like to waste your time. Unless this is. Definitely. You definitely haven’t wasted my time not a minute. You’ve actually, some of the things you’ve talked about you saying I’ve been mentioning but actually it hasn’t been thing I’ve mentioned. I’ve kind of I made suggestions to you and you’ve realised yourself. I have really. And it’s been interesting.

Really? I mean I would love to. What my one of my… The paint shop manager. He’s a cracking guy and he’ll say we’ll go to N-for a night out. We’ll go to the football. And then we’ll go for a meal a Chinese meal or whatever. Go to. As I say I drink when I go to N-. But I don’t. I would nae say I’m going to the pub tonight have a couple of lemonades and that’s fine. And I mean the last time I was maybe ten, eleven years whatever. I must have missed 85% of the crack that they were having because I don’t hear it. I just don’t. Unless somebody’s actually and I would say what did they say. And then they tell me and I laugh. But by then it’s too late. I’ve actually missed it. These guys are on to something else. So I’ve just decided unless there’s only two or
three of us going I’m not going back. .because it’s. .I’m missing
half the fun. I mean it’s great to go down. We have a good laugh
on the train on the way down. And we have a good crack and all
that kind of thing, but even when we were sitting on the train
unless it’s somebody opposite me who’s talking to me I haven’t
a clue. You know there’s that constant sing that you get of the
railway line.
But of course you can’t see him because he’s sitting besides you.
He’s sitting beside me. But if the guy there, whatever, that’s fine
him and I can have no problem. No problem at all. But if it’s
coming from the side I’m beat. Forget it. It’s murder. And it’s not.
As I said please don’t think that I’m deaf. I know there’s
something going on but I haven’t picked up. I haven’t picked up
what I used to pick up. And it’s only in the last three or four year.
That I’ve been made aware, that I do have a problem. I certainly
do have a problem. But I mean and you do just alter your life
to suit. If I could drive my car and have my passengers face me. I
wouldn’t have a problem. But because the passenger’s there I
who is that saved for is that for Donald Duck? That seat is it?
Aye
Aye we do kiddies.
I just noticed it now.
I thought you were talking about your car it’s took me a minute or two.
It’s for doing the children’s recordings.
If I as I was saying, if my passenger was sitting in front of me.
Sitting behind me forget it. But it was the same yesterday and
I’m actually taking my eyes off the road. What? I shouldn’t be
doing that, and so that. That to be honest is why I just got to
places on my own. And, and that’s a fact. Because it’s now that
we’re getting involved in it there is a lot of things that you maybe
do because it’s easier just to do it yourself. Er. Rather than
phone somebody up to say do you fancy going down to G-? Och
I’ll just nip down myself. Where as you’re doing away with
company. Because I’ve got another pal big G-. He’s fine because
he’s loud anyway, and I can hear him no problem, because he’s
loud. And he’s not loud because I’m deaf but because
he talks loud anyway.
In his nature yes. He’s quite an extrovert character. But it’s er.
It’s really strange that it’s of all these things when you sit down
and analyse them, you’re right there are a lot of things that I do
because or don’t do because of this.
So having had the opportunity to talk about that today and realising
that it’s maybe had more of an effect on your life more than you
thought on the surface. Does that maybe make you think about doing
something about it?
What can I do about it? That’s that would be. I mean I’m
answering a question with a question but that would be.
I think that’s interesting because what you were saying earlier about
going to the information, getting the choices, it was interesting. And
obviously the next part of the study is to have an assessment done.
And obviously the person who does that will have maybe some
advice on what you’re sort of what’s actually happening. I thought it
was interesting that you didn’t jump straight away to oh well I’ll get a
hearing aid. It was you’d like to know what’s going on, what’s
happening and why it’s happening and what we can do. And when
you mentioned there about you adapt to things. maybe that’s what it’s
about you finding ways to almost adapt back sort of thing. To bring
these things in again.
Well I don’t think. I don’t think I could adapt back. I don’t know
unless I was being taught, to go about being in company and
listening to a conversation and all these things. I don’t know
how I’m ever going to do that because unless you can be trained
to do it. I don’t know.
So do you think that will be helpful? Having someone to train you to
do that?
Oh absolutely.
If you were trained and you could say these things help.
Oh aye. I mean it’s all very well people to meet great but then I
would like you to tell me where I would get one. I’m just not
prepared to go to. I’m sure the H-‘s got very good. But I’m not
wanting very good. I want excellent. I just want. Because I really
don’t think I want to put something in my ear, turn it up. Oh turn
it back down. That’s no. there must be a particular thing for a
specific person. There are many I see hearing aids every day of
their life and they all look the same to me. And the only thing
that’s different is the fitment in here. The machine’s the same. It
does the same thing. There must be a place to go. Whether it’s
M- or wherever I don’t know. If it’s, I don’t even know what this
university does, whether they can put you down the right,down
the right sort of avenue to go down. Whether you can suggest
maybe there are clinics to go to. I was going to a psychologist
guy over on L-T-. So I would think there’s maybe specialist
places like that. To say there’s maybe this guy who is a doctor
Pete blahblahblah. And he can organise this and he can get it
made for you and whatever. And I mean that would be great.
That’s what we want. If it’s an operation, then I would need to
think about that, because I’m quite happy to go and try things.
and for that reason I wouldn’t like to be cut. That’s why I didn’t
want my knee cut. Because it would take longer for me to heal
than it would to do the oppo. So I would rather have something
stuck in my ear, than actually an operation to drill a hole and fix
my hearing.

Well it sounds like what you don’t want is somebody to say, right
there you are use that. You want someone to say that will work with
you.

If somebody said to me there’s the machine go ahead and use it.
That’s because that person knows in their professional opinion
nothing else is going to help you. That’s the answer. It’s like the
owner of a car bringing it in to see me, my particular profession,
for my advice. The car’s no use to repair. It’s not worth sorting.
Or we can do or we can’t do. And that’s what they ask me.

Certainly its not as important not as life-threatening or as
technical as your hearing or whatever else. But we’re the same
thing. You don’t go to the dentist because you’ve got a sore
foot. You know you go because you’ve got toothache or
something. And hearing is one of those things that I don’t think
is widely enough publicised because, I mean, you see dentists.
But you really don’t see anything.

No that’s true.

I mean what gives Specsavers the right to give you a hearing
aid. They do a hearing test fine. This would help you and they
sell you a machine for I don’t know, for whatever cost. And you
go away. That doesn’t make it right. That’s there maybe
something. It could just be something like my sinuses or
something’s needing bored out or whatever they call it adenoids
or whatever. Maybe that is the problem I don’t know. And that
would be great if someone would say if you have these adenoids
removed, you’re going to feel better. It’s going to do this. Then
we’ll try it, and if that doesn’t cure it then that’s fine. But I really.
I don’t think they cut you and go down here. I think they just cut up inside you. But I think to do your hearing they have to do a wee bit more.

So, so what you are looking for is somebody that would tell you, basically the facts of what can be done and what cannae be done and then work with you on that?

You could. You’ve got the knowledge. You could tell me and so I’m sure D- could as well. Most of your staff could. That would be fine for me. Somebody who is trained to do a specific thing, yes this is the idea, this is the thing. This is what we can do, this is what we can’t do. Go for it. What do you think? The ultimate choice would be

Up to you Up to me. As I suppose it is up to everyone else. If they do have it done or not. It’s not as if it’s life threatening. It’s. it would make. If I was hearing better I think I would be happier with life in general. Er because even, we’ll go back to my doctor. I was working with my doctor on Saturday and I mean he was babbling on about something. I was down screwing a floor down in a hut. He was behind me. I turned round and I said I’m deaf K- I dinnae ken what you said. And that was it aye right and he never repeated it. Aye right and that was it. So it obviously wasn’t important. It would be something like, because every two minutes he was asking if I wanted a cup of tea or something. It’ll have been something stupid like that. But I knew he said something but I didn’t pick it up. I just didn’t pick it up. I was, I maybe had an electric screwdriver or something going. Now I’m not saying I’m the. If you’ve got an electric screwdriver on, you maybe wouldn’t hear. Maybe somebody with a hundred percent hearing wouldn’t hear either. But I would like to have thought ten years ago I would have heard. Because I know I would have. But er it’s.

But you can see the difference?

Oh aye. No I can hear the difference.

You can hear the difference. That’s really interesting but obviously when we do the assessment we can talk that through with you and talk through the problems you’re having. So we will do that as part of the study. Because obviously at the moment I don’t know what your hearing’s like or what level you’re having problems. I know some of
what you’ve told me today about what level you’re having problems
with. So we can sort of give you some advice at a later bit but.

Aye cause when D did that hearing test there was something
that was a way up high and something a way down low and
there was like nothing in between. So maybe that in between bit
is where the problem is. Er because er I believe D-, her father got
a test and he’s got a hundred percent hearing. And he shouldn’t
have because he’s does the same job as me

That’s no fair.

It’s interesting though because obviously those tests that were done
were done for an exam so you’re we didn’t have the whole thing. But
it would be interesting to see what comes up in the full assessment
which we’ll do later. But other than that basically well you’ve
answered any questions I had. But I just wondered if there’s anything
else you want to add?

Not really no.

That you that’s come to mind? No?

No. apart from I actually feel much better now.

Having a chance to talk about it?

Well, not so much. Maybe talking about it but also the realisation
that this is where a lot of my problems stem from and that’s why
I’ve become. I take a step back now. Rather than get in there and
have a laugh. And I would rather. Because I mean when we’re in
a crowd it’s, it’s pointless. It’s absolutely pointless. Er no that’s
actually helped me maybe more than you realise. To be fair.

Well I’m glad you’ve got something from it too.

Oh I’ve had. I’ve honestly I’ve thoroughly enjoyed this. I mean
even silly wee things like the swimming and that. You never
think you don’t swim because. But it is because I don’t want
water in my ears. And having that feeling. Because when you do
that you think it’s a pail. It’s sloshing about. And it’s not, I mean
it can’t possibly be. But I mean it’s a wee bit of water
somewhere. And you. You. And it’s not coming out. But where is
it? Because you can hear it in my inner ear. I thought your inner
ear only affected your balance. But you can hear it. And you’re
lying in your bed thinking you can feel it trickling out. I tell you if
you had that yourself.

I know what you mean. I know what you’re describing yeah.
It’s and it’s horrible. Because I mean I got. And folk think you’re
daft. I just want to get this thing out of my ear so that I can get
on with my day but. So I realised ok. I don’t get my hair wet, I
don’t dive in anywhere, I don’t put my face under the water.
Cause I mean I love to swim. I used to love to swim. Erm and I
just. I’m sure people think I can’t swim. But that’s no. that’s not
an embarrassment. That doesn’t bother me. Because I mean
when I used to swim. I was taught to swim. So your head’s under
the water. You’re stroking you’re breathing. And everything’s
perfect. My grandchildren went to Australia. They went to
Australia good swimmers. When they were there, they became
excellent swimmers, because that’s what they do. They join
these swimming clubs and they just go for it. It’s great to watch.
And I think I used to do that, you know. That’s er. My phone’s
buzzing and I’m not answering it.
I’m going to stop this now.
COPA 4

Interviewer: That’s it started to record. So if I leave it there it will pick up everything so you don’t need to raise your voice. We can just have a normal conversation. So just to start me off can you tell me how you noticed a problem with your hearing?

COPA 4 When I was at business my direct boss would sit opposite me. And he’d say something to me and I would say pardon? And he said to me one day you’ve got a hearing problem. I said I’ve not got a hearing problem, you just don’t speak clearly. And then in the November of that year I was at dancing. And the teacher took me up to do a dance and turned me-totally disorientated. So I went down to the doctor. And he said the liquid had gone out of kilter and that was that. Later I was walking up on A- and I turned round because someone was following me and I got disorientated again. And I thought there’s something not right here. And then I started to feel my face getting pulled. So I went to the doctor and he sent me to a consultant. He couldn’t find anything. doing all the tests, reaction of the knees and so forth. But he said we’ll do an MRI scan. When I went for the MRI scan they found the acoustic neuroma. They think I had it for about ten years. So of course I had the operation. You know my voice could be effected everything. And naturally I could lose my life. Anyway everything went. I seem to be one of the very few who’s not visually marked because normally there are lines on the face. And then I went and had a test. And there was nothing there. And the hearing on the other side was alright, of a level not to get a hearing aid. And all to one I’ve not got a problem. It’s if I go out to dinner and there’s people talking up there. The first thing I say to people, and I didn’t say it to you because you knew the circumstances. But I always say to people I have no hearing on my left hand side. If you wish to speak to me speak directly because I lip read. But I don’t need to lip-read because I can pick up the sound, but if they are away from me. If they turn away, if they talk at the back I always say if I’m not in your vision don’t talk to me. If they’re not looking at me then that’s it. So you’ve sort of learned what to do and what you’re able to do. Oh yes. It’s hard work, because they forget and you know. We just had friends on Saturday and I just went out of the sitting room and of course I called through and I’m not oh sorry, sorry I
forgot. But I find the public quite difficult, you know, in general, you know. Erm can I relate an incident that happened to me just six weeks ago? Erm I’m very strong in trying to get people educated in this situation. I was always conscious of people that had a deaf problem. I’ve always felt they were isolated, because it wasn’t visible. Blah, blah, blah. Anyway I was in the A- and L- and I’ll not go into all the details. But halfway through the conversation the girl said something and I said pardon? And she went tut. And I said please do not do that in my presence. Well I just lost it. And I went out and this fellow said to me is everything alright? And I said it certainly is not. I spoke to her manager. And I thought the manager would write to me. I wrote to head office. I got a nice letter; just recently back because they were doing a lot of enquiries. And it’s a very nice letter. I brought it with me so you can see. Saying how insensitive and it’s something they are conscious of. Because I asked how much they’ve training, and how much they’ve got. And according to them it’s quite a big thing in their company. But for some reason it did not work that day. And that’s the kind of thing that I am trying so hard in every aspect. I’ve even encountered this in Marks and Spencer’s. I’ve written to them. Er I assume that you’ll know SK who is very.

Yes very well.

I know S very well. And of course she is an awareness person. I just always feel it’s a disability if you want to call it that. But it is not acknowledged.

Or respected.

Yes. Yeah. Yeah, because people if you don’t pick it up. I mean I, it’s not very often I don’t pick it up because I’ve warned them to talk to me, but if I don’t and anybody makes a comment. I’ve got to retaliate I’m afraid. I just can’t let it go at all. Because I thought I can say things a lot of people their confidence isn’t there and wouldn’t make any comment about it. But it is improving; there is no doubt about it. It is improving. But it’s not as good as I would like to see it. Anyway

So when you. You mentioned that your boss had mentioned that you had a hearing problem, but you hadn’t been aware of it then. Before you had your operation had you been aware of any hearing problems?
It was only him, funnily enough. That it seemed to be. Naturally he’s talking to me for several hours in the day. And it was just with him. But you see I was just in the company of one or two or three. And we didn’t have a canteen, so there wasn’t where I was sitting with a group. But no I was not aware of it. And it was Professor Mi--; I don’t know whether that means anything to you? Who was the surgeon who operated on me. And unfortunately the gentleman died two weeks later, and sad. He was only 58. He took a massive heart attack.

He would have been pleased with his work.

Yes well as I say my face was out of alignment at that time. Just with the bruising and what not. And I had double vision. You know my eyes were out of focus. Er so that was what he knew at that time. But he didn’t see the final thing. Which I found was very, very sad.

It is sad yeah. So when they told you, you had some hearing loss in your other ear. Did that come as a surprise then?

This one?

Yeah.

No. I’m not aware that there’s anything wrong. He. The gentleman did say to me that it was down. But they wouldn’t recommend a hearing aid at that stage. Right?

Right.

And that’ll be seven or eight years ago now, I think. And I’ve never had a test since then. Apparently. I have done the one on the telephone.

Oh yes. Uhuh

They said I did have a hearing loss.

Right.

But I don’t think they gave me a level I think that was all they said. I can’t remember now. But no I’m not aware. As I say on a one to one. I can hear the television, cinema, theatre difficult. I get the infrared if I go. If it’s a play. Music is no problem for me. But speech, you know, and jokes, you know I miss that kind of thing. I always ask for the infra-red. And I don’t find them very satisfactory. Again it’s something I take up with them as well. The one place that I found the best was the L-

Right

But the P- is bad. I think because of their low, if you go underneath the canopy.
Aye I know what you mean.
It loses you know. And there are always dead places in theatres.
The theatre’s bad. We’re working on that one at the moment. I
can’t think of that one. I think the F- is a wee bit dicey in places.
Yeah I heard a beep I thought. I just thought it had stopped working
but it’s fine.
Oh see I never heard that.
I think it’s my phone that’s run down.
Oh right.
So you’re quite active in
Oh very much very much so. I’m very much involved with the
hearing club Deaf action.
Oh yes right, right.
I’ve been with them oh at least twelve years. And it’s a lovely
group. We’re just sorry we don’t get people. I don’t know why.
There’s only an average of about twenty. I mean the number of
people with hearing losses, because we all understand the
problem. You know. We have, you know we get information from
each other and all this. And if I hear something that’s happening
in the Council and that, I relate it, you know, to them. But erm
yes I’m very much involved. And I’m also in a group of retired
people. I’m very much into theatre. I was a singer but because I
don’t hear it I’m always a wee bit apprehensive I don’t pitch
correctly. So that has gone. And I sang for years and years and
years. But that’s what happens.
Any other things that have gone? Or that you find you maybe don’t do
so much now?
I would say I certainly don’t socialise as much as I did. Erm I
wouldn’t say that’s because of my hearing. You know if I’m just
going out the door she doesn’t hear me. And I’ll say to them did
you hear that? And he’ll say no what did she say? I’ve said to
her once or twice usually there’s nothing wrong with my
hearing. But that is a general thing with people when they do
lose. I mean my mother had very, very. She was eighty six when
she passed away and she had very good hearing. Very, very
good indeed. My aunt was 104 but she had a hearing aid. But
never used it
Right
See that’s another thing. The number of hearing aids that lie in
drawers and what have you. So anyway.
Yeah. I'm quite interested to ask though you know when you were saying your boss saying you had a hearing problem but you said you didn't did you genuinely. Was that you thinking you had one but I'm not going to admit that or was it genuinely that you hadn't noticed it?

No. no I hadn't noticed it at all. I hadn't noticed it at all. I wasn't aware that I had a hearing. And yet they told me although neuromas are very slow growing and but I think it was the size of a walnut when you know it was removed. But as I say I certainly didn't think.

You didn't think I mean it was all his fault not mine.

But it's interesting because I think there are a lot of people who think they've got a hearing problem but are not going to admit to it. But there's people like yourself.

No I was not aware of it at all.

Who are not aware of it. Uuhh. Uuhh. I mean and there was no feeling you know how you get. I mean I've now got a numbness because of the nerves. But as I say I wasn't aware. But even that consultant said that he couldn't find anything. It was only when my face started to pull I thought there's something going on here. Yeah. And it was all done very quickly. I think it was all done in about three months. Yeah I think I saw the gentleman in the June and it was all done on the 17th of August. It was 65 not 65 95.

Right. Right.

That it was operated on. Never had a bit of bother ever. Ever. He was wonderful. He really was. It was very sad.

A great talent.

Oh well he was world renown I didn't know that at the time. But he had travelled the world. He had seemingly pioneered the operation for acoustic neuroma.

Right.

He just said to me that he wouldn't know if it was malignant or not until he went in. and also if it was attached to nerves it could leave me paralysed. The wound wouldn’t close and all this. and that was the first thing he said to me in the recuperating room. He took my hand and he said to me we’ve managed to save the facial nerves. And I grabbed his arm, thank you thank you thank you. Because human nature and public being public, anything that’s different.
Yes

You know. And the lady who was seen prior to my operation was very badly marked. Very badly. I mean her mouth was all the way up here. And she showed me photographs of just after the operation and that was even worse. And they had taken it from this side and had transplanted it and had brought the opening down. And when she came to see me after the operation she said did you find that very traumatic? And I said no I didn’t.

Because I could see visually er that the first pictures were quite disturbing. But I’m a realist. I just. If that’s the way it’s going to happen there’s nothing I can do about it. It’s as simple as that.

You’ve had a good result.

Oh great. Dr R- sees my eye. I can’t see it but he sees my eye is different. But I don’t. But for a long time I never had a cold on that side from my nose.

Unlike myself. I’d like to see A- trying to transcribe this.

But the feeling is I would say basically back. And er I used to say to Mr S- who took over from Professor M-, will the nerve not grow and join back up again? And he said no I’m afraid not.

No.

But I thought with nerves you know recuperating themselves. It turns out they don’t. but if I cover that ear

Right

Nothing at all. But er it’s terrible.

But in normal day to day

No problem

You’re fine?

No problem at all. No. again I’m not aware. I mean if somebody was in the room and asked me something behind me, and that happened just the other week, and of course I didn’t hear her.

And then she tapped me on the shoulder, because she spoke at that side, and of course anybody who’s with me.

Would know.

I always tell them to move over to the other side. Then and I mean all my friends know now to come to my right side. And I said lady I’m sorry I’ve got no hearing on that side and I didn’t hear you. But I wear that you see. But they don’t see it of course.

But it just says Deaf Action.

Yes. Yes.
It doesn’t say. You know that I’m. That I’m you know, hearing on one side. Oh well.

It’s interesting you know that once you had the diagnosis and this hearing loss. You’ve gone right into this group. Almost as if you’ve become very assertive about coping with your deafness.

Yes well I mean it was up to me. I mean nobody else could help me in the situation. I’ve not felt I’ve had a problem a great big problem er with it. I mean because. If I ever lost that it would be devastating to me, because I love music. I love music. And that would be my one thing that I would miss terribly. But as I say I wouldn’t say I’ve ever felt or got depressed you know. I think like that at all. Because even with it in say the first year I really wasn’t aware of the, that it was totally gone. Although I had been told it would be totally gone. I just because this one was working, you know.

Yeah, yeah.

I seemed. But no I’ve never really got down about it or shut myself away or anything like that. As I say these things in my book you’ve either got to face them or you go down. It’s as simple as that. But erm. I mean I’ve just had a mastectomy in er March. And you’re back on your feet and.

Yep. Yep.

So do you think that’s a big thing about dealing with things? Just accepting that they’re there and getting on?

Oh yes. I think definitely. I mean if you start to think oh dear, what am I going to look like what am I going to. You’re away on a losing wicket in my book. As I said. And I know people deal with things differently. I mean I’ve always been independent. I’ve always been positive in my outlook to things. Because I don’t think there’s any point being otherwise. But that’s just how I handle it. I mean my daughter said to me last week you know you’re a unique you know? I don’t know what it meant but that was quite poetic. Because I’m not saying he couldn’t understand but he thought I had some reaction to the radiotherapy. But I’ve had nothing.

Nothing

Nothing at all. I mean my skin’s red. You know now. But apart from that no. but I mean I certainly refused chemo. I certainly
refused chemo. Because I’m on a very good drug. A very good
drug. I’m digressing from.
No it’s ok.
And as I say. I’ve lost what I was saying there. Yeah I didn’t want
to lose my immune system and I didn’t want to have my bone
marrow affected. And I said no. they weren’t terribly happy
because of my age to give it to me anyway.
Right.
So what’s done is done. That’s it. But you see I don’t feel any
different. I’ll not say any more.
That’s ok. Do you think attitude effects how people cope?
Sorry what was that?
Do you think plays a big part in how people cope with hearing loss?
Oh yes, I’ve got no doubt about that. I think positive thinking,
whether it’s correct or not. But as I say it’s something I’ve
always tried to do. I’ve never been in the situation where I’ve had
to go back the way from saying that. And er a depression.
Although I must admit before I had this operation I said to my
friends I will tell you when I want visitors. Because I didn’t know
how I was going to cope with it. I knew I was facing the reality.
As soon as it was done how would I react? And it was the
Wednesday. I had the operation Monday and on the Wednesday I
had visitors. And I was up and meeting them and sitting out on
the balcony but I mean the. Can I
Do you want it off? It would be much easier this way wouldn’t it?
So this is COPA 4 continued. Just in case we get them mixed up.
Once we type it I’ll take that bit out. Yeah. No erm.
No I certainly do think if you can have this positive att.
Yeah
And accept that that’s the situation. Because once it’s done
that’s it. You can’t go back and say I want that you know sorted
or repaired or whatever. It’s there. That’s as I say that’s the way I
handle it. and I know a lot of people and a lot of my friends have
said to me oh I don’t know how you’ve coped and so forth. But
then we’ve all got to
Because it’s interesting when you were saying about hearing loss and
about how people like yourself that get involved and find out as much
as they can. And other people don’t
Sit back. And don’t know about it.
Don’t want to know about it.
They don’t want to know about it.

How there’s different ways yeah.

Oh there is no doubt about it some people. You know I think if you lose or are losing both of them. That must um. I mean one of the ladies in the hearing club has just taken, well a year ago, macular degeneration as well.

Right

And she is coping marvellously. She’s got two hearing aids, do you not think. But without her hearing aid there’s nothing

Right

And we were out Friday and she’s out every day as well. And she’s coping exceedingly well because she’s going to lose your sight as well. She’s got her vision.

Yes.

But she hasn’t got clearance you know. Although I well I got a thing sent to me about these tablets for macular degeneration. And she bought them. Now they’re not cheap. But she doesn’t have her dark days when the blackness that’s gone

Right

It hasn’t improved her sight. She doesn’t

Uuh

Think anyway. But it certainly helped her black. She doesn’t get the black days now. And that’s marvellous as far as she’s concerned.

Yeah. Because obviously when you start to lose your hearing your sight’s important too to help you. Oh very much so because you’re depending so much on visuals.

That’s right. Yeah

Things. And as I say. Other people would just go down. And just say it’s oh. But as I say everybody handles things different. And as long as I can I will try and look at it that I can’t do a thing about it.

Yeah

If I can rectify it I’ll try but if I can’t rectify it I’ll forget about it.

Yeah. Can I ask you? I mean obviously you’re not at the stage where you need a hearing aid at the moment.

Well not to me. Whether the audiologist will say

Will have a different point of view.

Yes you’re needing a hearing aid. I don’t know. But the strange thing. The phone I’ve got no problem speaking on the phone at
all. Even last night when I was on the phone. I heard a, a ting you see. And I said to Helen what was that? Is that your phone packing in? She said no it was a timer. And I thought how did I pick that up? And yet I’m sure if there was a timer in here I probably wouldn’t hear it.

Yep

And yet whether it’s because it’s at my ear

Yeah

I don’t know.

That’s made a difference.

But you know sometimes I think that’s funny. I wonder why I heard that. I know we’ve got the banana shaped thing and you know the level of hearing.

Yeah

And people’s speech as well makes an awful lot of difference. If you get people who don’t project or just you know mumble. That can be a problem. You know.

Yeah

But I on the whole I manage fine.

So what do you think would make you think about a hearing aid?

What kind of things?

Oh if I was very much aware that I wasn’t hearing you for example. Or I wasn’t hearing the television. I mean that’s one thing I’ve got it probably up at just below half.

Right

And I what I would like to know what is the level where you’re actually. I mean it’s not a hundred percent I know that it’s not a hundred percent.

Right.

Because of the audiologist that these years ago telling me it wasn’t a hundred percent. And also that telephone thing say. So I don’t know how much loss there is in that ear. But I can hear. I hear the ambulances and I hear the um any of these things that are high pitched.

Yep

Things that are low maybe I don’t hear as well.

Right

But I’m certainly not aware of losing out shall I say.
Yep. Yep. I know that your hearing’s bad in your left ear. But if you never had your right ear tested would you that you had a problem?

No.

No so that’s fine that’s what I wanted to know.

Erm probably I do. When I say that I can’t. I tell people not to talk to me if they’re not in my vision. Would certainly indicate that I have a problem. And if like for example on Saturday I said to Helen just at the door do you want pineapple juice? And I walked into the kitchen. And I heard the yes because I knew it was either going to be no or yes. If she had elaborated I might not.

Yes.

And she followed me and said did you hear that? And I said yes I heard you. So if there’s only like one answer coming

Yep

I’m anticipating that answer.

Yes there’s clues. Whereas if she’d said have you got any grapefruit?

You might have struggled with that.

Uuh. That is it. I may not have picked that up. If she had ended her sentence or said something totally different I would have had to go back in and said what did you say?

And it would have been her fault.

Yes. But no I try to ask questions where I’ll get the yes or the no.
or one direct question.

Yeah

And I’ll always say to somebody did you say 28 pence? I don’t say did you say 28 or 38? I just give them one.

Yeah

And they come back and say no yes whatever it is.

So you’ve actually trained people to do what you need them to do.

Oh no. well I suppose you know by saying to them perhaps that’s the way forward. But no. I certainly. It’s all for my benefit at the moment. I mean where a situation like in M- and S- or the A- N-

Yeah

I’ll take action.

Yes

Because I really was so, so cross that day when she went. You know the situation. (whispering)

Yeah. I know what you mean because it’s so dismissive of somebody who’s coming in and who’s maybe just having this conversation.
Oh yes. I don’t think I’ve ever been so angry since I was in business. Because I did. I make no bones about it. I just went off. On a tangent.

Yep

It was the I don’t know what word to use. You know that’s just what it came over to me.

Yes the level

If you couldn’t hear what I’m saying. There we are. But I think she was rather sorry afterwards.

But I think that’s your point though. Because it’s not always what you say. It’s the body language that goes with it. That people pick up.

Oh yes.

Yes. Yes.

And that one well there wasn’t a word spoken. It was just the eyes going up into the head.

Yeah. It got to you right away. I’ll just have a wee drink. Just because I know there’s probably a lot of women in the group because there’s only two men. Would probably just ignored it. But I thought no, you’re not getting away with that young lady.

Yeah

Because I do feel education you know for hearing loss is very important to it. And so many people you see. I mean when I go into a hotel and if I’m just myself. And even although if I’m not myself. Because I’ll usually have a single room. Erm I say what is the drill for fire? And they always say, well the majority have a book with these things in. and when I mention the number of people who’ve got hearing diffic that.

No

And I mean there’s so many things like that. And of course in the last hotel they gave me a thing to hang on the door. It had on it deaf. And that I was a bit apprehensive of. Actually advising people that there was somebody in there that had a deaf problem.

That didn’t know. Aye.

I said to the girl I really don’t think the wording of that is suitable. And I said for you yes. But you just don’t know who’s in the hotel. Anyway. Something’s.

Yeah

But there we are.
Yeah something to think about. I mean just taking it onto the next stage and on to the subject of hearing aids erm if you were at the stage where you were considering hearing aids have you any thoughts about hearing aids?

**Using them do you mean?**

Yeah or about what kind you would like? What or you know how you feel about them?

Oh I’m wanting a digital one without question.

Right

Of course analogues they’re away anyway. But digital. Because that lady that I said had had the operation in March. She was the first person to have digital. And she said to me that it was wonderful. That you know the background noise was cut out of it. But see a lot of people now don’t seem to be able to handle them. Or they’re not finding. I mean I’ve told a friend who’s got two. I think they were private if I remember correctly. And she’s not finding it. And I says you go back. And you get them sorted. They’re supposed to be tuned in for your particular hearing.

That’s right

I don’t think she’s even been back about them

Right

But no digital. And ones that go into the canal. If that is the type of hearing aid that would do the digital and still do the bone.

Yeah you could. They do digital. You can have them in the ear. You can have them behind the ear. There’s a whole range of digital ones.

Right

Most hearing aids are digital now. Because as you say the analogue’s gone.

The analogue’s gone. Yeah.

Would you have a preference for one behind your ear or one in your ear or?

In my ear. I would prefer. If that was going to be the choice. I would probably try them both to see. But preference it would be in the ear. Definitely. And how do the digital? Now I’ve seen the digital. And I’m trying to think the tube. How is? I mean two doctors that were in a group with me at a lip-reading class.

Theirs were tiny but they didn’t seem to have any tube to the mould or anything.
The newer ones don’t actually have a mould. They have a wire that goes in. and it goes in your ear.

Oh. That’s probably what they had. Yeah.

They were doctors. Because both of them had two. I don’t they were both retired I think. But see lip-reading classes I think are marvellous as well. And I really. Well I know you are limited to numbers and you don’t have the teachers and so forth. Which I think is a great pity. Because one. We had a student in one of the groups that I was with. And I was one of twelve going for lip-reading. And do you know I was the only one who finished that course.

Oh dear. Out of twelve?

Yep. Yep. Which I thought was very sad. Very sad indeed. And I mean she does signing language. I mean I do a wee bit of sign language myself. Er not a lot. I can’t do a conversation. But I can do words and get away with it.

Uhuh

And Deaf Action are running a course. And of course with me having my op I missed a lot of the course. And the gentleman was superb there. And I mean actually I’ll go back. When I hope it will restart one day. But I think that everyone who has a hearing loss. Whether they’ve got a hearing aid or not should go to lip-reading.

Apart from the actual lip-reading skills is there anything else that you actually get from the class?

Oh the companionship. And you know er interaction of people and all that. And I mean they’re lovely. I mean the lip-reading classes that I have been to over the 5, 6 years that I’ve been in them. Have been superb. And I mean we’ve done things as a little group. Going here there and everywhere. And I go to S-’s class. And you know we were out at her house one afternoon. We were away at the gardens in D- another day. So you’ve got all that companionship and you know taking people out that you know probably wouldn’t do things on their own. And maybe are not in groups because of their hearing loss. Oh no I find the hearing. the lip-reading. And er so’s the sign language. There’s only seven of us in that. I haven’t got to know everyone who started in this year. I got to know two of the ladies. You know on a one to one you know.
Yeah

We talk and converse and so forth. N- who has no hearing what so ever er she’s learning sign language. She’s in Australia at the moment. Erm and er Sister M- as well. I talk to them. Erm I know them through the hearing. Hard of hearing club Right

But er. No I think all these things that people can take advantage of. Without a question. Because it doesn’t take much. I mean you’re picking up a bit of information. And you’re getting the company. I certainly do. I think everybody does. Er I mean all the hearing. All the lip-reading classes I’ve been in it’s been nearly a hundred percent every week. And that proves itself that everybody is interested.

Yeah.

And enjoying it. If they’re on holiday, if they’re sick. Different story all together. But to come. And I mean we’re talking senior people we’re not talking. See that’s another thing I would like to see. I would like to see the younger people who are coming in as well. Because I like, you know the mixture of age as well. But er that all helps. And you know you get different attitudes. You’ve got different viewpoints on things. So you’ve go the whole complex of it. And I just think it’s great. I thoroughly enjoy it. It’s like almost a whole network of information that doesn’t come from going up to the hospital and seeing the audiologist.

Oh no, no, no.

It’s like this (unclear)

No because it doesn’t matter who it is. You’ve got something. It might not even be relative to deafness or to er loss of hearing.

But it could be anything about you know. That person’s going off next week. Or whatever it is. And the information is getting passed on. Because I’m very much involved, involved with transport as well. And also with the local authorities. And any information I get, whether they want to take it on board or not (talking over each other unclear) is irrelevant. I pass it on anyway. And if they take it on fine. And if they don’t want to that’s fine as well. And that’s why I go to these talks from all the different local authority or whatever. Er fire er police. You know all that is there.

Yeah. So much more than you would get you know from leaflets and things.
Oh yes. And see the things on screen I think is absorbed much better than even reading. You know

Yes

I think the visual thing can go over very well.

The last thing I wanted to ask you about when you went to the hospital and they tested you and they said that you weren’t in the range for a hearing aid. What else did they say? What information did they give you about how best to sort of cope with that? Nothing at all?

Nothing.

Right

It was just. You know I was depressed about things you know. As you know. But that was all. And when I came out he said it’s up to you. But I don’t think you’re ready for a hearing aid. And I said well I don’t feel I need a hearing aid. Even now I would say talking to you I still don’t feel I need a hearing aid. Whether if I had a hearing aid and I was out with 20 people would that make a difference? I don’t know. Because some people who have hearing aids that you know away from them they can’t pick it up. I mean there’s all these magical things that you read in the magazines. You know a hundred yards. Or 50 feet or 60 feet or whatever. And I’ve often thought about saying I wonder if I should get one of them? Just to see. Sister M-‘s got a very good thing that she puts on the table

You know and picks up the sound from that

And picks up the sound from that. Uuh

Yes. Because I mean she’s. She’s got two aids as well. Quite a bad hearing loss and but she finds this. At her convent she says she finds it very difficult. I mean she doesn’t go down into the common room. Because they forget or you know. And she’s a wee bit isolated I feel. And I think that’s why she enjoys the group. Because we all understand what her problem is. Mind you I would have thought other nuns that are there would have hearing loss as well you know.

Yeah

Because they’re all seniors. Because is it after 40 that they say people’s hearing starts to deteriorate? And this is why so many people just say no I’m fine. As I’m saying to you. I’m fine

Yeah. I don’t have a problem. Yeah. I’ll tell you a story about that later. Er but it’s interesting though because what I’m saying and what
I’m finding I’ve heard other people notice, myself included is you go to a group where everybody has a common sense of having a hearing problem and people manage really well in that group. And I think it’s because everyone is aware that people have got a problem.

Oh yes

And they take care when they communicate and it’s a pity that that doesn’t translate to other groups.

Uhuh

And I think the difference is in these groups people are more aware.

More deaf aware Yeah

Whereas in the common room perhaps they’re not thinking oh there’s people with hearing problems here they’re all just doing their own thing.

Yeah. This group of the retirement group that I’m in. which has now changed to the E- friendship centre. I always go down to the front see. And this applies to B- theatre as well. Because I’m a friend of B-. I’m in the committee B- theatre. And we’ve got a microphone. And some speakers will say no I don’t use a microphone. So of course the hand goes up. And I’ll say excuse me can you please use the microphone that’s why we have it.

But I don’t need it. Can he hear me? And that’s another remark that I cannot stand. Is somebody saying can you hear me? And why do they say that if you’re deaf you can’t hear them? All they need to say is put your hand up if you hear me. Then you see who can’t hear you. And I get so cross. And of course I keep saying would you put your hand up. Because whenever I go you know out in front of them it’s the first thing I say. Would you please put your hand up if you can hear me? And all the hands go up. And I can tell if anybody’s hand doesn’t go up. But then if I do see somebody I’ll say to the person next to them will you ask the person to come down to the front and so forth. But that only happened once with me. But I thought why did they say that? Can you hear me? And you’re supposed to be talking to people who’ve got a hearing problem.

Because if they can’t hear they’re not going to say yes.

Exactly. They can’t go. I mean it’s such a stupid remark. I mean to say put your hand up if you can hear me. Immediately if everybody can hear you the hand will go up. But if somebody doesn’t hear you no but I always go to the front. And as I say on both instances. If the speaker says I don’t need a microphone
you can all hear me. And of course up goes the thing. Excuse me please use it. I mean even although I’m hearing without the microphone. I still maintain that the microphone helps. It makes a difference.

Yeah.

I’m going to ask you to do an expert thing for me. With your experiences you’ve had with the hard of hearing clubs and the Deaf Action and everybody else that you’ve been involved in. If I’m sitting here as an audiologist. The same to you. If you came to my clinic and I’m saying to you you’re, you’re not at the stage where you need a hearing aid yet. What would you say to the audiologist are the things that helped you? That they could advise you about.

The things that help me? What to hear do you mean?

Yep. It’s just rather than just say well you don’t need a hearing aid just now and sending. Well I certainly think advising people you’ve got a hearing problem to begin with. And saying to them if you want to talk to me talk directly to me. and also the other thing if there’s two people and they come into the same conversation at the same time I say excuse me I can only hear one at a time. And I can say that quite sharply unfortunately. Erm because so you can get a conversation you’re in a conversation with one and somebody wants to put their wee bit in and they’ll come in together. And I mean sometimes I will hear both. But others I don’t and that’s what I say. One at a time. So just one person at a time. It’s the same at committee meetings. I’ll put my hand up when I want to say something and I always say to the chairperson could you please just speak one at a time. Because that’s in a committee you’ve got all of them contributing.

Yeah.

And one thing I know the audiologist at the R- gave us a talk. A very interesting talk. Er on how the numbers have come down. And how waiting times have come down. She was excellent.

That girl. I can’t remember her name. But I think she’s the head audiologist.

C-?

A then.

accent?

I can’t tell you now. can’t remember now. But she was excellent telling us all. And of course I flung a lot of questions at her. And
I asked about their involvement with Deaf Action. Which they don’t have. So that’s going to be looked into. That I threw her a lot of things. Whether she’ll take them up I don’t know. But that was excellent.

But as I say I say one at a time not the whole committee going. Right

So this that we’re talking about now. From my point of view as an audiologist, if I had somebody come into my clinic for the first time who wasn’t suitable for a hearing aid. Would you say it was suitable for me to tell them some of these communication tactics you just mentioned?

Oh very much so. Very much so. And also to get involved with people who have. Whether it be slight or big hearing loss. But as I say the communication the fellowship I’ve had a lot. I mean I’ve always been involved with people. But I find because of this communal interest. Or lack of whatever you want to call it. Erm that we have that report. You know?

Er to each other. And understanding I think. The main thing is the understanding of the situation. Being aware that isolation can cause. You know if people are shut out. Now there was a lady who came to the hearing club. And she said now she was 28 at that time. And she said that her father used to call her stupid and what. And that was

Now that girl went to America. Now she’d no voice she used sign. And that girl now talks. Five years she was in America. And she’s now 40 something. I was when she said hello to me. I couldn’t. I really. I said what has? When did? Where did you get that? And she said 5 years. And I found that amazing that all her life she had no voice and yet she goes. And I can’t understand. You maybe able to explain to me. I find it very difficult to understand how people can get their speech when they’ve got no hearing. I find. I mean you’ll not remember there’s a film Mandy.

Oh I do yes.

Oh you do.

Yeah I’m older than you think.
Anyway Mandy was deaf you know with her on the balloon. But
a girl at her age. And there she was. I mean she’s still completely
without hearing

Yes

But to be able to converse with me. I found that absolutely.

How? How do they? How can they do that?

It depends maybe she’s had voice at. I mean I had a similar situation
with a friend who didn’t speak until her 50s. And it was because she
had been ridiculed when she was younger. She had spoken as a
child erm but because she had a deaf voice people had kind of shh
don’t talk that kind of thing. She had as an adult chosen not to speak.

Right

But in her 50s she got more confident about things. That she started
to use her. So maybe this girl did.

See that’s she was speaking exactly the same way as me. There
was no muffled sound. Or the thickness. Or anything

Yeah

And that’s what I found amazing.

She’s maybe had really good therapy. On top of what she had when
she was young. To help her be more confident at using her voice.

Uuh. But you know 28 before you even get this.

Start. Yeah.

And your friend was 50. Did, did she have the sound? Of the you
know the muffled sound as I would call it that you get when you.

Yeah. She had very little hearing but er she lost her hearing when
she was three. So she had some memory of what sounds were like.

Very, very little memory. But gradually she started again. And it was
purely because she decided she wanted to speak. You know.

Well that’s what that young lady said to me. And I really felt like
weeping for her. I thought that is sad. That some parent would
say that to you. You know you’re stupid and you’re this that and
the other. She stays in Glasgow that girl. But she’s erm. I really
thought it was wonderful. And I was so elated for her. You know.

That after all these years she was able to converse rather than
do her sign.

Yeah

And it, it was wonderful.

So another important aspect is having somebody. Having somebody
really listening to you. And understand how you feel. Rather than just
what you’ve got a hearing problem. Well what does that mean for you? You know what does it mean for different people?

Yeah.

But maybe that’s an important thing we need to think about. Is.

But it is sad. You know when you think that. And I’m sure it will still go on until in this day. That people can, can often if they don’t. Now you see several times. Somebody has said to me when I’ve said pardon? Oh it doesn’t matter. I say sorry don’t say that to me please. It matters to me very much. And they’ll repeat it. And that was what happened in M- and S-. when the wee girl said something and she walked away saying it. And I said excuse me what did you say? I said yes it does matter very much so. And I want allow anybody if they say something not to repeat it. That I can pick it up.

Yep.

So we need to. That’s education of the public so we need to. If people do just say oh ok then. Then that will continue.

Yes

So it’s down to people understanding that.

Oh yes.

Also for the deaf person to push their.

Yeah.

Problem. The right I’m not accepting that. You’ll. You’ll speak to me the same way that you’ll speak to anybody that’s got full hearing. And all that kind of thing.

So again maybe as professionals what we really need to be doing is encouraging people. Because not everybody will feel comfortable about doing that.

Oh no. oh no. I know that.

Encouraging people to do it. And giving them support to be able to do that.

But this is where I feel that at a young age where a child has a hearing loss. It learns that it doesn’t accept people shoving it aside and saying it doesn’t matter. Or I’m not saying it again. Or Yep

I cannae think. That’s the kind of age group. What. What. And I’m digressing here. What’s the attitude of the profession with this music always on in people’s ears?

Yeah it’s

Do you think it will have a detrimental affect in later life?
Oh definitely. Oh I think it’s having affect much earlier now. We’re starting to see people. You know where people in their 60s and 70s would be starting to say oh I think I’ve got a hearing problem. That’s moving forward now. So we’re starting to see it earlier.

Yeah and hearing. You know playing loud music and going to these concerts. As such question mark. With all that noise. And even the musicians I don’t know what they’re hearing. Like Mick Jagger. I just wonder.

Yeah.

Oh a lot of them have got nice er nice levels of hearing loss as you say.

Uhuh. Because I’ve often thought in the last twenty years this is going. It’s bound to affect. It’s you nearly see. I would say 85 percent of young people with the thing in their ears. All the time. And I mean I was in a bus a fortnight ago and I didn’t see anybody with them but the driver said if you are playing music make sure it’s only you who’s hearing it. And I’ve never heard that before.

No. yeah.

So is there

Yeah it is quite worrying when you’re sitting there and you can hear the music in somebody else’s ear.

Well it’s tinny. You see and I can pick that up. I can

Yes

You know if somebody behind me or somebody across the way.

Not if on that side but that’s. But I use the window at that.

Right

That’s another thing that’s where I place myself. And it’s in restaurants I’ll place myself at a wall so that I’m picking up sound from this. I don’t know whether you’ve been in the new restaurant of T-college

No I haven’t

It’s got slate floors and the noise is dreadful

I can imagine.

I took that up with the manageress at the thing. I really couldn’t make out to see. She said that she would see if they could carpet. They carpeted round the edge of the restaurant but not round the table. And if anybody moves a chair and people would be hearing it.
I can imagine. It’s interesting thought. Because that’s the kind of things that we don’t think about. We think we’ll have a nice floor that’s easy to wipe up things.

Yeah

Because we’ve got lots of teenagers who spill things.

Yeah. Yeah.

But then we don’t think of the repercussions of having the nice floor like that.

Yeah. Yeah.

So it’s a wider issue.

And as I say I try to get away from the kitchen if I can, because of the pots, because of the pots and pans and all that.

Yeah.

That I place myself and that’s another thing that I would suggest that they’re advised that they make the decision where they’re going. If they’re one sided I’m talking about. One sided hearing.

Because it’s the first thing I’ll do. I’ll say can I sit there please. Rather than just sitting anywhere. But see I’m assertive. I know that. I mean I want to put myself where it’s going to be an advantage to me.

Yes. Uhuh.

And so forth. Where a lot of people would just say oh I’ll just sit here I’ll just sit here then. I’ll make the best of it.

No I think you’re right.

Yeah, yeah.

No that’s, that’s been helpful though. Because lots of things. The kind of things that we’re looking to pass on to people.

Good

And maybe that’s one of the things that we need to look at is you know maybe our job doesn’t stop when you don’t need a hearing aid.

That there’s things we could be telling people

Yes oh yes very much so. And I do hope and it’ll take a long time to educate the public. But the very fact that you said that the younger generation is now going to have the problem earlier it may activate things a bit earlier. But it’s all in the public education. And business education. And as I say any time it doesn’t matter what it is if I think something can be improved on that level I’ll say whether it’s theatre business anything. There we are.

Well thank you very much
You’re very welcome.

I’ll stop this now, now there we go.
It’s surprising the number of people you say try these and they’re right.

Interviewer: I know my husband just buys his from Boots.

Yes that’s what I do.

Right if I leave that there it should pick up our voices without. Yeah it is great. So we can ignore that and just carry on. So basically what I’m going to do is just ask you a few questions and depending on what you tell me that will decide. Help me decide what to ask next ok?

Yeah that’s fine.

It’s up to you to share as much or as little as you want.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Anything you think oh I think that’s relevant just jump in. ok?

Mhmh

So basically first off can you tell me if you’ve noticed any problems with your hearing? And also how long you’ve noticed them for?

It’s certainly not what it once was.

Right. Ok.

Erm that the. Let’s have a look in stages. Really. In my early thirties I was working in a very loud place for a few years.

Right And actually sort of escaped from that because I could feel that this was not going to do me any good.

Right ok.

And later on, that’s about twenty years ago. We went on a holiday in Tunisia. And I fell off my windsurfer into the water. Where with hindsight, it was probably where the hotel drains were coming out into the sea.

Oh dear.

And I picked up a very, very painful ear infection. It must have been inner ear because the medics kept looking in and saying we can’t see anything.

Right. Right. Right.

But it was very, very painful. And it took about three. Three different sorts of antibiotics before they found something that could kill it. and I think it was pretty well cleared. Going on from that I had a wee bit of tinnitus ever since.

Right
Er I did have a. how do you know you've got hearing loss? Your wife tells you so.
Right you've been warned
No. in that sort of way I went for a you know proper test at the B-hospital in F-W-. Erm about four or five years ago I think
Right
And they recorded a fairly normal set of middle aged ears. You know where you've got a drop-off at each end. And one of them I forget which one, had a slight kink somewhere.
Right ok.
Which I think is that infection but don’t know.
Yeah. Don’t know why.
Erm so back to the question again. That. That. That’s where I’m at. I was very interested in the question you were asking on this the use and misuse of auditory profiles
Mhmh
Because there I had what I suppose is an auditory profile.
Yes.
Erm registering the sensitivity of the ear and having a circuit test right through to the brain.
Right yeah.
Um I’ve a feeling there’s a lot more to it than that. Mainly in terms of processing speed.
That’s interesting yeah.
Because pretty well everybody complains in crowded halls especially in halls with bad acoustics. That this is where they suffer.
Yes.
And yes I have not yet not gone to anywhere because of that. But I know perfectly well if there’s a whole host of people chattering in the hall there. I will find it more problematic trying to hone in on people and keep the rest at bay.
Yep. Mhmh. Yes. Yeah
Now there’s an awful lot of information flitting about there.
Yes.
So you’ve got to collect out the significant bits and then sort through the significant bits. To find the bits that you want in the language and whatever.
Yes. Yes.
Erm all in real time.
Yes. Uuh.
The sort of thing that speech recognition computer on
computers cannot cope with one bit.

Yeah.
So I think this. my guess is it’s the main difference is because
the processing speed’s gone down a bit.
So are you finding it harder in that kind of situation to pick out the
speech.
Yes.
Right. Ok. thank you. Now you said you hadn’t stopped going to
anything. So would it be fair to say that having noticed this problem it
hasn’t really affected your life? Or do you feel you’re finding some
changes that you’re making?
No I’m not making any changes. No it hasn’t effected my
lifestyle. It’s just sort of increased the problems shall we say.
Right
With the lifestyle that I’ve got. Because I think it’s processing.
That it’s processing that’s been the problem. I haven’t yet looked
seriously into hearing aids.
Right. Ok. and although you haven’t stopped doing anything have you
found that when you are in these situations, do you have any coping
strategies that you use to, to make it easier for you?
Mhm. If you wanted to hear to somebody you’d have to pigeon-
hole them, concentrate on them and perhaps get a bit nearer to
them.
Mhm. Yeah
Er or accept the fact that you’re. in background noise you won’t
ever receive the totality of it unless you’re focussing.
So you tend to find the person you’re speaking to is your primary
focus
Yes yeah mhm
Whereas before you would maybe have spoken to two or three
people fine.
It maybe depends a bit on tiredness.
Mhm
It goes up and down with tiredness. (unclear). Erm the tinnitus,
certainly does. Normally er I ignore it the same way somebody
who lives in a city ignores the traffic. But er. Well I suppose I
woke up a bit early this morning. And it’s in the background. Or
shushing away in the background.

Right. Ok.

But if I was completely on top of everything then it would be a
completely ignored thing.

Yeah.

And I usually know I’m tired because it comes out of the
background.

You’re aware of it more.

Yeah.

Do you think also when you’re listening? If you tend to be tired and
you’re having a conversation do you find you’re less inclined to put
the effort in to have the conversation? Would you just think oh this is
too much trouble? Or would you be able to rally enough interest to?
Oh I could certainly rally enough interest. I like talking to people.

Yeah. Good. Ok. so you mentioned you’d been for an assessment.

Did they offer you anything at that time? Any help?

Mhm. No.

No?

Not that I can remember anyway.

Right.

Not that I took up. It was just this, this is how it is.

So there was no sort of apart from hearing aids there was no mention
of anything else? Hearing tactics or anything like that?

No.

That you can remember.

No. no.

So that’s something you’ve just kind of done instinctively?

Yeah. I don’t think there’s any sort of great wisdom that you can
gather.

Yeah

It wasn’t really obvious to start with.
Right. Ok. thinking at the moment. It’s not obviously. From what you’re saying it’s not having a great impact on your life at the moment.

No

But looking towards the future what do you think would make you go from managing the way you are with things at the moment to actually seeking help for this?

Er I’m sceptical about the any what help would be available.

Ok.

Erm in some circumstances lets just say a directional microphone really would. When I’m sort of focussing on something and the outside wasn’t getting in.

Yep.

Would be helpful. But I don’t think. Oh I’ve done something. It’s just the

Some. But that would be very specialised.

Yes.

Er further down the line. I would be more aware of these things. I would be less inclined to go to them. activities where this is likely to be the state. That’s about there. That’s what i would really.

So do you think there would come a time when you wouldn’t go to these situations if they were difficult?

I would become a bit more reclusive perhaps.

How do you feel about that?

I’m very fatalistic actually. Because of course my wife’s the opposite. She’d hit me in the head

Right

She’d be trying every hearing aid in sight.

Right.

Spending all our money on gadgets.

Right.

Uhuh.

Erm fine if it works. Fine if it gives you value for money. Her projects have and some haven’t.

Right ok.

Especially spending a lot of money on teeth it was a good idea.

Money on creaky knees it hasn’t been a good idea.

Oh dear. Right. Ok.

Erm so yeah. If I heard or thought there was a magic answer.

Yep.
Well then I’ll go for it. my suspicions at the minute are that are no magic answer. Except in specialised (unclear).

Yeah.

I’m involved with the university in the third age. And there’s a lot of people around the first thing the speaker says is can you all hear me?

Well you’re not going to answer if you don’t are you? It’s interesting though correct me if I’m wrong. But it sounds from what you’re saying that you don’t feel hearing aids are particularly beneficial. Would that be right? Or your impression is that they’re not.

I don’t know what I’m. one I don’t know what I’m talking about Right

So anything I say has got to be looked at with that.

Ok. ok.

But I’ve a suspicion and you’re test will prove it rightly or wrongly. That the hearing is a bit dulled off. But nothing sort of drastically in there that a volume would help.

Yes. Ok. uuhuh.

I wouldn’t be after an increase in volume.

Mhmh. It’s just when you mentioned directional mics I wondered if I was to say to you we can give you a hearing aid with a directional mic. Would that be sort of thing that would be of interest do you think? Or would you still feel?

I think I would. The only. Well the flipside of that of course is that it’s going to reduce the sound coming from other directions. So that only in exactly that one particular situation that the directional mic would possibly be a good idea.

Yep.

In another situation it would possibly be a bad idea. Er so as of this moment, I don’t think I’d bother to go down that route.

Ok. right.

Erm because I can cope adequately.

Yeah

Without and er I’m not quite sure where else. Sorry I’m not quite sure that the electronic industries can find something to offer me.

Right. That’s interesting yeah.

Speeding up the mind I don’t think they’ve got to yet.

I understand when you say you can adapt the circumstances that you are in.
Mhmh.

It’s interesting that you say you’re a fatalist and when it comes a point that you can’t do that. You’ll, you’ll just do things differently.

Yeah. Yeah. I mean you know one thing. Once upon a time I used to be an outward bound instructor. I was too old to be an outward bound instructor in 1979.

Wow

You know I just couldn’t run up and down a load of mountains ahead of a lot of 18 year olds.


So these things come and hit you.

Mhmh

They were there all the way along.

So do you think acceptance is a big part of things? do you think it makes a difference whether somebody accepts the reality or not? As to whether they manage?

Well there was that famous that you see on t-shirts and where ever. Disaranta.

Yes.

Where it talks about accepting the things you can’t change and changing the things you can and having the wisdom to know which is which.

Uhuh.

And so that’s about. That’s where it’s at.

Yeah. So it’s there’s kind of an attitude of things change. I change with them. er I live life as I need to live it.

Yeah. If. If. You know. If you can’t do something straightforward do something about something then go do it. if you can’t then you can’t.

Mhmh. Yeah. This is true. Yeah.

Mhm.

The other thing I was going to ask you about and obviously I’m assuming that you’ve never tried a hearing aid. You’ve never been down that road have you?

No.

How much would you say that you know about hearing aids? That you’ve been told about hearing aids? That you would say. I mean some people know people with hearing aids. Some people get it from the press. Would you say you know much about them? or?
I would say the only thing I know about them is sitting around with people who have hearing aids with them and trying to get something out of them. 

Uuhh.

And people you know leaflets and booklets and things trying to sell you hearing aids. 

Yes. Uuhh.

So that. Not a lot.

Not a lot. Has that, those experiences influenced your opinion of hearing aids?

Erm. That in a general sort of scientific awareness of what they are up to. 

Uuhh. Yeah. Yeah. Having a bit of knowledge about the subject helps you to think about it.

Yes. I. it’s either going to be a straightforward amplifier. Or it’s going to be a bit cleverer and be an amplifier on certain specific wavelengths. Because of bands of frequency. Or it’s going to be more focussed in the direction.

Mhmh.

And there’s not much more it can do I don’t think.

Yeah. I’m going to put a hypothetical question to you. Say you, obviously you’re having to think ahead on this one. If you’re hearing was a bit worse, so obviously it was affecting your life.

Yeah. If I was to say to you here is a hearing aid that will do all these things. er would correct that. How would you feel about wearing one then?

Would anything else influence whether you wore it or not?

I’d feel a bit self-conscious shoving it on for the first time. You know before. I woud feel self-conscious yes.

Right ok.

As you can see I’m not a dressy person. So er being unsmart would not be the be all and end all of it.

Right.

So yeah. It would be a sort of badge of decrepitude.

Right.

But I’d get fatalistic about that too if it was necessary.

Right. So wearing it, to you has a connotation of age? Am I right? Or getting older?

I can’t say age. A connotation of disability.

Right. Ok.
Not less hearing, which may have a connotation with age. But not perfect connotation of age. So it’s a sign of a disability. A sign of I’m not sure. Whatever. Yeah. Yeah. Uhuh.

If it was going to do the job it would do the job. But the one of the reasons we’re here is that it’s a good free hearing test. Yeah. I’ll find out for sure. I’ll find out for sure yeah. Gather all the information you know? Yeah I think it. I think it’s Age Concern are offering a free telephone hearing test. That’s right. Yeah. Sort of people call up. Ok as far as it goes. Uhuh. Yeah

But you know it’s spreading it wide when it’s very, very thin. We hope to get better stuff at QM University. Yeah. So this is more. Just you know looking at the idea of you know the visible sign of disability. Do you think that if hearing aids were not visible would that have an impact on whether people wore them or not? Would that have an impact if you were able to wear something that couldn’t be seen?

I’m sure that would have an impact on whether it was worn or not. It’s the males rather than the females. I had a friend up in (unclear place name) who wore a hearing aid. And she had a carefully designed hairstyle to cover it. Uhuh So she got round it that way. Yes. Uhuh.

Erm. Whereas you’d have to have somebody with very wild and woolly hair. Yeah. But if it was one of these wee one that goes into your ear and was able to deliver everything you needed. Yeah. That. Hypothetically if it’s invisible. It would be an advantage. It would be quite a big advantage to quite a lot of people. Mhmh
As I say I tend to be an awkward bugger. The fact that I knew it was there. Would be as important as if somebody else knew it was there.

Well that’s an interesting concept. So if it’s not seen to other people. So it’s not seen to be a visible sign of disability. Is there something else about wearing it tat would be in your mind.

Bloody nuisance. I would keep losing it.

Right

You know glasses again. I have one good set of glasses, one good set of reading glasses sitting near the computer. Oh and I reckon three or four or five Boots ones scattered about the place. Where I can find them so if I lose them.

Yes.

I’ve got some glasses now which are fairly definitely driving glasses. And a second pair of those which are television glasses. It’s a yes it’s the visibility in a way. But it’s also the drag. Keep away from the extra complication in life.

Yes.

Perhaps it’s the processing speed again.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Absentmindedness. It’s always been something near to the surface and it rises now.

So if it’s a trade-off isn’t the right word but I’ve got a vision in my head when you say that.

It is a trade-off

Of benefits and you know inconvenience as to how much it will help me. and how much it’s a bother. And mayb that’s a continuum. That we get to that point where maybe it changes. And it becomes worth the bother.

It probably gradually would become worth the bother.

Mhm

But yeah. Yeah. But I’ve no problems sitting like this having a conversation with you.

Yeah

Which is the chief use for hearing for me. erm in a sort of committee room with people sitting round. You know. I’ve had no bother there.

Mhm

It’s. it’s your coffee morning sort of thing. Or a lot of people chatting away at once is where I notice the lack.
Yeah

And the tinnitus in the background
Yeah with all this babble and trying to hear through that.
Yeah

Mhmh. Well that’s good. Well basically that’s the areas that I wanted to cover with you.
Yeah

But is there anything else about your experience of noticing you’re losing your hearing that I haven’t asked about that you think is important?

I don’t know about important. I think I’ve told you mostly. What it was is that I keep the radio on. If I’ve been driving round and she gets in the car and switches the radio on and it’s louder than she fancies.

Right. Ok.
On the other hand recently she’s been winding up the television volume.

Right
To a point where it’s more than I would have had it.

Right. Uuhh.
So that. Those are the sort of other things I’ve noticed. As much as anything else. We’re not multitasking quite as much. You get in to concentrate on something and cut out the external influences. Like somebody shouting your tea’s ready.

Yes. Yeah. Uuhh.
I think that goes worse. I’m sure M- will say I shout at him and he doesn’t hear you know.

Right.
I would say the same thing back again.

Uuhh.
Er so. So that. That’s the impact. That’s probably the chief impact there in terms of radio and television and so on. Because there we. We’re more or less the sameish.

Right.
So we live. Well the other person can live quite happily with. Our telephone’s no problems. So I, I, I, a louder telephone might be a clever gain.

Yeah
But we’re not there yet.

Right
Er. No about there I think.

No that’s good. That’s fine. Right then that covers the things that I’m interested in and that’s been really useful. So what I’ll do is I’ll just stop the recording and that will be us for today.
Interviewer: So if I just put that there that should pick up your voice no problem. Ok?

COPA 6 Uhuh.

So just to start if I can ask you have you noticed any problems with your hearing and if you have for how long?

No I haven’t really. Er As I explained I was. I had an episode in er about 2000. when I had a drop in my thyroid level

Right

I got a whole load of much milder symptoms which was wet ears. And I did actually go and have a hearing test. It was confirmed at the time that my loss. I knew it was. Looking at the television it had gone down definitely.

Right

But when my medi. And I’m sure it was. Nobody actually said it was to me. But I’m sure it was. Because I had a series of symptoms that all rectified immediately.

Right. So when you started the medication you got.

When I upped the medication. I already was on. But I was under-medicated.

Yeah. So how. What do you think your hearing is like now then?

I reckon it’s pretty good. I mean it’s not something that I have a problem with. I’ve got grandchildren and er I don’t think I’ve got a problem. I don’t seem to miss much. I don’t feel I’m missing anything. Whether it’s that or what I would like to know. What it is I like to be a hundred percent there. Or as good as hundred percent as you can expect to be.

Can we go back to talk about the time when your hearing was down then?

Yes.

You said you noticed things. what sort of things did you notice really?

Particularly the television. Really. I don’t watch masses of it. But if you find you’re doing the volume control. I find it wasn’t good but it was confirmed by this because when you put the bar on it was coming up from 18 which is what I would normally expect it to be on and it would go up to 30.

Right

Normally I notice if my husband has to put the radio on louder than me. And er certainly if we’re listening to it, I’m always listening to it a little bit above the level which I’m, I would
choose for myself. I’ll come into a room and very often I’ll say oh
for heaven’s sake darling turn it down a bit. But if I go say to my
son’s and listen at the same level they’re listening I’m
comfortable listening to that. And I’m comfortable hearing
extraneous noises. I don’t think I miss much. If you’re in a room
completely. You know with other people as well.
So when you’re hearing was down did you find a problem with that?
Before your medication was fixed if you were in a room with say 5 or
6 people having a conversation. Would you have struggled with that?
Strangely I don’t think particularly that was an issue. Erm you’d
think it would be. Erm. It. I don’t think it was a big thing. But I
don’t know that it went on long enough. It went on for 6 months
so how many times I would be in that situation in that period of
time. You know Christmas parties or something like that. When
you’ve got a or music in the background is when you notice it.
Isn’t it? I would say that really, probably it might not have been
brought to my attention. But I think the thing that I really noticed
was the fact that I was changing volumes on things.
Volumes and things like that. Yeah. So you didn’t feel. Or did you feel
a need to change some of the things that? Did you find yourself not
doing things that?
No. no. no.

Not at that point. I don’t think. It wasn’t extreme enough for that.
Right.
I the symptoms of having this. You know wanting to wiggle your
ears. Getting a sort of a swishy sort of noise. It was
discomforting.
Yeah
I didn’t like it. It was itchy as well.
Yeah
But that resolved completely.
Well that’s good. I’m pleased that’s happened.
Yeah. Yes it was. So was I. I was given all these different sorts of
medication and clearly none of them worked. They just weren’t
addressing the right problem I don’t think.
No. uuh. Just having to get it sorted out.
Mhmh
Six months, I mean six months is not a long time. But I'm just wondering if you can think a wee bit about if that had extended. If your hearing hadn't

Yes. Yes

How do you think you would have coped with that? Do you think you would have done something about it? Or would it have

Oh yes. I mean I was already doing something in a sense. You see I didn’t. until I had other symptoms and things. I didn’t. I suppose I like to be on top of things. I don’t like basically sort of lagging behind. If it was still and there was nothing else that anyone could do. I would be pushing for anything else.

So you would have actively looked for help?

Yes very definitely. I think I would. I mean for instance my glasses. I really am one of these people who could function quite well. I could do the driving test and all this sort of thing.

But I just like it. This I can actually see as well as I can see. So if you can make things better you will do?

Yeah I’ll make things better. Yes.

Would erm would you have considered a hearing aid?

Oh yes. Definitely. Very definitely. I mean I don’t like the idea, any more than I like to wear glasses. But I would overrule that because I want to be.

You want to be right. That’s quite an interesting thing to ask you. What is it about not wearing glasses or hearing aids that you don’t like?

Oh I think probably. I personally like myself functions without any props. So I can you know. You know.

Make it better.

Yeah. Me I mean I take a thyroid pill every day or a couple of thyroid pills. And it irritates me that it’s something I’ve got to remember. Erm. I don’t have a great problem about it. I just work out and I do it. It annoys me. You know. It would be a nuisance to wear a hearing aid. There would be battery implications. And all sorts of little extra implications. Which as you get older all sorts of things. the implications of things mount up.

Yes.

Whether your knee is giving you jip today or something like that. And it’s just a constant reminder don’t bother we’re aging. You know?

So it’s all these wee bits that add up.
Yes they do. So you end up without being able to do things absolutely spontaneously and automatically. Er.

Yeah. I understand where you’re coming from.

Which is the thing that can hit you at any age. For whatever reason. But certainly I think it’s a cumulative thing as you get older.

Yeah

It’s one of the things that you don’t realise is going to happen to you. Oh it happens to everybody else. But oh no I’m not going to get old.

It’s interesting because I think from what you’re saying, what I’m picking up erm had your hearing not recovered erm it’s almost like there’s a sort of journey where you’re conscious of it and it’s annoying. But you’re getting by. And at some point that annoyance becomes enough

Yes

I’m going to change what I do. I’m going to maybe get help or, or you know wear something or whatever.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Definitely. I won’t have an awfully long period of tolerance. I think basically given the fact that I didn’t wait very long before I was having this sort of swishy-swashy. I was getting on to the GP and saying right I want a hearing test done at the hospital. I had my hearing test and that sort of thing. And it was proved. Again I think it could be very difficult that the response is such that although I don’t think there’s anything wrong don’t dip your head in the water or something. That big swimming pool or whatever it is. Not leading on to anything any more constructive than that. And I think that’s why. That would be my ultimate frustration. Would be if they said oh well it’s not really that bad. You don’t really need this. My frustration would come at that point. I do, because I can’t cope. I don’t like coping like this.

So if the professionals for want of another term

Yeah. Mhmm

They had been saying one thing but you wanted.

Really wanted a better service. You know I would be feeling very frustrated.

Do you think that’s something that we as professionals could take on? The person living with the hearing loss has an idea of how.
Yes. I think it is very important I think that people. It doesn’t
matter what you’re talking about people’s reactions are very
different. To erm mobility or to oh I don’t know to anything. In
particular you’re talking about hearing. So yes I think some
people it will not inconvenience them or it certainly won’t
impinge on them. It might impinge on others. But from where the
individual is I think there is a complete difference in how people
will respond to it. And erm I think it’s quite important that
professionals as you say pick up on where the person is at. You
know. And don’t just say oh it doesn’t matter. Or it’s not very
important. I mean actually I had an interview in which there was
erm a student was in when I was having this interview. And er
it(my skin) was itchy as well. So I was taking piritin at night to try
and stop the itches. And I was annoyed in the daytime because I
wasn’t feeling right, along with other symptoms which obviously
aggravated it, but my GP turned to the, to the er his new student
and said well it’s not very, it can be quite annoying to the
person. But it’s not really terribly. It wasn’t quite what he said
that it wasn’t important. But it did play it down rather. I. I felt very
irritated. That. You know he wasn’t really taking it from where I
was. He was sort of thinking I’ve seen much worse things. they
have amputations or whatever.
Whereas for you I mean.

Well it was. It was significant.

Yeah. In terms of services you know accessing services if you were
aware of a hearing problem. What do you think is more important
going by the test results that you have there that show whether or not
or to go by what the person is saying, regardless of the test results?
It’s probably, if you have test results it’s probably quite
important to bring them to somebody’s attention that this is the
situation. Objective. As much as it can be it is an objective test.

Mhm

But having said this is the situation and maybe not to go like a
bull in a china shop to say that it is the situation, or maybe to go
at it slightly from the other side,and going and saying how do
you feel about it? Do you think really you’ve you know do you
think you are ok or not? I don’t know what you. Are you coping?
But to bring it in at some point that really you are actually
missing quite a bit.

Mhm
You know? Which might be quite a shock to the person if they’re
coping fine, I’m afraid I’m coming in from a social work angle
you can hear it.
You and me both.
Yes. But. But that’s the way I would feel about it. But I don’t
think in a way you can deny the fact that you’re not hearing very
well. That’s not very helpful, but other people, if you’ve got
somebody and other people in the family are saying oh for
heaven’s sake dad you’re not hearing. He’ll say oh yes I am fine.
It needs somebody from outside to say well actually your results
haven’t been that brilliant. And it might be helpful if you
consider such and such or whatever. And there
We’re all working together. Because what I was thinking was if
somebody has a realisation that they’re having a problem but the
reality for them
Yeah.
Then it sounds as if you think they need somebody to acknowledge
that to have a look at the results but acknowledge if they’re
struggling.
Right. Yes. I think so. Yes I think that it needs acknowledging.
But to a certain extent facts are facts. Facts are facts and they
can’t be denied but it depends on how you actually interpret the
facts.
Yes.
That way you can work. Which end you start at almost. Do you
know what I mean?
Mhm. Yeah. So you come from a social work background. Do you
think that people’s experiences and attitudes affect which services
they want? So in other words do you think attitude effects how people
cope with things?
Oh. Er. I’m sure it does, and I think it’s how people have....
perhaps if they.... if you come to a. .....perhaps the first port of
call might well be a GP or somebody if you are going. If they are
a bit dismissive or. or the opposite even that might be in a sense
almost a block about whether you might bother to pursue it any
longer. Or wait a time. If it’s not too you know too extreme a
problem. You know erm. It might be quite extreme. They might
be in a fair amount of denial about the whole thing. Erm I think. I.
it’s a very sensible. For me it has almost more importance in
terms of sensitivity than loss of sight or anything. I don’t know what it is but I do not like wearing hearing aids.

Right ok.

And it may well be to do with the fact that I don’t know much about them. Erm it’s once you get behind the. I wore contact lenses for 25 years. And I much preferred that to wearing glasses. You do actually get the inconvenience of glasses of having them thrown at you. And the feeling of looking behind bars. But once your brain has taken in that this is a fact you do see almost one hundred percent. Anyone else can see. But as far as I know I don’t think any hearing aid has got to that level. Mhmh. Yeah. So maybe. Again we’re back to this benefit and inconvenience.

That’s right. How much are you actually gaining by doing it? I saw a study once, which is totally off the ball. But it was basically about people wearing contact lenses and they asked people who had no sight problem to wear contact lenses, just clear ones. And everybody gave I think a high percentage of people gave up, because there was no gain for them.

It’s basically having a piece of grit in your ear

Yeah

In your eye

Yeah

So unless you’re going to get the gain. you’ve. You’ve got to get the gain from a hearing aid or whatever before you’ll really feel it’s worth having. But if you won’t want to acknowledge it if you don’t think you’re going to get a gain from it.

So you maybe people won’t wear hearing aids until they’re. they’re maybe aware of the problem but until it’s reached the point where.

That’s right. Until it’s seriously inconveniencing them. As you say it’s got to go over a certain level...level of erm incapacity as it were. Yeah.

No I think that might be interesting to think about there’s obviously a fashion element in glasses.

Yes

Do you think that the appearance of hearing aids has anything to do with whether people wear them or not?

I suspect it has. But er nobody as far as I know has made a fashionable hearing aid. Er what they’re.... let me see what little
knowledge I have a friend and she and her mother. Actually
whether, she’s my age but she’s had a hearing problem since
childhood. She had glue ear and what have you. And she’s very,
very good. Which is a mental statement. But she quite happily
wears a hearing aid. Because she thinks it definitely makes up
for the problems that she has. But she wears her hair over her
ear and things like that. But er she’s quite. She seems to be
quite comfortable with it. But most people that I know you could
say it’s a vanity thing. But that’s down to what they look like and
er
Yes Uhuh
All the rest of it.
Mhmh
Yeah
So I’m just wondering whether for yourself. Obviously it’s not
something you need to consider at the moment. But do you think that
would influence you know the style of hearing aid would influence
whether you wore it or not?
I think it possibly would. I mean I think. I thought I heard
somewhere that you can actually get a combination of glasses
and hearing aid.
Yes that’s right
It would probably. I think yes it probably is worth it. I’m not. I’m
not super bothered about my appearance. It’s not one of the
things that is uppermost in my mind. I admit to myself I don’t
make a huge effort tidying up every five minutes and that sort of
thing. So I’m not fashion conscious and never have been. But er
I think yes it would make a difference to me. If it. If I haven’t got
to wear a lumpy something round my ear. And I. yeah
Just as you were saying earlier about having the glasses on over
your eyes, would people be amenable to wearing hearing aids if they
were smaller and easier to get used to I wonder if that would.... if that
is actually important to people.
My. My feeling is it probably is. My feeling is. But I think one of
the other problems is that it’s that they’re not as straight
forward. Again from my experience it isn’t straight forward. You
don’t get a prescription plonk it on your nose smashing. Like
normal. You get it. I mean if you’ve got the lenses that I have
there’s a bit of getting used to them if there’s enough extreme in
them for me. But if you’ve got to think in terms of batteries, think
about adjusting volumes, you’ve got to get it screwed in right.
And you’ve already pressed it first with your fingers. All these
things are you know, the number of older people that I know that
have got hearing aids and half the time they haven’t got them in.
it feels funny or the battery’s gone down. Or they’re squealing.
You know because they’re just not adjusted properly. I think it’s
all. It’s all a bit more high-tech than putting a pair of glasses on.
Yes there’s more to it. Definitely
Yeah.
I think that. It’s an interesting point that people tend to not wear their
hearing aids until they’re older and that’s when they have more
difficulties. So I’m just wondering if there’s anything that we can
I don’t think anybody’s going to wear a hearing aid for fun are
they?
No.
I meant. I mean my granddaughter has already started wearing
glasses and she. I know when I started wearing glasses I really
thought oh this is awful. In fact she’s 7 and everybody’s made
her think about oh you’ve got a lovely pair of pink glasses. And
she seems to be happy as Larry.
Yeah.
You know. But I don’t know whether. It would be a much more
difficult ballgame to try and get her to wear….. If she needed
it…..but a hearing aid would be much more of a performance
wouldn’t it?
And I wonder if that is back to attitude again. Because now. You
know when I was younger if you were to wear glasses people were
oh. Children in classes wearing glasses they were scared that they
would be made fun of which was terrible whereas now they are more
of a fashion statement.
Oh yes much more. Much more ok. And I think there’s been a
huge barrier down. I mean they have a practical application
because you’re either losing them or falling on them or a kid at
school at 7 is you know.
Yeah I can imagine yeah
It’s very difficult. It’s still an easier option than trying to wear
something that’s going to adapt to you. It’s quite interesting just
taking that one instance of this friend of mine who does use her
hearing aid all the time and is very aware that she doesn’t hear
because of it. Poor dear she likes to go out. And her husband
says well you know there’s no point in talking when you go out
because she won’t hear you. She’s so upfront. She’s a social
worker too and she’s so upfront about everything and it’s not a
problem. It’s not a problem she can go with whatever hearing aid
she has. But in a group situation she’s still not. It’s not
Yeah
The ideal. But you know she’s worn. And she’s also been in the
situation of having grommets in her ears and things all through
her childhood. and now growing up. So it’s been part of her
whole life experience. I think for most of us. I know I’m talking
off my head really. But I think the majority of people that I know
that have come into wearing hearing aids. I mean over 60 or so
and probably a large number even over 70 so they, I mean it’s
the learning curve of anybody. It gets more difficult.
That’s right.
It gets more difficult you know. Whether you’re talking about
learning on computers or whatever you’re talking about. It’s
something which I think that this may be a bit of a problem is.
That when they are prescribed. Somebody whatever they are like
to look at or however good they are. Somebody doesn’t really
spend a lot of time. Or get a review or they’re getting on with it
or coming back for it. And I don’t know whether it’s gone
because I haven’t got experience. But it obviously needs a fair
bit of input. Not just in the prescription and making sure the
right one is being prescribed. But actually having you know
usage of.
Yes.
Er sort of carrying on getting used to it. A wee time coming back
and having a look at it and how’ve you been getting on. People
would probably deny quite a lot. I know that’s human nature. But
yeah I think that’s absolutely relative information.
Yeah. You’re right it is. There’s no work involved. It’s not like glasses
where you put them on and it corrects things. the other thing I’m
listening to you talk here I’m interested in we’ve talked a lot about
hearing aids. I’m just wondering we’ve got this period where people
start to notice that. Up until they get to the point they start to think
about hearing aids or of other things that could be put in place to help
people. I mean have you been aware of communication tactics? or
anything else, any information about these sorts of things? have you come across that anywhere?

Erm what sort of way?

Well in any context have you seen any information in doctor's surgery or known anybody that had a hearing problem and had some help?

Nothing's really jumped out at me. I must admit. No. I mean any. I think we have information overload. I mean I know it's very good to go to a surgery and you're sitting waiting for your appointment and you can see leaflets for everything. You can see MS society, doesn't matter what, diabetics, preeclampsia, just everything. I mean... I think...well I just switch off. If actually I was watching and I was looking for. You know if I was coming in and I was worried about my hearing. Perhaps I might scan it a bit more. And wonder if there was anything available. See if there was

No I don't know.

I'm just wondering about the time you went and they said it wasn't that bad. Do you think it would have been helpful if they said it's not that bad that you need a hearing aid. But here are other things you can do. Do you think that would help people?

Certainly. The only thing I was told was don't go swimming, which is what happened to be one of the things that I did quite a bit because er we lived in Fort William at the time. And there was an underwater training centre. And I think it was something that was very common. Because I think this business is common in people who get a lot of water in their ears over time. And I think it was negative extremely negative. It was positively don't get your ears wet and that was about it. You know I wouldn't say it was exactly wonderful. You know?

I'm just thinking of somebody

Yes

At that point

Yes

Who don't need a hearing aid but are conscious of a problem. At that point this is what you could do this is some information that might help. Do you think that sort of thing would be helpful?

Yes. I sort of wonder what that information is. I mean if you were. If I was asking you what information would you be able to say back to me of things I could do?
Well I think if somebody came in and said when I go out to a restaurant or when I’m in the pub it’s not good. You’d be able to say well here’s some communication tactics. Here’s some things you can do.

Yes so being direct.

Here’s some other things you could get at home. You know.

You need to ask people. Make sure you ask people. You know acknowledge. I think this is one of the other things I think that people are shy to acknowledge. That really if you are in a group.

And again this is my friend Helen would say very directly to everyone if we’re in a group situation. She’ll sit us because she did quite a lot of lip-reading. You’d find her making a conscious effort to sit to the person. She’d always have one to one conversations. That was very noticeable in a group, because she was a social person. You know

Yeah

She’d still need to try to screen out the extraneous. And use her lips to sort of you know. Make. Make the communication better.

So I’m just thinking things like that.

Yeah

Maybe there’s a role for between noticing it and getting a hearing aid.

I think so yeah

You know to help you to cope.

Yeah. Yeah. That probably is. I think that is something which I don’t think is on the GPs mind at all. I don’t know. Perhaps some variation in what people want.

It’s interesting because you know I was thinking about going to the hospital for an assessment and being told you don’t need it. But maybe

I think

The GP sounds like a good area to start

I think it would be an idea to start there because after all you’re not going to get a referral until you go there. And it maybe that if you turned up and said well as I think a lot of people may do.

And say my son, husband says that I can’t I’m not hearing them. And I can’t wait and whatever. And it turns out the GP hears the story and says well even if you’re not going to be tested. It might just be that that’s the case. Because I would have thought that in a one to one situation in a surgery unless the accent is just prohibitive for you to pick it up. You’d find that a GP should be
sensitive enough to know when particularly if it was in the
range, or more or less in the range that it was normal. You see
what I mean?
Yes I know what you mean.
In which case I don’t think it’s going to be a huge amount of help
to send everybody every Tom, Dick and Harry to a specialist. It
just won’t cope. But it might, as you say at that point be worth
saying something like if you are having a bit of difficulty you
might just. You know. If you think it’s a problem, acknowledge
it’s a problem to other people. And say yes speak a bit louder.
Even things like that I think can help.
Yea,. things you can do. Or even thinking,. Some people have things
to help them hear the phone or hear the doorbell.
Well they can have
Even information about that kind of thing…..
Yes
You know.
That would
Maybe we need to move that from the hospital to an earlier stage.
I guess it ought to be at an earlier stage really. Because I mean
as you say a bell or something like that. I mean all these kinds of
phones that have got amplifiers on. You don’t have a… and it
may only be…. I don’t understand these things but it does
depend on frequencies doesn’t it? If you’ve got a high-pitched
something you might not hear it.
You might. That’s right. Uuhh. It’s interesting because that’s
something to think about. Well that’s covered all the kind of areas that
I wanted to ask you about but is there anything that I haven’t asked
you about that you think you know that you think this is worth putting
down on paper.
I don’t think there is anything. Really. As I say I mean I’ve
thought about it a bit more than I would have done f it hadn’t
been for the fact that I had that episode. To be fair enough it not
being, and I think there were a lot of things that only hit home
when you have a problem. If it’s short or long-lived. It doesn’t
matter. It only hit home. I mean. it brought things out a little bit. I
was in a wheelchair for a short time. It was peculiar because it
was the first time I ever realised. Although my sister-in-law is in
a wheelchair. Just how incapacitating and how difficult it is. To
really know what somebody else is not suffering but having to
cope with. Erm and I don’t think that many people actually have a great sympathy with hearing loss.

Yep. Mhmh

If you get to being blind or even sight- impairment I think people are sympathetic. But it’s not very visible to be deaf. So that people don’t really have. I was going to say much pity. But don’t have an understanding is the word I probably want. They don’t accommodate the difference.

No they don’t accommodate. Er I think that’s and particularly in you know….our…. our society. I think you know you’ve got big offices, where there’s all sorts of buzz going on. And people will find it difficult if they’re not able to be absolutely sharp. It’s all things like that which I think you know people. We think in terms of disabilities and they tend to be rather exaggerated ends of the spectrum, rather than those which are maybe mild, not terribly significant which the GP obviously thought…..but very impinging on the person’s life and other peoples with it as well.

Do you think some of that could be the fact. You know just talking about there’s no information immediately to hand and we don’t talk about it until it kind of concerns us.

Yep

Do you think hearing problems are something that are not. You know that are not talked about to make it mainstream?

I don’t think they are not a conscious thing. No I don’t think they do. No I don’t think they do. I think. I mean you even get things like Sight savers international. And things like that. I’ve not heard of a deaf place. I mean I. in a sense it’s not relevant. But it is because there is a sense that everybody does things. your sight is terribly, terribly important. To be in a deaf world would be hell, really hell. Erm I wouldn’t want to wish in either way. But it wouldn’t be worth to me without hearing. These sort of people. You’re only going to use sort of your brain and whatever. Some form of….some visual form of getting about. That’s right yes. The colour would be out terribly.

Yeah because when you’re saying that. I’m just thinking it’s not something that’s talked about a lot. And maybe it’s something we need to look at.

I would say
At the stage of noticing a problem erm if we were more aware of communication generally in society. I'm just wondering what impact it would have on their lives. It would be very interesting to know really whether I don't know you’re going to be doing these tests right through the ages. As I understand it you should be able to pick up quite a lot of extras from that. Because one of the things I've come across really is people. This one friend all the way up to my age basically had a hearing problem. And knew it exists but it’s really quite low, when you compare it to say sight problems. It's not. You know people with sight problems are obviously having them picked up. One…. And b I expect they’re a lot more common than hearing problems. But as you say most people don’t tend to wear hearing aids so you can't even notice that people have a hearing problem. It’s like a visual clue. When someone wears a hearing aid. Oh yes they’ve got a problem.

Yes

But it's people in the mid range who have a problem. And where you’ve got children it was historically the thing to put them into Deaf schools and they've been withdrawn from the mainstream of society. But erm. And you’ve got the communication problem with the people who have. Who may have been taught reasonably well but have got an impediment before getting into full life, but who have got that bit of contact sort of thing. But in a sense it’s mainream or nothing. So either somebody’s got an experience particularly when younger or no experience at all of. And I think that it’s how you learn to deal. Other people learn to deal. They either say oh it doesn’t exist. Or they begin to take it on board and start accommodating. And look for it. Start looking for it. or if they see signs what a really. Did you actually hear what I said? Or is it just they said yes? It’s interesting because that could be a thing if you’ve got people with a hearing problem.

Yes

Who are trying to hide they have a hearing problem

Yes.

If you have people who don’t have any experience of hearing problems. Who are looking for it. We’ve got this mismatch already. So we don’t see that it’s there.
Yes.  
It’s an interesting concept.  
I know that must happen a lot.  
Yeah. Mhm. That’s a different one to think about.  
Good oh well.  
So if.  
Yeah  
I’ll stop the tape now then. I’ll stop the digital recording now.
COPA 7

Interviewer: It’s sitting there so it will pick up your voice fine you don’t have to worry about looking at the microphone or anything like that it will pick you up ok? so just to start us off can you tell me if you think you have a problem with your hearing and why and how you notice it.

COPA 7: It’s er a slight problem that I put down to just my age.

Right

I’m 76 on Sunday so one would expect my hearing to have deteriorated by now. I suppose gradually it is getting worse although I have no problem in hearing you.

Ok fine. And do you find that if you’re in a room with one person is it easier than if you’re in different situations?

It depends on their diction. And on. I think to answer your question it’s not any different in a crowded room it’s the same.

Right. Right. Ok. so in what situations would you say you’re aware of having a hearing problem.

When I communicate with my wife who has a hearing problem.

Sometimes, quite a lot of times she doesn’t appear to hear me.

Right.

On the other hand she says that she’s answered me and I haven’t heard her. Er it’s either just a misunderstanding or there must be some words at some level of diction that I miss.

Right. Ok. so that would seem to suggest that overall if you’ve got a good situation with someone with good diction then you get enough of what’s being said that you can fill in the blanks. Does that make sense?

Yes.

Right

But it has deteriorated over time. I think it’s not as good as it used to be.

Right. How long would you say you’ve been aware of it?

Probably about a year or so.

Ok. right. And did you notice it first or did other people say to you that they didn’t think you were as sharp hearing?

I probably not necessarily noticed it but recognised it when the number of occasions when I was unable to communicate properly with my wife because she said she didn’t hear me. But it turned out that she had made some response and I hadn’t heard it. So it seems to have got worse and it’s mainly through communicating with my wife.
Ok. Although when I speak on the telephone she tells me I'm speaking far too loud.

Right.

She keeps telling me to lower my voice.

Right ok. and you mentioned the television as well, do you need it louder than your wife?

Well I play that I need it louder than my wife when she comes into the room but she sort of er complains that it is too loud.

And I turn it down.

Right.

And I keep saying well it is you that’s got a hearing problem.

And she say well perhaps not just.

Does your wife wear a hearing aid?

She does now. She’s recently got it in the last three months.

Right ok. that would explain why she’s coming saying it’s louder.

Not necessarily because as with all people with a hearing aid she doesn’t seem to wear it very consistently.

Right.

It’s just getting her to do it. I think there’s a lot of times she, I think vainly thinks she doesn’t need it.

Right. Right. Uuhh. I know what you’re saying. so you know for just about a year you’ve got a problem with your hearing. On a day to day basis what impact does it have on your life?

(pause deep breath) I attend quite a few meetings and I, I find that if I’m sitting alongside someone and I can’t see their lips and they’re not pointing at me it has an effect. So I usually try to sit opposite the people who are likely to be doing a lot of talking. Erm whether that’s whether that really does any good I don’t know. But logically I feel that in order to hear everything that’s going on at a meeting I position myself to see the person who is likely to be doing most of the talking.

Right. Your actually starting to learn some strategies that help with that. Ok. did anybody explain those things to you or did you just think about doing them?

No. no. I decided myself. And it may be that er that there isn’t any evidence to prove that my hearing has gone but I just have a feeling that it’s. or maybe it’s a wrong feeling. It could be at my age it should be getting worse and maybe isn’t I don’t know.

Right. Right. So you’ve never been to have it formally assessed?
Have you any sense of why you’ve not pursued it?

Probably too busy doing other things.

Right. Ok. Right. So it’s not on your priority list?

Well that’s it. Er when you get to my age you tend to be thankful that you don’t have much wrong with you.

Yeah

And the thing that does concern me at the moment is that I’ve got a gammy knee so.

Right

I’m concerned with whether I have to get that looked at.

Right

So I don’t think about my hearing or my eyesight for instance because I really should be going to get my eyes tested as well.

So would it be fair to say that at the moment there’s an awareness that you’ve got a problem but it hasn’t come up the priority list to the level where you think I need to do something about this?

Correct yes.

Do you think that that’s the kind of thing that happens to most people? So you mentioned your wife had had a hearing problem for a while. Do you think we tend to roll along until we get to the point when we think oh wait a minute?

I think some people do. I think that I am the minority of people that seem to relish when there’s something wrong with them and they perhaps magnify it and make everyone aware that they have a problem or a perceived problem.

Yeah.

I think the majority of people keep putting things off until it has to happen.

Yes. And then go along. And obviously you haven’t reached that stage. But so this is very hypothetical but if you were thinking about going to a clinic or to your doctor to see about getting this assessed what kind of things are you thinking of from the strategies that you taught yourself, are there any things that you would think if I went to the hospital I would like this to be available? Or this would help me?

No. I don’t think I know enough about it to think of that.

Ok

I have accompanied my wife on a couple of occasions when she’s been to see the audiologist. But I’ve just sat in the waiting room.
Right ok.
So I wasn’t I was only aware that you know it seemed to take a while that she was away and when she came back she didn’t tell me a lot of detail about it. So no I don’t really know what would be involved. But it doesn’t er frighten me as much as er perhaps some er visits to the hospital would.
Yeah ok.
But I haven’t thought about it yet.
Right ok. That’s fine. Now do you know what I’m just wondering here I mean your wife obviously went along and got a hearing aid erm. Eventually yes. She’s had a hearing problem since she’d been a young. Since she’d been a teenager.
Right
And it’s gradually got worse and she had some sort of advice, I suspect not very technical or very authoritative advice that it would never get any better.
Right
And she just accepted that. And I think she has evidence that there’s members of her family that had the same thing. And I think her sister who lives in Australia was very profoundly deaf in one ear and limited hearing in the other. And she went for an operation which was successful for a limited time. And then she’s lost almost all her hearing. And I think that evidence in inverted commas has put my wife off having anything done at all.
Right yeah.
It only when er. In the last year that she’s thought about having her hearing assessed and I think eventually her GP did persuade her to go to see the audiologist. And as a result she’s got a hearing aid that she’s still getting used still trying to get used to it.
Right ok. her having a hearing aid has that influenced your feelings about hearing aids at all?
No. no. I’ve obviously thought that if erm. Just like I’m, I wear spectacles now I don’t see anything. If you need them you should have them. And if I needed a hearing aid I would wear a hearing aid.
Yeah.
Although I may need a walking stick but I don’t use it. I carry it about with me.
Right. U huh. So you’re sort of using it. You’re still carrying it around.
I have. My knee does give way on occasions sometimes. So I, I thought I’d better have it just in case.
The other interesting alley. You said there you don’t know enough about hearing aids, do you think that’s there’s not a whole lot of information about losing your hearing
Yes
And what you can do to help?
I think there’s a lot of ignorance about a lot of health procedures. Not only hearing. I think the health service could do an awful lot to communicate with the public. Not just their patients but their potential patients. Because everybody’s a potential patient of the NHS at some time I think.
Yes. I think that. And I think that’s an interesting thing of how do you move people who are potential patients along the path. So they know what to do when something does happen.
Er it’s like the majority of middle and young people. They don’t want to know, for instance the number of people who haven’t started looking for pension provision. Because they think it’s too early. I’ll do that later on.
Yes
And it’s the same with people who think they’re relatively healthy. Go and see the doctor. Oh no, no I’m fine.
Yeah. Yeah. They’ll wait till something happens because I’m thinking from the point of view of people who are in the position that you’re in at the moment where you’re aware of a hearing loss. But it’s not at the point where you feel you need to have a hearing aid. Do you think….. Is there anything that you think before that stage it would be useful to know about?
Well one of the things was when I responded to the invitation for this project, this research project. I thought well this is an ideal opportunity ah to find out something about it. And if I do need some attention it’s a prod. It’s a way of forcing me down that path that I. If it had been left to me I would have waited till I sorted out any problem with my knee and thought about it later on. Where as er I’ve taken a step of showing an interest in this project and with a hope that er once I’ve learned a bit more about it and once I’ve somebody’s found out what the state of my hearing is. If the result of that was that I needed something done I would do it.
That’s interesting. So do you think screening programmes if they were offered they would be a good idea? So people could just go and have their hearing checked?

If. I think so yes. But I should mention that the cost of such a thing would be high. It would be factored in somewhere because I’m sure it would cost a lot of money.

Yes.

But yes I think there should be screening projects for all sorts of ailments.

Do you think if that was the type of thing that it would be uh. Is your feeling if it was you could go to your GP’s surgery or you could go to your hospital or do you think it would be better as a sort of high street thing. That people could go in without having to see their doctor?

There are benefits in both ways. The high street has the aspect where it’s good for people with so called busy lives. The high street always has a commercial aspect. Somebody is making money out of it. But on the other hand, perhaps the people who are best able to do it are specialist clinics or perhaps your local surgery.

Yes.

I’m sure they would argue that you’ve only got so many pairs of hands. And they can only deal with so many. But perhaps hearing loss or perceived hearing loss wouldn’t be high on the list.

On the list yeah. But you. You were saying you wouldn’t have thought about going in and having of pursuing this with your GP but the fact that this opportunity came up. If we started a screening service, would you have thought oh I’ll just go and have my hearing tested?

Get some advice.

If it made me aware of it. I’m not necessarily sure that I know what goes on in my local surgery.

Ok

Albeit I go in every two months for a repeat prescription. But erm again it’s erm health service communicating to the general public. I think they play lip service to that and would like to do it better but I don’t think they know how to do it better.

Right. Yeah. Yeah. That’s interesting because I just wondered whether as you say as your hearing comes up your priority list becomes a problem. I just wondered if it was like the pension plan. The screening service was there and people said that was for me or
that’s not for me, I’m no old enough for that or whatever. I’m just wondering what your personal feeling would have been about it. My personal feeling would be if I’d. if it had been brought to my attention that there was a screening clinic available at my local surgery I would have gone to it earlier. I’m not so sure that that would be the feeling of the general public. I doubt that. Right. Right. Can I also ask you erm somebody being at the stage you’re at where you’re starting to become aware that there is a problem but you’re not at the level that you need a hearing aid. Are you aware of other ways other things that can be used to help with your hearing without using hearing aids? Well I don’t know if you’ve noticed but I turn my head. I think I’ve got better hearing in that ear. So I sometimes point what I think my good ear is to the source of the noise. Yep. Yep. And you mentioned And that’s, that’s not a very scientific thing but that’s the only thing that I can think of at the moment. Right. And it could be I have in the past suffered with what I perceive is a lot of earwax in my ear. Right I have had it removed at ….er…. my local surgery a couple of times. Er but the last couple of time when I’ve been and I’ve asked to have a look they’ve said oh the build-up’s not very good at all. Right. So it could be that if there was more regular you know checks of build-up of wax, perhaps everybody would be better. Although the way I understand it the wax itself doesn’t necessarily stop the hearing it stops the something vibrating. But er I have noticed, although not recently, in the past couple of year, where there’s been a build-up of wax, when you’ve come out of a hot shower. It seems you come out and you can’t hear a thing you know? Yes. It does yes. Whether it’s the heat that melts the wax and it flows and it moves or something else. Um my wife had an experience where she had a build-up of wax and she went and made an appointment and she put the oil in and she went and it was extremely painful. The nurse in the surgery was trying to get this
wax out and it was very poked in to hard and it was extremely painful.

Right

And at the same time my wife was getting her blood pressure checked and either because of that or coincidently her blood pressure went very high. It was 200 and something over 100 and something. You know there was panic stations.

Oh of course.

But it could have been just because of this extreme pain because of this person trying to take this wax out. And just the fact that they were done on the same day.

If it had been done the other way around.

It would have been ok. yeah. But what I’m thinking about is things, has anybody told you about particular communication tools or has anybody ever said well ok you don’t need a hearing aid but these are the things you can do to make it easier for you. Have you any knowledge of those?

No I haven’t but erm. I think I’m I was going to say it sounds big headed but I was going to say I’m intelligent enough to know that if you open your mouth better you’re bound to be heard better. So erm I’m conscious that perhaps not just because my wife’s accusation I maybe do mumble sometimes. So I’m sure if people did try to improve their diction.

Yes.

It would help.

Now would you feel comfortable, if you were at a meeting for example and you weren’t picking up what people were saying because they were mumbling or talking away from you, would you feel comfortable about saying to them that you have a hearing problem and I’d like you to do this?

Erm the first part yes I would feel comfortable saying I’m very sorry I didn’t hear that. But I wouldn’t feel sufficiently knowledgeable about telling them what they should do.

Right ok.

At the moment

Yep ok. So I mean you said you went into the room and you seat yourself appropriately and all these things people can have advice on.

Right.
But it would seem that that information isn’t getting out there and people like yourself are just doing it instinctively.

Yes.

Yep

Yeah I would accept that.

It’s interesting. Moving on to the subject of hearing aids, I know you’re not at that stage at the moment are there are there any circumstances that you think would prevent you from wearing a hearing aid, or encourage you to wear a hearing aid? Is there anything that you thi. Anything that you’ve heard about hearing aids at all? I know you’ve got very little experience of them apart from your wife

Well er. I think the thing that would encourage me to er get one if I needed one is the technicalities of the device. I gather that to start with hearing aids were a bit cumbersome and I was going to say scientific a little bit scientific, but not very adaptable. Obviously digital ones are a lot, lot improved. But and erm some of them are very small so they can be very in obtrusive. But you still hear people making awful noises when they’re trying to adjust it. And I think if I got to the stage where I needed a hearing aid, I would like to think that there was one available that was efficient and wasn’t going to cost me a lot of money too.

Yes.

One that was available on the NHS.

So having it available on the NHS. So what about back-up? Do you feel that you’d need back-up? Or if you got the hearing aid would you feel that you can manage on your own?

No. I think you always need back-up available. But I think as long as there was, as I understand there is, a clinic at our local hospital and my wife has told me that if she has any problems with it she can drop in any time between 9 and 12 or something any day and somebody will look at it and decide is it a malfunction of the apparatus or is it something she needs more tuition on what to do.

Yeah

So she hasn’t taken advantage of that yet. But I gather that’s available.

I would say so yeah.

I think it’s essential that that facility is available.
So do you apart from hearing aids do you know about any other devices that you can use with hearing aids for other situations that might be more complex than one to one?

No not really. I have a brother in law who’s profoundly deaf and the only thing I know he has is when his doorbell rings a light flashes.

Right

But I’m sure there are quite a few things like that to help.

Yes. Yes. Uuhh.

Other deaf people. No I don’t know about any others.

Yep. Ok. so you said that would encourage you to wear them. Is there anything that would put you off going for help?

Erm only the attitude of the people who were trying to so called help me. If they were (pause) I think an audiologist I suppose should be the same as a doctor. It should be a calling. They’re doing it because, not because it’s just a job, because they feel they are providing a service that can help people. Now maybe everybody is like that. But I would weigh that up first. And if, if for instance I went to get a hearing aid and I was put off by the attitude of the person I’d not go back.

Right so would you think that’s important to get a good relationship with the person that you’re working with?

Yes I would think that’s always the case on a one to one basis. If you, if you want to have an empathy you should you’ve got to start as you want it to carry on.

Yeah. So maybe if there was an opportunity, I know it doesn’t always happen because people move on but you could see the same audiologist and build that relationship, do you think that would be an important aspect of it?

Yes I feel that that would be good. Provided the er relationship was harmonious to start with.

Yes. Yeah. Well that brings another interesting question, do you think that patients or people who go for hearing aids, should have the right to say, or the opportunity to say I don’t really feel I’m getting a spark with this person I’d like to see somebody else. Do you think it would make that much of a difference that it would be worth being able to do that?

(sigh) erm it’s a difficult question. It would be easy to say yes everybody should have the right but I think some people would misuse that right.
And there would appear to be evidence albeit in a very small number of cases. That people just like the sound of their own voices and would make a scene about it. Without perhaps just course. Sorry.

I’m sure it. There should always be room for making a comment about er you know

Both good service as well as perceived bad service.

Mhm. Yeah I think you’re right. I think that’s important. I’ve got one last question because you’ve been really good. You’ve been so good with your answers that we’ve got through all my questions. On the subject of hearing aids themselves have you got any if you were wearing a hearing aid have you got any preference about what kind you would like or are there any kinds that you would prefer not to wear? Any thoughts on that at all? You may not have thought that far ahead.

I haven’t really but you know if you’re asking me now without knowing a lot about it, the smaller the device, that it didn’t when I went into a room everybody said oh he’s got a hearing problem. I’d obviously like that. But I would also like one that was easily adapted for a loop system because I’ve seen people fiddling about when we’re going into a meeting trying to adjust it. And I realised the smaller you have the device the smaller any switching mechanism has got to be. So it must be difficult to adjust volume either up or down and switch it into a different mode. If it’s smaller it must be more difficult to do but er if we can send people to the moon, then surely.

Surely we must be able to do that. Do you think it would be quite a good step to have things like remote controlled hearing aids, where you didn’t actually have to do this. where you had a remote that you could. Do you think that would be better?

I think that would be very if that was available yeah. Yes definitely if that was something in the future. I’d be happy. I suppose you can remote control other things so why not that?

Yeah. So maybe one of the things that we need to do as professionals is ensure that we constantly move hearing aids forwards. That we don’t just say they’re good enough now, they’re
digital, they’re smaller. Erm we’re happy. Part of the service do you think should be that we keep trying to improve them if we can?

Well I suppose if you er if you think far enough ahead, hearing aids in the future might be implants. That it’s all it’s in the back of your ear. In which case you must some outside control of it. So you’ve got to have a control. I mean if you can put er you know pacemakers in hearts and stents in blood vessels and other places it must be possible. It’s probably a case of there isn’t enough money to allocate because they don’t think it’s a priority.

Right yeah uhuh. Obviously the development is going on all the time so you’re right you might be looking at that in a few years. You just go and get it implanted and that’s it. But for the moment For the moment we’ve got to be what we’ve got We’ve got better than we had.

Well I was going to say they I don’t know whether there are more people with a hearing problem now. Or there’s more people that aware they’ve got a hearing problem. Or whether as you were alluding to before, you’re probably as a profession reaching out to people a bit more than you used to. I mean when my wife first had a hearing problem she probably didn’t even know what an audiologist was.

Of course. Yeah. Uhuh

And you know erm so.

It’s true because people don’t know about us till they need us. No that’s interesting. That’s been really good. That’s covered all the areas that I wanted to ask your opinion on.

Thank you

Is there anything else that you’d like to tell me that you think I’ve missed that might be important?

Erm no I can’t er no I think it maybe that I would have some more questions after we’ve had the other part with the hearing bit. I might have more questions but I can’t think of any at the moment.

But I’d just say that if you do get home and think I should have said that just email me, or email A- and say that you’ve got more information. And um if you don’t want to do it over email for obviously confidentiality I can arrange to phone you. So it doesn’t have to finish
today if you think of something four days from now and think I should have said that please do get in touch. That’s not a problem.

Yes I will do. I’ll certainly be aware of that. Yes. Can’t think of anything at the moment but maybe when I’m sitting on the train on the way home

Yes certainly. Well if you want to email it to me do a wee kind of paragraph or whatever on something and send it to me that’s fine. If you’d rather speak on the phone I can phone you up. So it’s up to you.

I don’t think it’s that confidential. If I was communicating with somebody about a more intimate aspect I might. But I don’t think I’d be that embarrassed about saying anything about hearing.

Right. Yeah. No that’s fine no that’s great. Well thank you very much for doing the interview. It’s been there’s some good bits in there that I can use. And erm I hope you have a very happy birthday. And I’m going to stop recording just now.
Interviewer: That’s it. That’s recording now. That’s great. That’s fine. Ok then so tell me why? Why you’ve come along today?

COPA 8: I’ve come along because I got a letter asking if I’d be prepared to help with this study and whether I can or not I don’t know. But here I am to help you.

Yeah. Ok great. So can you tell me you earlier that you don’t think you have any problems with your hearing.

This is true. This is why I doubt I can help you because I haven’t actually noticed any difference in my hearing. Erm but perhaps there is. I don’t know.

Right. Has anybody else said anything to you? Or suggested that you don’t hear so well?

No erm. Having said that I would qualify that by saying that when the family come to visit. Er they do tend to have the television slightly lower than I would have it.

Right. Ok.

But erm that’s about the only thing.

Ok. So they come in and turn it down?

No they don’t actually turn it down

Uuhh

They have said to me you know, do you not find that too loud?

Right. Ok.

So it’s not disproportionately loud.

Right

But it’s louder than they would have it.

Than they would have it. right. So have you ever turned. Have you ever tried turning it down to the level they want to see if that’s ok for you?

Erm I can hear it at their level

Right

But with more difficulty.

Right so you like it that wee bit louder.

Yes

Right. Ok. that’s fine. So. So maybe some people are starting to think that you might have a problem. But it’s not a problem.

No it

To you
Not a problem to me. erm I suppose the other thing is. If in crowds. Crowds of people. I don’t particularly like having to talk to people

Right

I feel I have to shout to get heard.

Ok.

But maybe that’s a different thing.

And what about when they’re talking is everything ok?

Um. Yes but difficult.

Ok. so if there was a background noise. If we were talking in a café for example would you find it harder to take in than you do at the moment.

On a one to one basis. Two or three people standing around that’s more difficult.

Yeah. I’m just nodding because I know exactly what you mean. It’s fine. You’re ok here but there maybe are some situations you have to work that bit harder.

Yeah

Does that bother you at all? I mean have you done anything to adapt to that, that you can think of?

No. not really, no. just stay away from crowds.

Right ok.

Which is no hardship.

It’s interesting you say that. Have you found that you’re staying away or not doing things you used to do because it’s more of an effort to hear?

No. no really.

No.

Not really. Just avoid the crowds. I find that life’s easier if you avoid the crowds.

A nice quiet life huh?

Yes.

Yeah. So if somebody. If we were to test your hearing you would expect it to, you wouldn’t expect there to be a problem with it at all?

No.

So. That. That’s part of what we all do. Is to do. not myself but one of my colleagues will do an assessment. To tell you exactly where your hearing is. So. Erm it’s quite useful to know that. Because often what happens is that other people do say something to you. Either that’s too loud or you don’t hear me.
I can understand that yeah.
Where it’s.
I’ve done it before with the other generation before myself. So
Uhuh. Uhuh.
So I realise that this is maybe how it’s pointed out to you.
How do you feel about that when people say it to you? You know
that’s too loud or do you need it that loud?
I just put it down to the fact that they’ve always got things stuck
in their ears. So they’re hearing on a different basis to me.
So they like it louder. Er sorry they find it too loud because they’re
used to listening to it in their ears.
I don’t know.
Do you ever find situations. Like if you’re talking to somebody and
you’re in a situation where you can’t see them. Like on the phone or if
you were talking to somebody in the other room. Do you find any
difference then than you do in here?
That’s sometimes on the phone but I usually put that down to
people’s accents. Not being used to them. It usually take you
two or three sentences to get attuned to people’s voice. So it
takes a bit for you to understand the person. Or hear them
better.
So there’s a bit about if you know the person or you can see the
person because you’re getting gestures and things it’s easier.
Yes. Yes it does.
Does that happen quite a lot?
Er no not too much I don’t think. Not enough to bother me.
Can I ask you a wee bit about? I mean obviously I’m assuming you
haven’t accessed the services? You haven’t thought there was a
problem and been to a clinic to be assessed?
No.
No. it what kind of things. You mentioned there the older generation
so you’ve obviously had some experience with hearing aids.
Uhuh
What do you think, if you were to start noticing a hearing problem and
start accessing the services? What kind of things would help? What
would you be looking for?
Erm. I can only assume that it would be a hearing aid.
Something to help you hear.
Right.
Yeah I can only think of that. I mean my experience was with my mother-in-law. She was deaf for many years. She was quite embarrassed that say there was a noise and people heard it they all looked one way and she looked the other.

Right.

Erm. That. So I suppose that. I remember things like that. I suppose there can be embarrassment comes into it.

Yeah.

For who’s not hearing. But until you’re in a situation like that you don’t know how you would react.

That’s true. And at the moment you’re not in that kind of situation

No I’m not.

So hearing aids are the thing that people know about.

That’s the only thin I know about. So I can’t. I would hope I wouldn’t get to the stage where I have to use sign-language.

Although one hears about it. You know.

Right

I don’t know it. I tend to think of that as for people who have been more or less born Deaf.

Yes it tends to be for people who have. Or for some people who completely lose their hearing. How do you feel about hearing aids?

I wouldn’t. I think. It’s. I think there’s two scenarios here. You can put forward and say I wouldn’t mind at all. And they seem to be getting smaller and smaller these days. And more ob, obtrusive. More obtrusive as the years go by. But until you’re actually put in the situation of actually needing one that you think it might be a bit more awkward to have one.

Why would you think like that?

Because people tend to be like that. I think it’s what I’ve seen.

Mhmh

Some people feel quite embarrassed about having to wear a hearing aid. But I think why? It’s there to help you.

Yes.

It. It’s. but a lot of people know. It’s this whistling thing you get with them. I don’t know if you get it with the new ones?

Not so much. No. not now.

Uuhh. I think technology is moving on and very soon you will be able to help people. But er I don’t know
It's interesting you saying that you still hear the whistle and you still
hear stories about people being embarrassed. That they're
embarrassing.

Yeah

Do you think that puts people off wearing them?

Yeah. I do. Yeah.

Even if they help.

Yeah. Uuhh.

So do you think if you were in the position where you were starting to
think you need a hearing aid, if there were other options other than
those. Do you think people would be interested in those? You know if
there were other things clinics could do?

Oh I think they would. Oh yes. Uuhh. But I can't think of what
they could. Apart from surgery of some sort for the ears making
it so. But I don't know if we'll come to that stage.

I'm thinking along the lines of like you're saying at the moment people
are saying your telly's too loud and there's certain situations you're
not hearing. If there was a clinic you could go along to and they could
give you advice on how to manage those situations better. So even
though you're not at the stage where you're needing a hearing aid but
there's maybe some interventions beforehand do you think they
would be useful?

Probably. Probably if I was finding it a problem in my life I would
probably look for an answer.

Mhmh. Yeah.

Or help.

Yes. Uuhh

But until that time comes I probably wouldn't think twice about
it.

Yeah just bowl along with it. Yeah

And I do tend to bowl along until the very last minute. I have to
admit

Yeah. So it's you'd sort of keep going, keep going. Until you think
there's something wrong here.

Yes

Do you think other people would influence you on that or do you tend
to be the type of person, where it's your decision?

Well you see this is the whole thing. I am a widow and my family
are all away and married. So I am living by myself. I think if you
were living with somebody else. You should do something about
it quicker. Because it can be an annoyance to other people which you don’t realise.
So you’re able to sort of set you’re telly the way you like, talk how you like on the phone
Yes
Without having to worry. Then I take it you’re not having the telly on loud enough to bother the neighbours then?
Oh no. I hope not. At least no one’s complained.
Right. Because that is another thing that often happens neighbours will notice.
Oh yes. We used to have a neighbour upstairs and we were listening to his stereo if we were on the same program
Right
Until he got some device fixed to his telly that. I’m not sure how it worked exactly.
Right yeah.
Whether he had. I think maybe he had earphones.
That turned the volume down.
Yeah.
Yeah that’s probably what he would have. Yeah.
But no I’ve not got to that stage. Nothing like it.
That’s good. So er just going back to the hearing aids. You mentioned about them being embarrassing. How do you feel about hearing aids at the moment? I mean obviously you’ve heard stories about them whistling and things. But if someone was to ask you what you knew about hearing aids what would you say?
Erm I would say they’re getting smaller and you can get digital ones now er. If you’re talking to somebody who feels embarrassed about using a hearing aid you begin to feel embarrassed for them.
Right. Right
Or at least I do.
Right ok.
You try to say it doesn’t matter sort of thing. I have met one or two people who are wearing them. And they’re always fiddling with them to try and get the volume to the right. Or the older ones. People who are using the older ones still. Erm and, and occasionally, you know, you do hear this whistling. And you think oh what’s that? And then you realise exactly what.
Where it’s coming from
And you try to get on with life and just forget it. Let them deal
with it. Because I can’t do anything about it.

Do you think that influences whether you would wear one or not
though?

Yes

Would it put you off or would you be keen to wear one?

It would put me off if I didn’t really have to wear one.

Yeah

Yeah

It’s interesting you say that because it’s sort of there’s a point where
you think you might need one. But maybe, it’s maybe not at that
stage that you would go for one. You’d go when you feel you really
needed it.

Yes

Right. It’s interesting to hear.

I say that now but er until you’re actually in a situation, you don’t
know, you know exactly what you would do.

That’s true. But do you think if you got to that stage where you were
starting to feel you were struggling with you’re hearing but I’m maybe
not ready for a hearing aid. how. how. What would you be looking for
the sorts of things to help you? Or would you sort of go along on your
own?

I would be hoping and praying that technology had moved along
by the time I got to that point. Hoping that they had come up
with some device

I’m wondering if you’re the type of person to say right I’m not hearing
quite so well but I’m just going to carry on. And just you know make
do. Or whether at that stage you would think about having some help
and advice from professionals, before you’re thinking about a hearing
aid.

I would probably just bowl along

Ok

Yeah

Yep. So you feel you.

Yeah. I’d probably be reading up as much. Trying to get as much
information as I could. That was out there. Rather than
approaching a professional. I’d try and bone up on it a bit as you
can nowadays.
Yeah now we’ve got the internet. You know it makes it easier. Do you think that’s quite a good resource for people? To, to get the help before they approach a professional?

I do. Yeah. You, you can learn lots of things from it.

Mhmh

And sometimes a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Yeah. Right. So it’s getting the balance right.

Yeah

So maybe as professionals we can think about the two of those. You know whether we can provide information so that, you know people think of clinics as being hearing aids. Maybe there’s more that we can offer that might be useful to people.

Yeah. I mean I have no idea, apart from a hearing aid what else you can do.

Uhuh. What. That. That says it all really. Because obviously it’s not being communicated that there are other things that could be done.

So there are other things?

Yeah. Yes. So I’m just thinking if there was information for example on listening in noise. You know communication skills and things like that. Whether that’s something before the level of hearing aids that might be useful to people. That somebody could go along and get some information on that. What do you think? What do you think?

Yes. Er I would imagine it would be useful. But I don’t know how you get that information. Would you go to somebody on the first hand. but if there was enough about it being said in the press, on the media, on the internet. Then it’s there for you to find out.

Yeah. Maybe even GPs surgeries.

Yeah.

Yeah. You know what it’s like you go into the surgery for one thing but come out with leaflets on something else.

Yeah. There you are.

Yeah. Maybe that’s something we need to. Get them into the GP.

But then you see you’ve got to be somebody who goes to the GP in order to get that.

That’s right

If the rest of your health is fine

Uhuh

How many times do you go? Once in five years sort of thing.
Yeah that’s an interesting point because that, that would be the thing that we would think of is for trying GP. Maybe a better idea would be libraries and that.

And erm. Well maybe yeah. It could be well anywhere where people congregate.

Yeah

Yeah

Yeah. From what you say a lot of the information that you got has not been from yourself. It’s been from other people and maybe negative comments.

Yeah

Maybe some more positive comments might help.

Uhuh.

Yeah. Well that’s interesting. It has. It has been really helpful. And, and er I appreciate that you’re maybe talking from the point of view of not appreciate. Of not having a problem at the moment. So it’s interesting just to think. Because you know these ideas are useful. It has been good to talk.

You do get quite a bit of information from other people. Who have perhaps been in the situation, you’re maybe approaching. And you see how they deal with it.

Yeah.

A different way to go. There might be a different way to go.

But that. That’s the sort of thing that does happen. You tend to find that people who are maybe starting to notice a hearing problem say to their friends oh you know this is what happened.

Yeah

And maybe it’s not always the same. No it’s not. But we do tend to listen to people who’ve been there first.

Yeah. Uhuh. Yeah. You can do better. Or hope that you can do better.

Yeah. Yeah. So do you think that is a big influence, other people that you know, your personal experience of other people’s?

Yes

Experience plays a part.

Yes.

Yes

Uhuh.

If you’ve seen people with hearing aids that don’t manage very well. It influences your thoughts about them.
Yes. Yeah.

Mhmh. That’s interesting. We’ll have to isolate people who’ve had a bad put them out of the way.

I do know one or two people with hearing aids. And I don’t know whether the older you are the more difficult it is to erm to fit a hearing aid.

Yeah. Mhmh.

I think maybe that comes into it.

Yeah

The older you get the more difficult to use it.

And that it’s more difficult to adapt to something new. That might be part of it. Yeah.

I think. When I. when I think about it, it is the older ones who have more difficulty with.

So do you think then that there’s good reason to tell people that they should start to think about this earlier when they notice a problem.

Yes probably.

Mhmh

Mhmh. Then you accept it’s part of your life. It’s like putting on a pair of specs.

Mhmh

Which are on the table.

Yes. Not that you. Well that’s true. If it’s part of your routine. That you don’t need help to get used to. Then I suppose it would be easier.

Then I suppose it’s the balance between doing it early enough for the hearing aid to integrate. And getting to that point where you think I really need to do it. At what stage do you think I need to go for a hearing aid? It’s something we need to look at.

I suppose something like that. When you think about it. I mean a whole proportion of the population now wears specs. But I erm it. It was something that you wore if you were different you wore specs. But now it seems to me about 90 percent of the population wear specs.

Right. Yeah.

And nobody thinks anything of it nowadays, whether it’s just because there’s this abundance of spectacle shops. You know people are using them for face furniture. And that’s. I don’t know if people’s hearing adjusts in the way that people’s sight adjusts erm we all need to know about it now.

Yeah.
Put the information out there.

Yeah.

In the public forum.

Yeah. So maybe if you see. If you’re walking along the street and you suddenly think, I think I’m having a problem with my hearing. And if you could just walk into a shop and make an appointment to have it assessed.

Uhuh

Do you think that would be easier for people than having to go to your doctor and make an appointment at the hospital?

I do. People are more inclined to do that.

So if it was on the High Street. Designer hearing aids, the same as we have designer specs.

Just about. Just about. If you make something designer people are bound to. It’s true. Especially the younger generation.

Yeah. So maybe it’s the. Um. I mentioned about hearing aids and image.

Yes. You’re right there I do think it’s an image.

The image of the hearing aids. And er people’s understanding you know. Your experiences have been you know people wear them they make a lot of noise. They’re not very good. Maybe we’re able in some way to change that. Do you think that might encourage people to come forward?

Mhmh. Yeah. Could you do something about the batteries? I always hear about the batteries. The batteries never last very long.

Yeah. That’s an on-going complaint.

Solar-powered hearing aids.

They wouldn’t work in this country. It’s an interesting point though. Because often it’s these things that put people off. Oh I’ll have to go and get batteries. Oh I’ll just do it later. Erm it’s interesting how that works. Yeah. There’s a few things. I think we’re talking about a few things. the solar-powered. Maybe we might be able to come up with something. That’s interesting though. Yeah. Because

We could all go round with solar panels on the top of our heads......to get.....which could um power, power your hearing aid, your i-pod, your radio, your telephone.

Everything combined hey?

But there’s solar-powered approaches which could power whatever.
Maybe we should pay to have that.

The best ideas come up

In conversation. Yeah. Yeah. It’s interesting though because I think that a what you’re saying is true. You know people will now wear glasses because of the name on them. Erm and maybe that’s. maybe that’s the difference in how people perceive them.

To be honest I’m quite sure it has something to do with it. Yeah Mhmh. For years we’ve tried to make hearing aids smaller and smaller so they’re not seen. Erm and this concept of making them, the name seen on them. Is a bit. It would be interesting to see how that.

Well when you think people have things stuck in their ears attached to I-pods or whatever, they don’t mind that. But ask them to wear a hearing aid. That would be a different thing altogether.

And that’s what the whole cultural thing. Well what is it that makes the difference. If somebody will wear a Bluetooth but not a hearing aid. What is it about the hearing aid that makes it different?

Yes. Yes. Uhuh.

So maybe it is the perception. Excellent. Well that’s been really interesting. And we’ve got a patent out of it. Is there anything else that you wanted to tell me about your experiences, your own experience, or other people that you think might be good for professionals to know about?

Er. No. except that it’s always the person themselves that doesn’t realise they’ve got a problem.

Mhmh

And other people don’t always like to say you’ve got a problem.

Mhmh

Erm. Perhaps something should be done about it.

Have you found yourself in that situation with people?

Uhuh.

Feeling you couldn’t say?

Uhuh.

You know

Yeah. Some people won’t accept that there’s anything wrong with it. And you’ve got to be very careful. Haven’t you?

Mhmh
You don’t really want to hurt people. But at the same time you know what should be done.

Yeah. But that again is maybe something we need to look at it’s how people. Because it won’t happen overnight. You don’t wake up one morning and you can’t hear. In most cases. Erm then they don’t believe they have a problem. And it’s interesting the number of people who don’t believe or don’t think they’ve got a problem. It’s interesting because sometimes on a hearing test people will have a hearing loss. And say oh I didn’t realise I had that much. You know and other people have a very small hearing loss and notice it.

Yeah.

So. So it’s very individual.

So it could be something to do with who you live with as well.

Right. Uuhh.

I think people living on their own. And I think there are more and more people living on their own er probably don’t acknowledge that they have a problem. Because if you’re actually living with somebody and they’re not or you’re not hearing them shall we say. You’re continually having to ask them to repeat something. Then you might. Then you might then think well why is this? Why am I not hearing this the same?

Yeah so they maybe realise it more quickly. So.

Yeah.

Yeah. Whereas.

And I think it’s sort of more with living with somebody, rather than visiting even on a daily basis. Maybe…. Maybe if you’re on a daily basis, in the workplace or something like that. It would be.

Whereas if you meet friends once a week it might not be so apparent.

Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. And if you’re on your own you can be turning the TV up. And doing things that you don’t realise you’re doing. Erm it’s often when somebody gets a hearing aid they think blimey that was loud.

Yeah.

Uuhh. Yep.

So do you think there’s. out on that point. Do you think that there’s people out there who have a hearing loss who don’t know they have it. Um. Until as you say they get to that point where they think it’s affecting me now.
I think there might be. I think the next generation might be. Because I think if they’ve been constantly blasting their ears with i-pods and things. that can’t be good for your auditory system. No. and if you’re used to hearing things that loud, you’ll tend to turn things up loud. You know when it’s too loud. I know. So I think there may be problems coming up in future. Mhmh. Yeah. I think you’ve got a point there. We’ll have to have a thing of hearing aids ready. Well yes, having said that I don’t know whether continually listening to something, say like a radio station. Would that be more of a problem than having something in your ear? To me that. That would cause more of a problem. If you’ve continually got the ear plugs in. At the sort of levels they are delivering into their ears. Yeah. And the closed off with this high level sound. Yeah. If you’re listening to a radio it’s that much further away from the ear. It seems more natural to pick up a sound than having it fed in your ear to hear it. Yeah. It’ll be interesting to see what happens with it. Mhmh. Aye. And how we need to shape services to deal with that. You know. Never mind. Well that’s been really helpful. Thank you very much. I just all I can say about hearing aids now. Thank you very much. I’ll just switch this off. If I can find the button
What I, I was trying to do is preparing ahead thinking you had switched it on already. Do you know what I mean?

Interviewer: No otherwise she’d have to transcribe all that. Erm that’s sitting there. It’s fine it’s to the level. So you don’t need to worry it’s picking up your voice ok. Alright?

Mhm

So just to start off can you tell me do you think have a hearing problem? And if you do how do you noticed it? How you became aware of it?

I used to think I did or my son did. Because I used to have the television on quite loud.

Ok

It was quite loud. But I think it was to block out other noises.

That you know outside. Or maybe it was you know force of habit. With having the kids when they’re young you sort of multi-task. You try to listen to them, listen to the television and do umpteen things at. So maybe it’s just force of habit. Because now I can turn it down slightly and I can still. Unless there’s a, a very low speaker on the telly. I have to put it up.

Right.

I have to put it up. Normal television I don’t have it on quite as loud.

Yeah

But it would have to be, his opinion as well that it’s too loud. But I know my bedroom, if I’m watching it in my room I do have it quite loud because I can’t if I put the knob too low down it’s a whisper. I think it’s more the television’s fault than having to have it high.

Right

Because I can be sitting across from the hallway with my television, or the television on in my room and I can hear it in my, in my sitting room. So it is loud but if I put it. Try to put it down a bit I can’t hear it.

Right, right. Uuhh. So it’s just getting the happy medium.

Getting the happy medium.

What about other things that you think you maybe might not be hearing as well?
Er at meetings if there’s a lot of people and we’re sitting at the back, you’re sitting at the back. Or if it’s a noisy meeting. Er and I get missing. And I get quite crabby, because I’m missing bits because there’s volume or speaking and also I find that sometimes if we’ve got a meeting and it’s breaking into work groups and there’s about ten here and ten maybe there. So you I can’t concentrate because somehow I’m managing to pick up not this way but I’m picking up from behind me. Not in front of me.

Right. Yeah.

I can hear the people behind me. Not in front of me.

Right. Ok.

But I’d erm I don’t know if that’s just me. Being kind of nosy. Picking up the end of the day. Or whether somehow I’m picking up back echoes rather than front ones. Right so if you’re in a room with a lot of people and there’s a lot of noise going on and it’s difficult to hear one speaker?

Yeah. Yeah and you said that kind of makes you crabby sometimes?

Yeah.

It makes you tense. Is that?

Yeah. Partly. Partly cause I er it gives me a bit of a headache. When it’s everybody at once. If they talk at, you’re not really hearing everybody. Yet you’re getting a sort of gabble.

Right

But you can’t hear anybody that. And there’s nothing worse, either than if you’re at a meeting listening to the. And you can hear the presentation quite alright. And then suddenly someone’s whispering to somebody else at the back of you. That annoys me as well because I’m picking up the conversation and missing what the person in front of me is saying. I’ve also thought whether it’s just echoing coming from the room.

From behind yeah.

From behind

What would you normally do in a situation like that? If you hear them.

Give them dagger looks.

Yes.

Erm if I’m trying to be polite. And if I’m, I’m not being polite I’ll say will you be quiet please? Shh!

Uuhh

But then you’re making as much noise telling them to shush.
You're still missing what's being said.

Do you think that affects the kinds of places that you go now? Do you?

No

No you still participate in the same things. Right. Any other situations that you notice it?

Not really. Although if people come into a room like last night’s meeting. They had three. We started half an hour earlier than the other three. And we had finished our meeting and were having a quiet peaceful tea and something. And er I quite enjoyed it. I was I quite enjoyed the banter that I had with my team. And the other team came in and they were nenene. It was all men apart from one woman.

Right

And the man’s voice was grating. I was trying to read the paper as well and that was annoying me. And I said I’m sorry. And I got up and left the table to go to the toilet. But I said to the facilitator I’m starting to get a headache. And he said I’ve no painkillers. I said no but it’s just they’re a bit loud. That they you know. And they’d put a fan on. And that was annoying me as well. Because I was trying to read the paper because I’d brought my paper.

And the fan was blowing the paper.

Right

And I got back in. I got back into the room and I said my coffee’s cold. Right. And somehow my coffee. Mind you, you made that coffee about half an hour ago. Of course it will be cold. It was my fault I said I shouldn’t have left it there. Erm with the fan going on. The fan’s cooled it. And then it ended up wasted. And I don’t like fans. Well what a long round about way of saying you want the fan off. You know.

You were being too polite. Yeah. Er

But I hate fans. Whirring about me.

Uuhh

I’m. my friend’s husband when I go and visit him. Er their house. They’ve got one of these sort er ceiling fans. Because he really feels the heat quite a lot. And in the winter times he’ll sometimes have the heating on for the rest of the family because there’s young children. He puts on the heating. And this fan. So you’re
freezing with the fan flying above your head. And you’re boiling
where maybe the heating’s on. No and I hate a fan. I hate a fan
And of course you’ve got the noise of them as well. When you’re
trying to listen.
But I think er. I don’t think there was that much noise from it.
Well they hadn’t really started the meeting. I actually managed to
get the fan put off when the meeting started.
Right
But er it would have been a. a total distraction to me. It’s not the
noise but just the fact that I’m not comfortable with them. I don’t
like cold air. Because that is what I don’t like the fans for.
Because you’re blowing down the air that’s cold. And I don’t like
wind or that.
Mmh
But er that kind of puts me in a bad mood anyway.
It sounds like there was a few things going on that night. Where
there’s. It sounds like if you’re in a wee company of people that you
know you manage ok.
Yeah
But when it gets a bit more it gets a bit complicated.
Especially if they’re kind of loud. And they’re angry and loud, if
you’re exchanging points of view and getting a bit heated. I
mean I can be as loud as you can when I want to as well but it all
sort of mixed and matched. I don’t know if I’m getting a bit
agitated by it. Or fearful of it. Because I er I’ve got a man back in
my life because my son’s move in again. But for the past 15 16
years I’ve not had a man.
Right. Uuhh.
In my life. So men’s voices might be a bit scary to me. You’ll I’ll
get I’m comfortable with normal speaking voices in a man but if
they start getting a bit erm loud and kind of aggressive. Trying
to get their point across, which I do as well, aggressively. I’m er.
I can be a bit fearful of that.
Right. Right. I understand.
So I don’t know whether it’s hearing or that. Or emotional. Sort
of.
It’s interesting though because if you’ve not been used to listening to
men’s voices. It’s interesting that they’re the ones that you’re noticing
that they’re the ones that are difficult. So your it could be a bit of both
actually.
Er and now my son has just been diagnosed with Asperger’s

Right

And er he tries to explain things. And I think it’s because he uses such he’s so precise in his language. That he says to me do you understand what I’m saying? Or did you understand that? And of course it sometimes triggers me off. And I’ll say of course I did! Will you stop shouting at me. After. And then he’s claims that I’ve shouted at him. But I’ve not but he can’t hear himself. He’s shouting back at me.

Yeah. And then it all kind of And then it all kind of it escalates but that’s not to do with the hearing test or that. Erm but yeah it is quite difficult. Because if I do get excitable my, my pitch goes up. I know that.

Yeah. Uuhh.

And I do become loud myself. If I’m nervous.

If you’re nervous.

Or I can appear to be shouting at people.

Right.

And come across aggressive.

Right. Right. It’s interesting you. When you said there about your son saying do you understand me and you saying of course I do. Do you worry about that? Do you think you worry that people and they’re going to think you haven’t understood it?

I think. I’ve never thought that it was my hearing that I couldn’t understand it. I’ve always thought I couldn’t. I’m very fearful of people thinking I’m stupid. And if they say did you understand what said. I’m sort of thinking are they thinking that I’m an idiot. And it’s that. I’ve never sort of thought that it’s my hearing. And I’ve never looked on it from that point of view.

From that point of view. Because often folk will say that. If I see someone who’s got a hearing problem and er I’m not sure if they’ve understood me. I often will say did you understand that? Meaning did you hear that? You know that really.

Right. Right. Right.

I’m just wondering if you know you worry that you know I’m not going to hear somebody. And I’ll say the wrong thing. Has that ever been a problem?
Not. Not that I’ve registered. Maybe it has. Because I have noticed I don’t know whether it’s trying to understand something in my head. Or whether it’s I’ve heard somebody saying something and I’ve maybe heard every second word or something. Or. Or maybe I’ve sort. And I’ve taken the erm wrong meaning out of something.

Right. Aye. I’ve always just put it that way.

Uhuh That I’ve never sort of. I’ve just put it that I can’t understand what they’re meaning and that’s even in conversation with my son we get quite a lot of arguments about that. I’ll say something and then he will say I don’t understand what you mean. Or what are you saying that for? And then trying to let him understand I’ll say it a different way.

Uhuh Using different words. And he’ll say you’re lying. You’ve changed your story. And I’m saying no I haven’t I’m just I’m trying to in my head put it a way that maybe you’re better understanding.

Uhuh

But what. He’s stopped it quite so much now. But he an awful lot of times he’d say you’re lying. Will you stop lying. And I could nae understand what he was meaning by lying. D now the more that we’ve talked about it. It’s me changing what I’ve said the first statement slightly in my because I’ve thought oh the way I’ve said it they haven’t understood it. And it’ll make sense. And of course I’m thinking that will make it ok. But then he’s hearing He’s hearing a bit more.

He’s hearing it. This. And I suppose Asperger’s is so precise that they’ve got that hearing that they can register exactly. And they’ve got total recall. Total recall.

Uhuh. uhuh.

I’ve noticed that quite a lot he had total recall.

Right. Ok.

He can recall meetings that we’ve attended. Public meetings that we’ve attended. Er I haven’t noticed it. But colleagues have noticed it. That he would make a brilliant minutes taker. He can tell you who said it what said it and what they said at that meeting. He actually can picture the person saying it.
Uhuh. Uhuh. And bring the whole thing back.

And bring the whole thing back. Which is quite difficult if you actually try to do.

Yeah there’s no way you can play it safe.


But it’s interesting because often that is a strategy that works for people that have got hearing problems. That if you say something, sometimes saying it in a different way the person can then put the two together. And they maybe haven’t heard all the words. But they’ll get enough to make sense. You know sometimes as you say you hear bits and you miss understand. If you change how you say it. You know if you say how old are you? What age are you? The person gets enough of the two to be able to go that’s what my age is Right. Right. Right.

So that is a strategy that people often use. They would be saying instead of shouting at me say it differently.

Mhmh. Mhmh.

So it’s maybe something that you’re coming across in two different ways.

And there is a number of things I’ve had in my meetings and things. I’ve got some meetings it depends on who’s at the meeting some people I feel intimidated so I don’t. but they’ve other. Other times I will say. And if it’s a person in authority saying something. I’ll say I don’t we don’t understand that. Can you put that in diff? and the number of times people at the meeting will say I’m quite glad that you said that because I don’t understand it but I’ve not got the confidence to say, hey well hold on I didn’t understand that. So I. I don’t know whether it’s my hearing or whether it’s just that. At. Well sometimes I’ll say well I should maybe have understood. Why am I making out that I’m stupid. And it. It can be a combination of oh a lot of things. I’m just wondering if that plays a part. When you don’t actually hear somebody. Because of all the sort of different connotations that’s got. Do you feel comfortable, when you don’t hear somebody to say I didn’t hear that? Say it again or would you just let that go?

Depending on the type of meeting it was. If it was a public meeting and it was a presentation I would nae stop the presentation if I hadn’t heard it. But if it was somebody giving a presentation at a meeting then no. not at a public meeting but just at a meeting if there was questions at the end I would have
noted it down. And that’s another thing that’s very strange, I’m not so much doing it now because I’m more confident. But I would write down. Take scrapes and scrapes of notes at the meeting. *Right* So I suppose if I was unsure about something I would ask to get it verified when the question times come. I would either put a form of question or a point or a question at that point that I didn’t understand. Or I’ll say what did you mean. It just depends on how comfortable you are with *For example* The people that are there, Er but I have had one of these, I think it was M- I went to. Free hearing tests. Free hearing tests from H- or something. *Oh yes.* And up until I went to that I was concerned about my hearing. *Uhuh.* But they said that there was nothing. A slight loss sort of he could find. But not enough to sort of go to the expense of getting a hearing aid. *Right* There was slight hearing loss. So I’m not quite as unsure myself now. So now I’ve come to the equation that if I’m hearing alright but I’m not understanding what they’re saying. So that. But before I had that hearing test. It was and especially my son saying why do you have that television up so. You better go and get your hearing tested *Uhuh.* There was that doubt in the back of my mind. *Right Uhuh* But it would be interesting to see. Get another one because that was about two years ago. So maybe there is a slight change. *Aye. See if it is changing.* See if it is changing. But erm I was a bit sceptical because I thought are they going to say my hearing is depleting? And I did mention it to the guy and he says no. no he says we don’t with this test. But we tell you the truth. *Yeah.* We’re erm. We’re not using this gimmick as a sales gimmick. We get the funding to go out and do tests. I don’t know what he. He
was able to reassure me. What he told me wasn’t a sales

gimmick. Right.

Good.

So er good. He did say there was a slight loss. But er for my age

not that bad.

Yes. If money aside, take that out of it, if he’d said you’ve got a

hearing problem. Erm you need a hearing aid. Would you have been

prepared to wear one?

I think so.

Right

I think I would have. I.

Yep. Had you considered that that might have been a possibility?

No. not when I went for the test.

No. ok. So.

I don’t think I would be confident enough maybe to wear the

National Health ones.

Right.

And I’ve not got the. I’ve not got the, the money to buy the digital

ones. So I would probably struggle on without one.

Without one. No.

That’s me saying that the now. But erm I suppose if needs must.

I’d have to sort of come to some arrangement to pay. Or sort of

go to some form of fund that would maybe fund you half and

you find half. You’re there was that because it’s so obvious.

Right.

Yeah and I hear. I hear so much problems with them. Maybe it’s

people who don’t know how to use them.

Right

That’s what the guy told me. The number of folk. That they wear

the hearing aid but they’ve not tuned it into whatever they. And

they don’t know how to tune it in.

Right

They’re not prepared to tune it in to the loop system or anything.

Right

And maybe that’s put me off. And me I’ve been chairs of some

meetings. And er housekeeping I take it very seriously. And I’ll

say right loop system in place I want that. And sometimes they

say well we cannae do a loop system. But I says well I don’t

know if there is anybody who’s got a hearing aid coming to this

meeting but how are they going to hear if you’ve no got it? And
erm there. There was one lady who’s not very well just now at
the moment. But she’s deaf. She’ll hold back meetings. She
would last. You would get ten minutes up the road and then she
would take another 20 minutes because my hearing aid’s not
working. I’m going to hit you. Yeah but an awful lot of folk said
that she hadn’t turned her hearing aids to whatever system that
was there. That’s them blaming her. Their equipment should be
tuning into her. But with their expertise they can’t. I’ve seen her
saying out my way I’ll set it myself. Cause I mean fangle twangle
with all the loop system and that. And I’ll go does she know what
she’s doing?
Aye. Uhuh. But she gets there.
She gets there but. I do say that if we are including everybody
should be included. And be able to hear. Take part or participate.
And if they can’t. they haven’t got the loop system in place for
that meeting. Have all that’s going to take place so it can be
read. It’s going to be quite hard but in a sort of written form. So
prepare your speech beforehand. And hand it in. and even for
people like me who take notes and everything. I like. If I’m
watching a presentation I like to see it as well. On handouts that
if I do want to make any notes I can write it down.
Yeah.
And I think it’s quite lazy of the person who’s giving the
presentation. I know they’re trying to save the trees and that
kind of thing but if there’s if you’re only needing a dozen copies
for people invited to listen to your presentation. Why not give
them it so they can take it away? Or they can make notes
against it.
Or they can make notes on it.
Now and that would help people it would give them. Help people
that haven’t got the confidence or doesn’t want to acknowledge
that somebody has you’re hearing difficulty. There’s an awful lot
of people out there. Because I erm a gentleman on a piece of
work that I did struggled right up until very nearly the end
without saying anything at the meetings we had or anything I’ve
got a hearing problem I never heard a thing you said. You say or
I only heard half of it. But his pride he wouldn’t let anybody
know until the last minute that he was struggling. But he
shouldn’t have to do that. If people. If we had been well
prepared. If we’d had the paperwork that he could have read.
Uhuh

Nobody would have known.

That’s right. Yeah

That he had a hearing problem. Another one I accused of having
a hearing problem. But he didn’t have it. Because he was always
cutting in and butting in.

Right

Er when other people was talking and I thought maybe he’s got a
hearing problem. Maybe his hearing aid. And I actually said that
to him and he said oh no I’m ok. it must have just been his
manner that he came to a point he wanted his point and he
couldnae retain it and until the person finished. And he just
butts in. but I thought it was because he had a hearing problem.

He could have had but he didn’t

He’s maybe not aware of it.

No maybe not aware of it. Or maybe not wanting anybody else to
know it. And maybe a bit angry with me for letting it out at a
meeting.

Aye. Now that’s an interesting thing you bring up. Because you know
we all think people notice they’ve got a hearing problem. They talk
about it get a hearing aid and they’re fine. But there are lots of people
who don’t know they’ve got a hearing problem or know and don’t
want people to know. Or don’t want think they’re ready for a hearing
aid. And these things that you’re suggesting you know and if they
were available for everybody, these people who don’t get it aren’t
going to think I need a hearing aid. There’s other things that we can
do. I mean have you found any things that other people have done
that have been useful? To you at meetings or when you’re going
anywhere?

Yeah erm. As I say what’s helpful for me because I’m a slow
reader or I’m em missing what the person’s saying if I’m
wanting to take notes. Is that prepared handout and I had an
argument with somebody at erm E- University teaching hospital.
At one of their lectures. I think it was P- S-’s lecture. Somebody
was giving a lecture and I said have you got this presentation in
a handout copy? She said yes. I said well can I have a copy?
Well we don’t like handing out because that distracts. You’re
reading the thing. People are reading it. We find that it distracts
it from the presentation. We give it out at the end. Oh I’ll have
mine now. I take notes on it. But I mean things like that it. It
shouldn’t presume to make it comfortable for them to do the
presentation. It’s the person that they’re trying to get the
message across. That should be able to follow and. Especially if
they’re wanting lay-people to attend things. Fair enough for
professionals who can do it no problem. But for they can get a
copy afterwards. They can even email them saying what did you
mean in your presentation. Whereas lay-people maybe haven’t
got the same abilities to email in their house. Or easily email.
You’ve got to go to the library. Book library space and things
like that.

Exactly.

If you want to do it. Whereas somebody that was a pro. That was
working they could take time out maybe at a tea-break or a lunch
break to email that person and say what did you mean? And that
person can. It was very interesting but I didnae understand it.

That way yeah.

But the lay-person hasn’t got that opportunity to see that person
again. So everything should be made easy for them.

It’s almost like we need a bit of, well not just deaf awareness training
but that’s the kind of thing. Because I mean people are used to doing
things the way they are used to doing it. And maybe we need to step
back a bit and think what if somebody was here who can’t see the
screen. Or somebody was here who hear it. Maybe that’s something
as a society we need to think about doing more of.

And the translators, signers are quite far and few between and
they’re quite expensive. So erm that’s a form of exclusion as
well. But if the person is comfortable and got good eyesight.

Even if it was big print. They could, if they were getting the
presentation they could follow it reading it and kind of trying to
listen as well. They could follow it by reading.

Yep

And there’s. and the number of meetings I’ve been to. They’ll
say have you got any needs or anything. They do get the needs
but they it’s only if you request it.

It’s not like these things are just there

No. no. if there was a way that they could flag up that somebody
is showing interest to come to this seminar. You need it in big
let, er big print because of their eyesight or they’re sort of
hearing erm it would benefit them if they had big print that they
could read and try to listen at the same time. Some things can
be flagged up. Because I know myself I've recently been
diagnosed with Sciptopic tendency. Erm I'm pink paper because
the white paper.

Ah right

The letters they. But lately it's not been affecting it me so much.
But how I found out about it was I went for a test and I
screamed. At something that I was told to look at. And she went
what happened there? Why did you scream? And I said well the
letters started moving about the

Moving about it.

And she said that's what I wanted to hear. That's what I wanted
to hear. That's exactly what it is on the white paper the black
letters start moving around. And I've often I was 60 when I got it
diagnosed. I've often wondered why I never read. I hated
reading.

Well I can see why.

I hated reading. I always just thought that I was lazy.

Right

And the same with if I was reading an article in the evening
newspaper or a thing. I'm starting to get a headache. I'm starting
to get tired. Oh I'm tired reading it and I never finished an article.

Yeah

But now I see why. Unfortunately I've lost the both pink
perspexes that she gave me.

Oh no. no.

I've misplaced them. And I've noticed that the staff that knows.
Some of the staff that knows from meetings that I was to get
pink paper have left so I'm getting the paperwork on white. So I
have to say I'm quite comfortable with that. Because you're only
going to be reading it at a minute. For a minute or so.

Uuhh. So you can cope.

So I can cope with that. I know I've not got the pink Perspex. But
if it is erm reading material that we're going to be flicking
through or, or things. I like it on my pink paper.

Uuhh. Yeah. Aye. If you're going to have to look at it closely. Yeah.

So I mean there are a lot of things that we can do. We don't have to
be around. There's one, one solution.

Yeah. And, and I never knew that until it was one of my tutors or,
or the people in the adult learning said have you ever had this
test for dyslexia? I thought I'm no dyslexic.
It’s this sight dyslexia. And I says no but er I often wondered why I was getting headaches sort of concentrating on white paper all the time. All the time and I think. I’ve had my eyesight tested and it’s alright so it’s not that. And that’s what it turned out it was. The minute I got the pink paper the headache’s gone. And I could be studying and reading. So much better.

Yeah. And then if there was something that I really wanted to read I could because I had my perpex to put over the white page to sort of read it.

Yeah. Yep.

But er I don’t know what the solution would be in audiology to get people to realise that they go to a health person for early intervention. I don’t know whether it would be. You do screening tests for everything else. Why do you not sort of do, even a pilot for a screening test for audiology? Which is a perfectly good idea. Why not screen people at what 50 or 40 or what ever and just see. Because what a lot of the time it’s somebody like yourself who’s saying you don’t hear properly. And like yourself, people are pleased to find out that their hearing is not that bad. But often that’s the first time people find out they have that hearing problem.

Yeah. Er yeah. I know what you mean how you don’t know until you have these tests done. I mean at, at the moment obviously you’re doing really well. You’re coping really well with your hearing loss. In the future if your hearing got worse and you were thinking about a hearing aid. Or thinking about help.

What kind of things would you like from a service? You know if you were going to go along. Have you thought that I’d like if they did this. Or I’d like if they did that.

Because I’m an activist I know audiology is pretty way down here with their service provision. I would like erm not the long wait before you get the hearing aid fitted. And er to not have to er sort of go. Er to be able to get your batteries from maybe a chemist on prescription or a local area rather than having to travel into the audiology department. To get your batteries fitted. Or.
Yeah.

But that’s what I’ve heard through going to meetings and that. I’m, I know personally there’s it’s like everything else. There’s opticians. You go twice. I was told that the glasses that I had are still functional. But erm I could get another prescription. But because I wanted the rose-coloured tint in it. It’s going to be 60 pound extra. And I’ve never. I said can I pay it up. Way back in March or April and I’ve never been in since. I said can I pay it up 5 pound a week, er 5 pound a month. The optician said yes. But I’ve never been in.

Right. Right.

And I’m starting to get the headaches again. So I popped my head in and said maybe I mixed up my glasses. I had two sets. One he kind of condemned. He said give them into Oxfam.

Right

And I’m not very sure whether I’ve mixed them up and that’s why I’m getting the headaches with.

Yep.

And I popped my head in and said I think I’ve mixed up my glasses. Could you check them? Now you remember, you’ve still got to get a prescription.

Uuhh

But for a new set of glasses. So whether I need to get this prescription made out.

Aye.

But then. But that’s my choice to struggle along with my old glasses because they make do.

Uuhh

But for audiology, it’s nothing like that. You’ve got to wait their 18 months 2 years. For new patients, before they can get things fitted. That I think it’s a shame. If they can do it for optometry. Then they can do it for audiology.

So having this. A service where somebody decides right I’m now at the stage where I do need help.

Or they have been told, medically that they need it.

Then the services should be there and they should be local.

Yeah.

Erm how about the people you see?

And I’m not just talking about the older generation of people. I’m talking about everyone.
No, no.

I mean because there is a lady that comes along to the older people’s one. She’s fighting for audiology, M-C-. Her, it’s on her daughter’s behalf.

Right

And obviously if it’s her daughter she must be in her 40s or 30s, 40s things. Erm that. It’s not just older people. That are maybe finding that their poor, their poor relatives in the National Health.

It’s audiology itself.

Yeah. Mhmh. So all these groups that have hearing problems.

Yeah. That are maybe having to wait. Because they’re not. Er because they’re not the funding is not there for a new or patient to get the service that they should get. Which I think should be looked at. And tried to make better. In some way or other.

Uuhh. So I mean apart from waiting times and things you talked about getting the batteries locally. Do you think it’s important that the audiologist is somebody that you can pop in and see and it’s always the same person? Or do you think that if you can go to the hospital and get your hearing aid, then you don’t need to always see the same person again?

I don’t think you have to go to see the. Um.. maybe you don’t go to a consultant every time. Um I think locally or at your health centre. Or just a locally or chemist or that. Who has been trained to audiological standards. In an area. Could help the situation.

Rather than trailing from W-H- into the I-.


Or from Penicuik say, into the town.

Uuhh. Yep.

That would. It’s there should be a sort of treatment centre

Uuhh

That can. That or can help in that situation. Maybe giving advice on how to think because maybe to wait for a something really simple that you’re stuck. You’ve accidently flicked the switch wrongly or something. When you’re cleaning it or fitting it. And you’ve maybe not sussed that out. Or you’re, you’re frightened to touch it in case you make it worse.

Yes.

That there should be somebody that you can go and get it checked. Like what I’m popping into my optician.
Aye. If you can pop into your local place.

Uhuh. Because before I used to use Asda’s er erm, Specsaver’s.

Right

Now they’re after me. I’ve not, I’ve not notified them that I’ve

found another optician yet.

Right.

So they’re saying oh we’re concerned about you because in

January you should have had your eyes tested. But this is just

newly opened up in the main street in C-.

Right.

So I don’t think he’s very busy. But he keeps himself going.

Yeah

And I er. He’s a very nice gentleman I pop in and as I say if I

need a screw put on or my glasses fixed I just pop in and he fits

it. But he does nae charge anything. He just fix it. Because he’s

trying to build up his business and he’s local.

So he’s got a good after sales or better an after care service. Yeah

Yeah. So that would be

Do you think that would be important for people with hearing

problems?

Yeah I think so. I think so. Erm and it’s strange. I was just saying
to, today. My one fear is fire and getting burnt in a fire.

Mhmh

And losing my sight. I feel I could cope with everything else like

hearing loss. As long as you’ve got your sight you can write

notes

Mhmh

My speech, you can still write notes. But if you lose your sight, I

feel that is the ultimate end. In my, in my imagination

Yeah. Yeah.

But erm, that’s my one fear.

Mhmh

That erm maybe that is why, your sight if you’re. you sort of do

go. Like to an optician. Because you can walk in. you don’t need

an appointment. Or you do need to make an appointment but it’s

your choice to enter. Whereas you’re it’s leucocratic to go to a

doctor or a department in the hospital. And that’s a sort of final

step, I’m going.

Yeah. I’m now going to the hospital. There’s something wrong with

me.
Yeah. Whereas if there was somewhere that you could go, a place to get a screened. Or a. I mean you can now go in to the chemist to get a diabetes test.

Right. Right. Uuhh

So why can’t you go? Why can’t they train up the chemist to put some form of basic equipment in that you can. They can run and sort of say well, like what they do with a diabetic. They’ll say oh well you’re 5.2 that’s ok. If you were over that I’d recommend you go to the doctor.

Uuhh.

Well that was reassuring to me and if they’d had that sort of thing for erm for hearing. You pop into when you do your shopping. That was A-s chemist that I got checked there. You’re doing your shopping anyway. Maybe you’ve got time to kill. Or you’re waiting for. You’ve chummed somebody down and you’re waiting for them to finish they’re shopping.

Uuhh

You could nip in and you could say can I get a quick test for my hearing? And then that way if there was cause for concern that. They would say right I think you should go and see the doctor. See you’re doctor and see if they can send you to see an audiologist. There is something, or I’m quite concerned about this.

Or even just give them some advice about this is where you would start to have a problem and this is what you can do about it. It would be useful to be able to give advice at that stage. Because it might be like you say, you’ve got a slight hearing loss. But you’re not ready for a hearing aid. What’s the bit in between? If you could just get some advice about what to do might be useful.

Mhmh. Mhmh. And maybe the hearing loss. Could be you’ve not realised it. They tell you not to put sort of cotton buds in your ear and that. Er and the hearing loss could be wax build-up. You might not think.

Yes.

There is a problem. Or you’re, you’re obeying rules you’re not sticking stuff in and cleaning your ears. I’ve. I’ve got one ear that I am disobeying. I’m sort of sticking cotton buds in. but I’ve got that’s got a lot of wax comes out and the other’s not too bad. But I’m quite offended with the one that’s not got a lot of wax in. because I think there’s something wrong.
Yeah. And somebody had a wee look might be able to. I meant to do that. I understand.

It’s funny because all my problems seem to be on my left side.

Right

I’ve got circulation problems, sort of left ankle, this here and this kind of knee. And if I do have any pains and that in the face it’s all down that side, which you know....and even when I er.... Erm had the numbness it was the left side. Fair enough it was the right side of my, of my lips that went kind of numb. But it’s all the left side. That I. it’s funny that it’s always the left side I’m, getting more wax out of than the right.

Right.

So that

It’s strange how it goes one way.

It’s strange. That it’s down one side. That. Yeah I do believe that a lot of preventive care could be er money spent on....rather than er before having to go into hospital. Or sort of go. And spend a lot of money on.

Yes so you could be sort of getting to the point where you sort of see it happening and then

It saves me going to the doctors then I’m happy. With the doctor but.

But it’s interesting what you said about if you test it then people might not need to go to see the doctor. That if it’s all done in the High Street.

Mhmh

Then it’s part of life. Isn’t it? You just walk past and think oh I’ll go and have a hearing test.

Yeah

So I understand what you, what you mean. But if. We were talking a wee bit earlier about if your hearing had got worse you would nae have a problem about wearing hearing aids. And this is. There’s no way. There’s no right answer. Because it has nae happened. But just tell me what you think. If your hearing got a lot worse erm and you needed to wear a hearing aid do you think you would still be unhappy about wearing the NHS one? The bigger one? Or do you think if you needed a hearing aid you would wear what was available?

I would wear what I could wear. What was available, but if I was a case of erm a case of not being able to go to my meetings or socialise or that. You know I don’t socialise. My life is
sometimes I burst into tears sometimes at this. My life is circled around business meetings. I don’t have a social life.

Right. Right.
The only social life I’ve got, in that I can’t afford it. Is going to the bingo.

Right.
I don’t go to the pub with friends. I don’t understand why people spend money on going or a meal. It doesn’t interest me at all.

Right.
If they say I’m going for a coffee. Why spend 2 pound 50 for coffee. When you can have a coffee in you house. In your own house for free. I don’t think anything of going to the bingo.

Right. Because you enjoy it.

I enjoy it. But then I get frustrated because it’s the same faces in view. That women all the time. But erm yeah I don’t go to the cinema and theatre. So my life is going out to meetings and that and seminars. So probably if my hearing got worse and I couldn’t go to hear them. I would maybe swallow my pride and go about wearing it.

So you would tend to think a hearing aid is for use when it’s starting to effect your life to a degree that you’re not happy with.

Yeah
Yeah.
I wouldn’t accept.

Oh that’s interesting. That’s been really, really helpful. It’s answered all the questions that I had. Is there anything you?

Plus more. Maybe rattling on. But yeah.

Is there anything else that you’re thinking about hearing aids? or deafness or anything about that? That you’re thinking oh she didnae ask me about that one. I’ll tell her about that because I’m happy to listen to anything else. I think what’s maybe putting me off the er older fashioned ones. I actually see folk fiddling with knobs behind their ears. So I think that it’s not. That it’s not why am I trying to find words here? It’s not an automatic sort of level that the hearing aid itself does. But maybe the digital ones or the, the more expensive ones

Mhmh

Maybe can adapt or are smart.

Right
Maybe I’m looking for a smart.
Smart

Hearing aid.

I know exactly what you mean.

One that actually it just sort of does what it needs to do. Sort of thing. Rather than you sort of fiddling with it. Thinking I’ve got that level. Right. You know.

Yeah.

And sometimes, some people would say to this woman that always moaned and moaned. Have you got your hearing aids in?

get them in. She said what’s the point of wearing them. Because they’re not. You’ve not got the loop system and I’m getting. I’m picking up interference. And it’s buzzing in their ears and that.

Sometimes you can hear the buzzing

Yeah

Coming from somebody. Which I think it should be looked at.

Yeah you shouldn’t have to have it

They shouldn’t have to have that.

It sounds that it’s like hearing aids are useful if they do what they need to do.

Yeah

But if they get to the point that they’re more trouble.

Yeah

Than benefit. People just don’t wear them. And maybe that’s where the distinction is. The idea of wearing one is more trouble than the benefit. It needs to move to a point where there’s the benefits from this and it’s worth the trouble.

Yeah. That’s it

Yeah and I think that’s what you’ve been describing. I don’t need it now because it’s not worth the trouble. But come the time that I’m not fine and it’s interfering with my life then I’ll wear it because then I’ll get the benefit of it.

But also we’re still. I attend NHS events and mental health ones as well. And there’s not so much a stigma with wearing glasses as there could be a stigma with having a hearing aid. Because glasses you can take them off put them on and you just request for could you get that in bigger print for me. Or could you enlarge, if it’s a presentation. Is there anyway on the screen to enlarge that? Focus it a bit better. But with hearing you’ve actually got to admit to the whole room I’ve got a hearing aid.

I’ve got a, a, a problem. Or I’ve got something that’s. that my
body isn’t perfect. And you’ve got to come out to a room full of people sort of saying yes I’ve got a hearing problem. And to some people that might be just a step too far.

Yeah

I mean I don’t know whether it would be a step too far for me.

Uhuh

At this stage but erm before. I know myself I was. Because I was crabby, bad tempered and emotionally I sort of felt impaired. At the time. I’m feeling rejected. If anybody said anything I would fly off the. Everybody round about would be traumatised. But once I’d got calmed down and came down again. I was all sort of what are you all like that for?

Uhuh. Uhuh.

They’d say well you lost your temper. You blew. I said well that. That’s me blowing. I’m fine now.

Yeah

But I couldn’t understand why they were frightened. Oh for god sake. All sort of griping you know. But that was then. But now I’ve sort of got the sense to sort of say to them watch what you’re saying I’m not in a good mood today. Just watch what you’re saying. I might blow. But now I’ve, I’ve stopped doing that at meetings

Right

They just take me out when.

Right

And say calm down. You know. Or they just look at me as though we better. Are you in one of your moods? Aye. Ok right we’ll keep. But I, I didn’t like the idea of them saying we’ll keep a cap on it. You know. It’s my problem I would have to keep the cap on it. And even one lassie tried to help me. By saying you’re going to blow. And I’d say how dare she think I’m going to blow?

And it would make me worse by her going to one side.

You need to have your own control.

Yeah

Yeah.

This is where I feel as well with the hearing situation. The person doesn’t feel that they’re in control of the situation if they’re wearing a hearing aid because you’ve got to notify them if you need a loop. You’ve got to erm some people I’ve noticed at meetings have said can anybody, can everybody hear me ok?
And that puts the oneness on somebody saying well I cannae really hear you. And I’ve seen me saying no I cannae really hear it and I don’t know whether that’s concentrating on them. Or I’ve looked round and I’ve maybe seen somebody with a hearing aid or that on. And I say well if I can’t. if I say well I can’t hear it and it might help them. I don’t think that’s why I’m doing it. But if we all said no use the microphone no we cannae hear erm it. It doesn’t let them off the hook. They have. They should be using a microphone at all times whether they like it or not. They must. Because erm you. Everybody’s equal and if you don’t use a microphone. You are asking people in a group to identify themselves as having a hearing loss or a hearing problem. So I’ve noticed it that sometimes at the start they say can everybody hear us alright and that way. Or I’ve seen them saying anybody got a hearing aid. The hands. The multi hands go up if they want to put them up. And they say well how? Do you want to nearer? Or will we use a hearing aid? Or what do you want us, how do you want us to do it? That way they are making the person feel a part of the group. Their not special but a part of the group. They. A person feels that they are being included. In that er they’re coming isn’t a waste of time and they have. They oh right they included me. So they don’t go away with a grievance. Because sometimes these. I hate filling in these evaluation sheets. But sometimes the evaluation sheets come back enjoyable food, enjoyable that, but the acoustics weren’t good. And the minute you see acoustics weren’t good I think you know that You know that something’s happened Somebody’s struggled. And that to me in this day and age shouldn’t happen. Yeah. Mhmh. But you’re right. I think if you did that every. If you did say oh I’ve got somebody in my group who’s got a hearing aid I’ve got to do things differently. If we, if we always thought right I’m going to stand up and there’s people in this room might not be able to hear me so I’ll make sure everybody hears me. Then you don’t have to expose the people and get people to you know put their hand up. You just er make sure it’s good for everybody. You don’t make. When you’re erm sending out the invitation forms erm it’s the person’s choice whether they put whether they need special needs or not. But although. That could be
helpful to list it. Rather than leaving it to the oneness of the person that has the need because they might not want to put on er write it. Or they might not be able to. They might be illiterate.

There's umpteen reasons.

There's lots of different reasons.

But if you had. Or they might be autistic. B- my son, came out with a brilliant idea. He said job applications I hate them because I've got to think up in words how to describe myself to the perspective employer. But if there was a form that had things that we could tick. They could tick

It would be so much easier

Easier than try and think of putting words down that would describe us. Just the words are already there and you just tick it.

Exactly.

And he said it would make my life a lot easier when I'm at the job centre or applying for jobs and that. And I thought what a brilliant idea. You know and sometimes I take his ideas to meetings.

Yeah

You know so I say er yeah. I sometimes identify that it's my son who. And I've told that he has just been diagnosed with erm autism. And I'll say he's helping me a lot. To understand how maybe at meetings even I might be infuriating you if I'm not getting across to people exactly what I'm meaning. My words are coming out but they're slightly different from what I'm meaning them to mean. and he's helped me kind of with that. Think before I actually blurt something out. Or say something think is that what you're really meaning? Or is that the answer to what that question was? Don't just rush in think before you.

It's interesting though because you're making a really. A really good point is that if you want to know the best thing to do ask the person who's experienced it. Because they'll tell you. You know if you want to know the best thing to do for somebody with a hearing problem ask them what would help?

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah

You know it's exactly what you're saying.

Yeah because that last conference in, in, last Friday was at the. The man he'd got to the stage he'd done four. And that was his last one. I'm not really wanting to use the microphone can everybody hear me? And they said yeah that's alright. Erm but
somebody says no but I'll come near the front. So you know I'm it's just dawned on me, when they said I'll come near the front it could have been that they thought I'll watch his lips.
Yeah
And that was maybe how their way of disguising Yeah and getting what they needed
And getting what they needed.
That's interesting
Erm but er some the er one of the days before that one, the middle one. Somebody shouted no we can't hear use the microphone. Then and he did use a mic. But it was on of these mics that it was on the clothes.
Uhuh a clip.
And or they had to hold it. And they erm. It wasn't a microphone that you stood behind the plinth. It was a ready made one. It stuck to their clothes.
Right
So you know if his head was that way the mic was there so you never heard anything
Right
You know it was fading and then when he came back to the mic he was alright. And then it was fading and we felt like saying keep your head still. I think somebody did shout will you stop going like that.
Uhuh.
You're or you. I think most of the time it was when he was kind of trying to point up or when he When he turned
Yeah when he turned it was taking it away from the central point. So all these... these new-fangled ideas for erm microphones, sometimes they work. Sometimes they don't because they had to put the battery in his trousers then they clipped him on then he started talking. And then he had to. They only had one between them. So they had to unclip everything and hand it to somebody else. I mean it was a picture watching them doing it. Yeah. Yeah.
That is ok as a roving mic. But to give a presentation you're needing sort of the mic to turn sort of whatever way he turned his head.
Yep.
Because how do you expect somebody to just talk and not?

Exactly. And not move.

They are going to sort of move. Especially if it’s a long presentation.

That’s right. You need the right technology. To work with it yeah.

Now that’s been really good. That’s been brilliant. I’m just looking at your brooch. It’s beautiful.

I got it for 50p at (unclear)

Well it’s fantastic.
Interviewer: What I’ll do is I’ll just leave that there. And that’ll pick up your voice from that range so you don’t need to worry about it.

COPA 10 Ok we have similar ones.

Ok. So just to start off. Can you tell me a wee bit about whether you’ve noticed you’ve got a hearing problem and if you do how you’ve noticed it?

Right. I think in general terms. There’s something I’ve noticed in the last five years or so. It was a general loss of hearing. And there’s been a specific problem I think which has gone away now, which I’ve had in the last three months. My left ear seemed to go. The hearing seemed to go completely. It’s now come back. It did come back. But erm the general loss of hearing goes back about five years. When I notice it particularly is in situations where there is a number of voices, going to the pub after work. Where it’s difficult for me to er hear what people are saying when there’s background noise, or alternative noises, or several voices. So that’s when I. I think that’s when I noticed it. I think it was about four five years ago. More specifically at home it’s quite clear that. With the telly I’m the only one that actually. Well the other members of the family er can hear things perfectly well when it’s down at a third of the volume but I probably need it two thirds of volume.

Right.

So those are the two ways that I’ve noticed a hearing loss.

Has anybody sort of suggested to you that you’ve got a hearing problem, or are you just sort of noticing it yourself?

Erm well I think the family notice sometimes that oh that why do you need it on so loud with the telly. And I think others occasions when I’ve not got things and some have been hearing loss or I’ve not been paying attention anyway. So there’s a bit of both there. I think they’ve certainly noticed that they’ve said something and I haven’t responded as they would expect. Would have expected in you know if my hearing was fine.

How about work? Any circumstances at work when you’ve got problems?

I think generally at work I can er I can generally communicate with most colleagues and listen to them. You know and hear them. Possibly if they speak softly I won’t hear them, but there’s no appreciable problems there. Er that.
So it’s not affecting work at all. It’s just I mean is it social situations things like that?

Yeah.

Do you think it’s been getting worse over the five years? Or is it pretty much the same?

Er I think it probably has got worse but gradually.

Yeah

It’s not. I don’t think it’s immediate that you suddenly have a loss.

So I suppose the. I suppose when you do go out socially do you notice? Well sometimes you get the twenty years ago I wouldn’t understand but then you listen. So it’s even more I think that I have to listen to people, or strain to listen, or move to people. Or do the

So it’s sort of you gradually noticing you’re having to do more to get the same result you would have got more easily?

Yeah

If that makes sense?

Yeah

Ok. Have you adapted what you do? I mean obviously you’re describing many occurrences where you’re straining to hear or moving forward. Do you find you’ve started to naturally adapt what you do to be able to hear in these kinds of circumstances?

I think so. And if there are people I definitely want to talk to then I will try and get so that I’m looking at them to the get um optimal erm volume or whatever. I’m just trying to think if there’s any other. No I think that’s it. I’m not conscious of it as a huge impediment that er to my lifestyle to my work or to my life. And er but I suppose it does rub in the sense that if we’re watching a film together I suppose the why do you need it on so loud turn it down. Or somebody’s trying to sleep upstairs. And you know I end up having to put the headphones on.

So you’re having to adapt because of all the people that you live closer relationships that kind of thing.

Yeah.

Yeah. How do you find that that is? I mean does it bother you that you have to do that? Er do you find other people start to change their behaviour too?

Erm I don’t know. Well a bit of mockery I suppose. Erm a function of age I suppose. And erm well I suppose when I had a particular problem with my left ear. I think I probably did find. But maybe
that’s harbouring over five or ten years time. And I think I did find
things a little a little irritating yes.

Right

Er but that was it. In terms of what I’ve done about it I did go and
see the GP. About one other thing and I think his view on it was
just that it’s a natural process.

Right

It certainly wasn’t at the stage where intervention was required
with a device or whatever. Or referral to a neurologist.

So you’re not sure it’s there? I mean it’s noticeable but it’s not had a
huge impact on your life not yet anyway. But if you think. The sort of
things that you would do socially are there any things that you’ve sort
of stopped doing, changed how you do them, adapted them at all
because it makes it easier? Or are you sort of living your life as you
did before you noticed you had a hearing problem?

Erm. I think same as.

Right.

I’m not I haven’t. I’m not ware of specific things that I have done
erm as a result of loss of some hearing.

Right. That’s good.

Not yet anyway.

So if I can just. And this is obviously just speculation because you
haven’t been in the situations. But thinking in the long-term have you
sort of got any ideas in your mind about what sort of things would have
to happen in your life to make you want to go for help? And I know
that’s difficult to ask but at what stage would you do something now?

I think if there was a severe loss in one or both ears. Which I did
actually have. This is what I had. Then I would go for help. Or I
suppose if there was something that checked it then I suppose it
would be oh you’ve got to do something about it. Erm but I’m not
at that stage no.

No. do you have any experience of hearing aids or audiology
services? You’ve been to the GP but have you ever been to a clinic?

I er no. no. no.

No. so it’s a whole new world.

I knew an audiol. I knew a couple of audiologists at uni but that’s
it. (unclear)
Right, because I’m just thinking in terms of it getting to the point where your hearing got worse. How you’re feeling at the prospect of wearing a hearing aid? If it came to that.

I don’t think I’d be bothered about it if it enabled me to hear.

Right.

I would you know welcome it.

Yeah

The choice of you know not being able to hear correctly and the er unsightliness or whatever of a hearing aid. The er former er far out weighs the latter. Or it would do for me.

Yeah. So basically at the moment it’s not affecting your life, the stage when hearing aids required. But if it got to the stage where it was a choice between your life being affected and wearing a hearing aid you would be happy to?

If the er whatever it was that was wrong with my left lug, had persisted and had gotten to the stage where it was required to get a hearing aid or something I don’t know. Then I would be happy.

Do you have any preferences on what kinds of aids or?

I don’t really know enough about them. Well I suppose a thing that is not. That is not too obtrusive. And does the erm whatever it is that it does. I suppose in my mind I see the 1948 version.

Yes I remember them too. Sorry I’ve just got to blow my nose. (Phone rings) that’s just my phone. Just hold on a second. It always happens at the wrong time. Put that on pause. So erm we were talking about hearing aids. Sorry. You’ve not got a lot of experience of hearing aids. But it’s funny because a lot of people say when they think about hearing aids even although they’ve been going for a while. So do you think that people’s perception of hearing aids plays a big part of whether they go for help?

I suppose. I suppose from the patients, well potential patient’s perspective, yeah. It’s the fear of the unknown and yeah the image that you have. And er also the admission. The fact that if you are going for a hearing aid you’re beginning to conk out. Your functions are uh. And it’s that having to deal with age in that way. Which is er I think probably quite challenging for some people who don’t want to do it. I’m probably one of them.

So it’s the end of erm. I’m sort of getting to that age when I need a hearing aid because I’m getting older.
Yeah. Yeah.

It’s interesting over the years, although people are wearing hearing aids younger and younger now. It’s interesting that we still tend to think of people with hearing aids being old people.

Yeah

Yeah. I mean you said there it’s been in the dark. Can you think of anything, I know you said you went to your GP and said I don’t think I’m hearing as well as I was. What would have helped you at that stage; apart from saying you’re not ready for a hearing aid? Have you thought it would have been good if this had happened? So you hadn’t been so much in the dark?

Well in fairness to the GP, what he said is that it’s a natural process. And er you er you can’t fight aspects of aging so er you may as well take them with as much grace as you can. Because you ain’t going to do much about it.

Yeah. There’s that yeah. But I’m just thinking along the lines of when you said you felt in the dark, I’m just wondering if as professionals what we need to do is education about the things other that hearing aids that can help. Because I think when we think about hearing the first thing we think is hearing aid. And there’s actually a lot of other stuff. Things that might be useful like communication tactics, like if you’re in a room with a lot of people how do you get it so that you can hear better without necessarily wearing a hearing aid. That kind of thing. Would that have been useful to you? That sort of.

I think it probably would. It’s a question of whether you get that to the public. And audiologists do that. Er. Er yeah. Interesting.

Yeah.

I’m thinking about ways you could think about doing that.

Yeah because that’s something that people. I’m just wondering, and just speculation again, if people know there’s actually a lot of things out there apart from hearing aids? Would people be more likely to go forward earlier? They say I’m not ready for a hearing aid but I might think about something else.

Things you could do, and maybe DH is doing already through NHS choices. Things you could do because people perhaps go to the NHS24 site. And er if there’s user friendly websites. If you could that. Then I’m sure you. I’m sure they could, could, could you know do it. Or even a daft you know random search. So yeah.

Or even self testing.

Yeah something like that. To not be quite in the dark.
Well that’s the whole point of NHS24 in England or NHS Direct or whatever it is in England. The choice of site in England. And the erm NHS24 the whole point about it, I think is to involve people in their own health. And perhaps to overcome the difficulties that perhaps some people. Well the service faces. And you know point people towards. Until it’s gone or whatever. To work or towards something that maybe of assistance. And by the time they do come it may be something substantial or perhaps not as straight forward as the way it might have been.

That sounds like. It’s interesting that somebody such as yourself, who’s at the stage where it’s not really affecting your life, but maybe the next stage, would be, if it’s starting to affect your life having information about the types of things you could do yourself.

Yeah

Might be useful. Sort of I don’t need a hearing aid but this might be useful, what do I do? Would that have been? Or do you think that might be useful to you?

I think that probably would be useful to a lot of people. Maybe er. And I don’t know what the first port of call for people who are getting older is er you qualify for SAGA holidays at 50.

That’s right.

Age Concern or you know other er groups that might er you know be useful. Er they’re on television. Er surely you have your video production unit or

So maybe taking it out of the hospitals? Other, other routes. Because there’s people. If you have a hearing problem but you never have any other health problems you might never be in a hospital. So maybe that’s you know another route to get to people.

Well you also have another, er I know about this because this is my area of work. But you also have patient involvement. Er what is it public involvement patient focus groups.

Yes.

And er also the new administrations partnership er mutual NHS. Er if you want to characterise it as audiology as er turning a deaf ear towards the challenge to communicate with people and preventive health then.

Yeah. That’s a plan. We’re sorted. So I know what to do. Because a lot of people think if I get a hearing loss I go to the doctor and he sends me to the hospital. And actually it’s a social condition and it maybe as you said needs us to step in, in other ways. Communicating
with people rather than waiting till they go to hospital might be a better way to do it.

And people who are doing that and know about that already is the RNID.

Yes.

Er and I would think that they would have the expertise and they would have the er and I suppose er it would be useful to work in partnership with them. I suppose fear of loss of hearing I don’t know.

Yeah. It’s a really interesting idea. Yeah.

Yeah.

Would that be of interest to somebody like yourself. You know if you were to pick up a leaflet or see a DVD or something that said how to cope with hearing loss or whatever.

I think

Is that the kind of thing you would think oh I’ll have a look at this?

I think yeah. And er and the web’s the place to do it.

Yeah

That er that if you like hearing loss Scotland or whatever. And a wee test. Or if you get one you know don’t worry about it or whatever. And the whole I’m sure you could build quite a sophisticated er interactive. Er I don’t. Nothing too fancy but enough to if you’ve got a minute we can test you or whatever. Or this is what to do if you are worried. Aye there’s.

Thank you very much I’ll copyright it by tonight. Just on the same sort of topic then. One of the other things that people have mentioned are support groups things like that. Would that be something that you know if you were having more of a problem might be useful or you know I would go to something like that?

Er it might be you’d probably be in the position there of until you actually do have a problem er then I presume you’re probably looking at some of the support charities, either for old age or for deafness.

Yeah. Mhmh.

Online community? I don’t know it’s probably a bit fanciful isn’t it? Er I don’t know. I don’t know if people.

Yeah because I think some people are different and go to support groups and other people would just rather find information for themselves. So you know.
Yeah. What you could do is if you have published material. If you have that so it’s easy enough to access on the web. And then have a local link in or ring this number.

Mhmh. Yeah. Yep basically what we are talking about is educating people as to what’s out there. Rather than it just being a straight-forward you have a problem you go to hospital to see someone. They fix it. There’s a whole kind of things around

It er it’s the classic definition of the NHS isn’t it? Is it treatment of symptoms or is it a health service, a health promotion service?

That’s been around for yonks.

That’s interesting though, because I think that’s what most people would like to move towards. Is that you know you can get the information to do something before you have to hand it over. You know not just in hearing loss but in lots of different things you know.

Yeah. I er I mean. I er suppose that’s the health service er I think in the first six months of the health service something like half a million hearing aids came out. So it was at a time when deafness was at a. because of the expense or whatever. It was, was part of everyday life. Because of the doctor and test or whatever.

But er it’s interesting because what you mentioned there are two kind of it’s almost archetypes really. It’s almost if you have a hearing loss and you have to wear a hearing aid, you’re old. Which is you know still a popular belief that people have. And the other one is that if you have a hearing loss then by definition the answer is a hearing aid. And er and in some cases it’s not because you’re not at a stage where you need to wear a hearing aid. But er but you need some help with a problem.

You’ve also got the er patient anxiety that it’s not just hearing loss. The er loss of sociability, or the loss of companionship or whatever. Er it’s the er this is the start of something greater.

Yes.

Er and the way people irrationally put it together you know this is the start of my Alzheimer’s. You know that chapter in my life when I develop a chronic condition.

Yes.

The first of many. We’re all getting older and lots of people living so oh dear.

Yeah. So do you think that that’s maybe again as audiologists working with people that we need to acknowledge that there’s more to it than I don’t hear well. I’ll give you a hearing aid you’ll be better. But that
there’s maybe this whole thing that people bring with them that’s maybe unmentioned?

Yeah er I suppose that’s what you’d get. That’s why you get these and that’s why you’d get patients maybe not going for help when they perhaps ought to. And I think that’s probably in the generation that’s getting to the stage. I mean alright it’s not er age specific, which I tend to think this thing is. I’m talking about people that are now sixty seventy. That think I don’t want to trouble the doctor. I don’t want to trouble the audiologist.

It’s not bad.

It’s not bad enough yet.

But maybe what you’re suggesting is that it’s maybe not a case of not wearing a hearing aid. Wearing a hearing aid. Like the area in between if there were other options you could self manage. Maybe that would make a change?

Well I think so yeah. It’s much more positive maybe the things between those two I’m sure yeah.

It’s interesting. No it’s been great thanks very much. Is there anything else you’d like to that I’ve asked about that you’d like to tell me about that you’ve noticed your hearing caused or you’ve noticed since you had it?

Not really er I don’t know. I mean I’m not quite sure how I measure it, how I can measure it. I suppose I. I probably er then again it’s all anecdotal impressionistic but I think I’ve probably retained about eighty percent of my ability to hear compared to what I had when I was 25.

Right

Er and er the other thing that’s linked in with it is people when they reach the age of 50 if they’ve had good eyesight, that’s when they start needing glasses.

Yeah

So maybe there’s a, in terms of the effects of aging and trying to be positive about it.

Yeah

Maybe there’s a broader thing about well aging it’s natural but here’s what you can do to help. And er just explaining I suppose er to people as they get older that this is going to happen. Yep. Don’t worry about it because you can still do this or you can do that. Such as erm reading glasses.
It’s interesting because most people will accept glasses and pick some really wow frames so they can show them off and yet we don’t seem to do the same and get a really fancy hearing aid. Well some people do some people do get bright blue ones. But in general people don’t. I wonder why that is? That you know people will tend to accept that glasses are ok but hearing aids seem to be a bigger deal for people?

Well I guess for that generation you didn’t have an actress making a hearing aid look sexy did you?

That’s true. Maybe that’s what it is maybe they don’t look sexy. I don’t know how we do that but we can maybe work on that. It’s interesting though because people do tend to say oh well I need glasses that’s not a problem. I don’t know maybe it’s a perception that we give out to people? You know that they’ve never really left that 1948 big box they used to be. And things where as glasses have.

Yeah and there’s and I’m sure the technology for hearing aids or whatever is er is much better now and I’m sure they er have them so that you wear them without even noticing.

Yes maybe we should design some nice sparkly ones and see, see if that works. It might work.

Like an earring.

No that’s great well thank you very much it’s been really useful some really good ideas. What I’ll do is I’ll stop this now if I can remember
## Appendix H. Sample of coding analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</table>
| **Length of time deafness had been noticed** | • That’s a good question about eight or nine years maybe? (NHF1; page 1)  
• Um...really just about a year (NHF 2; page 1)  
• About three years ago...I think it was probably bad before then but it stated to bother me three years ago.(NHF3; page 1)  
• Oh it's been years I can’t even remember.......but my husband has been dead for 14 years so it must have been longer than that (NHF 4; page 1)  
• I have been waiting two years for the test, and it's been getting quite a bit worse In the two years.(NHF 5; page 2) |
| **Type of work**                  | • First started off in the railways ...........(NHF 1; page 1)  
• Office work (NHF 2; page 1)  
• I am a joiner to trade I worked as a private contractor.... then became a building inspector(NHF 3 ; page 1)  
• When I was younger I worked as a machinist......I was just there for three or four years and then I joined the WREN(NHF 6; page 1) |
| **Noise exposure**                | • I went to Cowdenbeath workshop....it was really noisy(NHF 1; page 1)  
• My wife was just pointing out that a friend of ours said that people who had been in the army sometimes had a problem ..........personally I don’t think so (NHF2 2; page 1)  
• I worked inside and out but not with a lot of machinery (NHF 3; page 1)  
• I worked in the mills in Falkirk, it was really noisy there I couldn’t hear anyone speaking (NHF 4; page 1)  
• I was a teacher so there was no noise there (NHF5; page 2) |
| **Noticing hearing problem**      | • When I worked in the coal board....the nursing sister....... said I had better get a hearing test.....but I never really noticed it myself (NHF1; Page 2)  
• Um having to turn the television up and realizing I was not hearing what people were saying......recently I have noticed that when there are a lot of people talking it sounds quite loud but |
it’s not very easy to distinguish (NHF2; page 1)

- I do find some voices more difficult than others but I wouldn’t say it was because they are male or female (NHF 2; page 2)
- It seemed to happen very slowly and then it just got worse (NHF 4; page 1)
- I used to turn the telly up and I thought it was normal (NHF 4; page 1)
- Well I suppose it’s the usual thing I wanted my daughter off my back…………(NHF 5; page 1)
- I had already noticed that sometimes I wasn’t really hearing occasionally - and it only was just occasionally. I thought- “Oh I have gotten the wrong end of the stick here.”(NHF 5; page 2)
- I probably am having to say to people, “what is that you said?” and over the last four or five months I’ve been more aware, having said that I can speak with you and I don’t have a problem at all.(NHF 5; page 3)
- One to one yes and if I am looking at the person...........but saying odd things and maybe when I am not quite ready they would say, “you didn’t hear what I said”(NHF 5; page 3)
- [First noticed] when my daughter came home from holiday. (subject 6; page 1)

“Deaf behaviour”

- I started.....(laughs) funnily enough I dinnae ken if it was a habit I had gotten into....I started... even though I had heard what they were saying, I started saying “what was that?” an automatic habit (NHF 1 page 2)
- I was getting people to repeat things to me(NHF 1 page 2)
- I think it was because I was starting to notice there was a problem there before I wasn’t thinking about it much Once someone drew my attention to it I seemed to become more aware of it.(NHF 1 page 3)

Psychosocial effects of hearing loss

- I’d say... well when you are going out socially having conversations you are just picking up bits of conversation and you were trying to work out what is going on (NHF 1; page 3)
- ......it was the same when you were going on courses. You would sit there missing out on bits that were going on. (NHF1; page 3)
- When you went out........you can’t pick up what they are saying and I don’t like that- they could be talking about me (NHF 3; page 2)
- Watching the television, .............we are not ones for the square box but we like the news and sometimes I can’t pick that up (NHF 3; page 2)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings about losing hearing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I worried about it….I thought what’s going on here? I was really annoyed (NHF 1; page 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;[I worried] in case I went deaf altogether. I said to myself I wonder if I should learn to lip read…. I never got down to it….but it’s all at the back of your mind&quot; (NHF 1; page 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>When they told me I needed a hearing aid for my other ear I thought “Oh I am getting bad- I need two hearing aids.&quot; I don’t honestly like the thought if I am honest about wearing two hearing aids(NHF 1; page 4)</td>
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<td>I didn’t realize until my last hearing test that my hearing was so bad(NHF 1; page 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>It was a surprise ‘cos all along I thought it was this ear and then I got the test and they said it was this one too(NHF 1; page 6)</td>
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<td>I just get used to it, it’s just the way things are(NHF 1; page 6)</td>
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<td>I went to my doctor because I thought he could slot me into some procedure…..the technician used the vacuum thing and sucked it out….but I still wasn’t hearing well(NHF 2; page 4)</td>
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<td>I’m really frustrated because you are sitting there and you can’t hear and you are struggling.(NHF3; page 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think that’s how I feel…………it comes to us all(NHF 3 ;page 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware that sometimes now don’t pick up exactly- some odd words-but usually in the context I think, “Oh I know what that is”(NHF 5; page 1)</td>
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<td>I know my television is up louder I can’t really say that personally that has been a problem(NHF 5; page 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>I presume I must have some hearing loss compared to what I used to have…..but whether I need a hearing aid or not…….(NHF 5; page 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oh it didn’t bother me, I am getting older……..so I think if my hearing is not what it was well that’s just getting older. (NHF 5; page 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>It’s been -no I’m not, yes I am but I feel as if everything sounds- kind of muffled sound you know? (NHF 5; page 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>My husband reads everything out to me and he sits near me so I can hear him- he’s not a very clear speaker(NHF; page 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings about hearing aids</td>
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<tr>
<th>Family reactions</th>
<th>“Aye they are noticing it, the usual comments about “deaf in your auld age” but they are quite tolerant(NHF1; page 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aye they[friends]repeat it but at home I get the sarcastic remarks from my wife and the grandkids say “oh granddad”(NHF1; page 6)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My wife , I think, will know, my children are overseas but no I don't think they particularly notice it.(NHF 2; page 3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yes she has[changed the way she speaks to me] (NHF 2; page 3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My wife wears a hearing aid, so she said “Well, it comes to us all....”(NHF 3; page 3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I am sure she [wife] will keep me in line, she wears hers okay.(NHF 3;page 3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I turned the telly up ............but my husband used to say “That’s far too loud”(NHF 4; page 1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I wondered sometimes if that’s why the telly was too loud for him(husband) because he was used to the quiet (NHF4; page 1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I am on my own now, my daughter comes in every morning and she has never said anything(NHF 4; page 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My daughter[decided I needed a hearing aid]she bought me a wee house........since I arrived........she has had me at every clinic here is,(NHF4; page 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oh she[daughter] will help me because she wants me to wear it.(NHF4; page 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My daughter said to me” Oh you will be too proud to wear a hearing aid.(NHF 5; Page 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I mean she is not nasty she is only concerned(NHF 5; page 1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My daughter says “you’re not hearing that” or “the televisions too loud” she doesn't say it like that but that's the gist of it(NHF 5; page 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My daughter said “you will need to get a hearing aid because the neighbours are going to complain about that television(NHF 6;page 1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I don’t honestly like the thought…but if you’ve got to you’ve got to (NHF1; page 4)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
I've very rarely seen anybody with two - there's probably hundreds of thousands of them but...I never myself paid much attention. And the fact that folk can see you with hearing aids(NHF 1; page 4)

Aye it does[bother me] I has always bothered me to be honest(NHF 1; page 4)

I didn’t really think much about it until I actually got it, and then when I got it I’m saying to myself “Oh folk will see I am deaf” sort of thing with having this on. Now I think “What are they going to say when they see two?”(NHF 1; page 5)

I think it has got benefit so I will just persevere and wear it. I will probably get used to it and then not think so much about it.(NHF 1; page 5)

Still missing bits of the conversation.....I think I have programmed my mind to that hearing loss(subject 1; page 6)

With me it's just the fact that you can see them(NHF 1; Page 7)

......When you switch them on you hear the difference, but mostly when there's background noise I still have a problem. It's okay here when it's just one to one.(NHF1; page 7)

I had this problem for two to three years before I got my hearing aid- longer than that but it didn’t bother me, it was about two years after that before I came here, just because of the thought of wearing that thing in my ear(NHF 1; page 7)

I just sort of accepted it. I had a neighbour upstairs at the time wearing a hearing aid so you know I had heard him talk about the problem(NHF 2; page 3)

I don’t have any concerns about it. I am just coming for something to work, I mean I just accept it(NHF2; page 3)

The audiologist says I need a hearing aid based on the results she had so I guess they know whether it’s wax or not......I am quite prepared to accept that they know what they are doing!(NHF 2; page 5)

I realise it is going to be visible, but that doesn’t matter(NHF 2; page 5)

I am quite happy about it because I understand it will be digital so that’s good and I think I am probably happier for an external one than one that goes inside.....I just think the external one will be more efficient.(NHF2; page 6)

I intend to give the NHS ones a full trial particularly before I think about a private alternative. Now that the NHS ones are digital- could be good for
My background is in electronics and it just makes sense to have the microphone outside rather than wear it in the ear. (NHF 2; page 7)

I decided to go to the doctor and he sent me in to the hospital (NHF 3; page 3)

Well (sighs) I don’t know if I’ve got to wear it, I’ve got to wear it. I want to be able to hear when I go out (NHF 3 page 3)

I think it’s a big one I am getting, I like the wee ones you see advertised in the papers but I wouldn’t go privately, it’s a con.

Like I say if I have to wear it I will wear it [long silence] (NHF 3; page 4)

I knew I needed one, but I wouldn’t have bothered I would have managed fine (NHF 4; page 2)

I was on my own and I don’t know if I would have managed it (NHF 4; page 2)

What if it went into my ear and I couldn’t get it out or if it was really big and everyone saw it……….and what if it was too loud and gave me a headache and I couldn’t turn it down (NHF; page 2)

I hope I can manage, it better not [take a while to get used to or I don’t want it] (NHF 4; page 3)

I’m not [looking forward to getting an aid] I am fine the way I am…………The other thing that I am worried about is if my hearing gets worse and I have to wear two (NHF 4; page 3)

I hope it’s no a big thing that people will see, I look bad enough without it (NHF 4; page 3)

What if I don’t have enough hair to hide it? (NHF 4; page 4)

I don’t want people to see it but I don’t want a wee one in case it goes right into my ear (NHF 4; page 4)

What if I can’t change the batteries (NHF 4; page 4)

Do I have to pay anything? (NHF 4; page 4)

If I have to wear a hearing aid- but I just don’t feel that in general at this point in time I’m needing a hearing aid, that’s what I don’t know (NHF 5; page 3)

[other people] don’t influence me I am happy to try it and make my own mind up (NHF 5; page 4)

I mean I know hearing aids aren’t the great thing glasses are but I will try it…….if I need it (NHF 5; page 4)

[want] one of the small ones I don’t want it to be seen (NHF 5; page 4)
| • It is [important to me] I don’t want people to see it. (NHF 5; page 5) |
| • I don’t think so [whether the size would affect whether he would wear it] I don’t know I would have to wait and see (NHF 5; page 5) |
| • I did think – because I have dark glasses that I have to wear sometimes ……… I heard about the ones that go in your ear (NHF 6; page 4) |
| • As long as it works I will be quite happy (MHF 6; page 4) |
| • My husband manages well with his, he will help me (subject 6; page 4) |
| • I don’t think it will be hard to use. I am keen to get one because it will help me. (NHF 6; page 4) |

| Issues about Audiology services |
| • I was a wee bit curious ….. I thought they would have removed the wax before they did the test. I realize some of it is done by bone conduction …… but they didn’t [repeat the test after the wax was removed] (NHF 2; page 4) |
| • I think I was treated fairly promptly ….. I may have been given priority because of the cancer. (NHF 2; page 8) |
| • The only minor thing was my first appointment clashed with an event which I didn’t want to miss for personal reasons and that meant I had to wait another month which surprised me because I phoned right away (NHF 2; page 8) |
| • I keep saying I hope I answered the questions the right way so I get one (NHF 6; page 3) |

| Coping strategies |
| • I try to lip read I think that comes naturally when you can’t hear what people are saying (NHF 3; page 2) |

| Experience of other hearing aid users |
| • I’ve got two friends man and wife ….. it must be terrible in their house they are both very deaf …….. And my daughter in law wears a hearing aid (NHF 6; page 3) |
| • I had a neighbour upstairs at the time wearing a hearing aid so you know I had heard him talk about the problem (NHF 2; page 3) |
| • I know he [friend] has problems with it in as much as when he attends a meeting …….. when people start to talk he finds that difficult (NHF 2; page 5) |
| • I have a couple of friends who have them and they say they are a pest …….. my brother has a hearing aid but he says it’s a nuisance too (NHF 5; page 4) |
Appendix I . Examples of coding using NVivo software

Code description: Keeper of the care

<Internals\Interviews\copa1formatted> - § 2 references coded [2.04% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.89% Coverage

wasn’t offered anything at the Lxxxxx Place I got nothing there at all. Erm I was quite excited to see for about ten seconds. And then he just went it doesn’t work. And I thought oh well that’s that. And I never bothered.

Reference 2 - 1.15% Coverage

You know I wasn’t even offered it. I think if I’d been offered it, I’d have taken it. Because I keep thinking it might not have worked for him. But I keep thinking it might have worked for me. As I said my left ear is much worse than my right ear. But it bothers me in both ears. In both ears.

<Internals\Interviews\NF2> - § 1 reference coded [3.50% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.50% Coverage

Oh no I don’t think so I thought I was coming for the fitting today. No the audiologists said I needed a hearing aid based on the results she had so I guess they can tell whether it’s a wax problem or not. I mean I am quite prepared to accept that they (laughs) know what they are doing.

<Internals\Interviews\NF4> - § 2 references coded [2.75% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.57% Coverage

Well if my left ear gets worse will they make me wear two?

Reference 2 - 1.19% Coverage

Yes, but I don't want to say anything stupid

<Internals\Interviews\NF5> - § 1 reference coded [2.92% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.92% Coverage

Well I have been waiting for two years for the test because I think the doctor thought when I was chatting to him, you know, you’re not needing anything

<Internals\Interviews\NF6> - § 2 references coded [9.67% Coverage]
I just feel, I keep saying this, I hope I answer the right questions, the right ways so I can get one because it’s annoying me, you know?

I brought them just in case because I heard about the ones that go in your ear and Alex (Husband) has one and I thought now if I’ve got they thick leg glasses and thingy bobs for the hearing aid it might make a difference you know.
I'm not deaf, I'm dull of hearing. That's the what I'd say about it. And if people are loud I think wow their voices are loud. But they can be muffled you know?

And they say it again and I'm picking up one part but not the second part or the third part and ... the guys must feel like parrots because they're saying everything two or three times to me and I don't think I'm deaf (interviewer; mhm) I just under certain circumstances (interviewer; mhm) I don’t hear them

He's sitting beside me. But if the guy there, whatever, that’s fine him and I can have a problem. No problem at all. But if it’s coming from the side I’m beat. Forget it. It’s murder. And it’s not. As I said please don’t think that I’m deaf. I know there’s something going on but I haven’t picked up.

I know Sarah very well. And of course she is an awareness person. I just always feel it’s a disability if you want to call it that. But it is not acknowledged.

But you know sometimes I think that’s funny. I wonder why I heard that. I know we’ve got the banana shaped thing and you know the level of hearing.
And people's speech as well makes an awful lot of difference. If you get people who don’t project or just you know mumble. That can be a problem. You know.
### Appendix J. Glossary of terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>A group of codes that are connected and form a pattern during coding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant comparison</td>
<td>A method used during coding to compare and contrast data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core category</td>
<td>The main category emerging from coding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit</td>
<td>Criteria for judging the validity of the grounded theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo</td>
<td>A reflective piece of writing undertaken during data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifiability</td>
<td>Criteria for measuring the flexibility of the grounded theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Coding</td>
<td>The first stage of coding data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otoscopy</td>
<td>A procedure for examining the ear canal and tympanic membrane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure tone Audiometry</td>
<td>A test of threshold of hearing using pure tone signals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random gap detection test</td>
<td>A test of the ability to identify gaps in speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>A criteria for measuring of how relevant the theory is to the participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real ear measurement</td>
<td>A means of testing the performance of a hearing aid in situ issuing a speech shaped signal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturation</td>
<td>The end of theoretical sampling, when no new data arises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective coding</td>
<td>A more focused coding concentrating on aspects of the emerging theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Audiometry</td>
<td>A test of discriminating speech sounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub core category</td>
<td>A sub category linked to the core category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantive coding</td>
<td>A combination of open and selective coding to define the theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tympanometry</td>
<td>A method of evaluating the middle ear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tympanosclerosis</td>
<td>Visible damage to the tympanic membrane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical sampling</td>
<td>A method of sampling concentrating on patterns in the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Sorting</td>
<td>The sorting and development of theory through memos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible speech mapping</td>
<td>A method of measuring hearing aid performance in situ using a speech signal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Criteria for measuring the ability of the Grounded theory to explain how the participant resolves the problem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>