

# Hear & Now

from *Regional Hearing Services*

*Christmas 2011 Issue*

**FREE INSIDE!**  
See our guide about the latest hearing aid technology and our special Christmas offers!

## The dangers of buying hearing aids online



*The internet has revolutionised the way we shop. Whatever you need, you can buy – any time of the day or night – and have it delivered to your door, all without leaving the comfort of your own home. There are however a few things you shouldn't buy on the internet and hearing aids are one of them.*

The process of buying hearing aids can vary from time to time, but it should always involve a hearing test to show what type of hearing loss you have and which product is most suitable for your individual hearing loss.

It is possible to have a live demonstration so that you can see the benefits of wearing a hearing aid for yourself. The final stage of this process is the purchase of the hearing aids.

Trained hearing aid audiologists use a variety of helpful techniques and create audiogram cards to pinpoint exactly how specific hearing aids can help you, always with the customer in mind.

When you buy your hearing aids, you should always ensure that your purchase price includes a warranty, so if your hearing aid breaks you are protected. When you buy online this isn't always the case. In comparison to a

*If you ask someone wearing professionally fitted hearing aids, they would be able to tell you just how priceless being able to hear again is.*

trained hearing aid audiologist, the internet is impersonal and misses out vital information that ensures the right hearing aids are chosen for you.

There are plenty of other dangers associated with buying online, including refunds or returns.

Firstly, buying online is risky because not all websites will allow refunds or returns and you never know what you're missing in the small print.

Purchasing from a hearing aid audiologist means you receive their support and guarantees, so that if you're not

happy with the hearing aids, they will always try and find a solution, allowing you to feel safer with your decisions.

Secondly, a lot of people could claim that buying online is less time consuming and cheaper, but if the hearing aids aren't suitable they will probably end up neglected in a bottom drawer.

Modular amplifying devices are a 'one size fits all' product, and are sometimes advertised as hearing aids. They are available to purchase online, and come pre-programmed so don't necessarily reflect your individual hearing loss.

Please be aware that the purchasing of hearing aids is a protected function and is governed by the HPC (Health Professions Council). The HPC states that a personal consultation, which includes a full hearing assessment with a registered hearing aid dispenser, must take place before hearing aids can be dispensed.

Hearing aids need programming to suit your hearing requirements and you may need several adjustments to help you get the maximum benefit from your new hearing aids.

It will always be more beneficial to visit a branch - or be seen at home - with a friend or family member, rather than browsing an online store.

**Your hearing loss affects not only you but those around you. Their input is valuable to finding the right solution for you and seeing a hearing aid audiologist will always be safer option.**

### Inside this edition...

#### HEARING ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

Loud music is often stated as a cause of hearing loss but did you know that in smaller, quieter doses music has actually been proven to benefit your hearing?

**Full Story on Page 3**

#### IT'S CHRIIIISTMAS!

Discover exciting new recipes for your friends and family this festive season PLUS we highlight some of the best assistive listening gifts you can give this Christmas.

**Full Story on Pages 4 and 5**

#### DEMENTIA AND HEARING LOSS

Until now they were rarely associated, but recent studies and research have shown that there could be a correlation between hearing loss and dementia.

**Full Story on Page 6**

### Plus...

*Letter from the Editor - 2*

*Tech Column - 2*

*Share your hearing story with us - 6*

*NHS funding cuts affecting hearing aids - 7*

*"Recommend a Friend" offer - 7*

*Crossword, Sudoku and Competitions - 8*

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

We hope you enjoy reading the third edition of 'Hear&Now' - a newspaper aimed at keeping you up-to-date with the latest developments in hearing aid technology and hearing loss news.

If you are considering buying hearing aids online, you will probably find the article on the front page a valuable and interesting read.

Don't forget to visit our new website [www.totalhearing.co.uk](http://www.totalhearing.co.uk) to order your batteries and accessories - make sure you don't run out and end up missing out on the festivities in the coming weeks!

We've also included a fun crossword and Sudoku to help keep you occupied over the Christmas period - just sit back, relax and read on!

If you are feeling lucky, why not enter our competitions on the back page? You could win a Kindle e-book reader (worth £89) or a Christmas Hamper (worth £100) - how's that for a nice early Christmas present?

If you enjoy this newsletter, please pass it on to family and friends and bring them into the 'Hear&Now'!

Sincerely,

*Charlotte Taylor*

(Editor-in-Chief)

## A WORLD OF NATURAL SOUND



The new CLEAR220 and CLEAR330 hearing aids from Widex are completely wireless. Like two ears, they can communicate with each other constantly.

All the functions are adjusted instantly and automatically depending on your listening environment. From soft sounds to louder sounds, you can always hear clearly.

When combined with a unique range of wireless accessories, CLEAR220 and CLEAR330 makes some of the more difficult listening situations, such as watching television, listening to music or using your mobile phone, easier.

**For more information on these exciting new hearing aids call us today FREE on 0800 612 7994 and hear how they bring a world of natural sounds closer.**

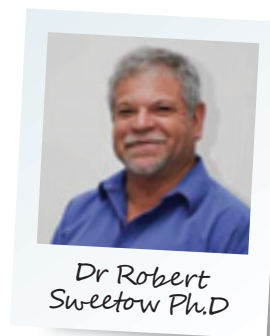
STAY IN SYNC WITH LIFE



# TECH COLUMN

## Internationally renowned tinnitus adviser educates Regional Hearing Services

Dr Robert Sweetow Ph.D, Professor of Audiology at the University of California, is a respected authority on tinnitus with over 30 years experience, and Regional Hearing Services have had the privilege of attending a recent seminar chaired by the Doctor.



Our Hearing Aid Dispensers were present to hear Dr Sweetow talk about tinnitus - including the causes and links to stress - and how we can help manage it, including the use of Widex's unique hearing aid function called Zen.

Everyone was extremely impressed with Dr Sweetow and have learnt a great deal about tinnitus management. Our Managing Director, Andrew Carmichael, said that the *"training and education are all part of an ongoing investment in developing and extending our services at our hearing healthcare clinics"*.

### What exactly is Zen?

Widex's Zen is a revolutionary program that plays random, harmonic, chime-like tones to help users relax. This sound stimulation is designed to turn your attention away from the tinnitus by replacing the buzzing, whistling, etc with a calming, and much less disturbing, background sound.

All of this helps to reduce the perceived loudness of tinnitus, which allows you to feel more in control of the situation and considerably less stressed by tinnitus.

We can also adjust the pitch, tempo and volume of each Zen program to your individual needs and even create different programs for different situations and purposes.

To listen to the Zen tones yourself, visit [www.widex.co.uk](http://www.widex.co.uk) and search for "Zen"

Zen is now available across Widex's Clear and Mind range of hearing aids, so if you would like more information on these and to arrange a free demonstration - at your local branch or at your home - then please call us today on freephone 0800 612 7994 (quoting ref: HN FH 03)

*"training and education are all part of an ongoing investment in developing and extending our services at our hearing healthcare clinics"*

*Andrew Carmichael, Regional Hearing Services' Managing Director*

# Could your hearing be improved by playing a musical instrument?

*Losing your hearing is a natural process and one that is commonly associated with age, but what people don't tell you is how to slow this process down.*

Music is often stated as the cause of hearing loss; when people attend concerts regularly or listen to music too loud. However in smaller, quieter doses music has actually been proven to benefit your brain, which in turn benefits your hearing.

Nina Kraus, the director of the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory at Northwestern University claims that *"If you spend a lot of your life interacting with sound in an active manner, then your nervous system has made lots of sound-to-meaning connections that can strengthen your auditory system"*.

Tone and pitch play an important part when writing or listening to music, and musicians especially

focus their attention on these making their brain work harder.

Violinists for example, pay attention to pitch cues to tune the violin efficiently and this training supports evidence that music training now changes and improves your brain and its responses to sounds.

This is further examined in a report by Nina Kraus and Bharath Chandrasekaran called "Music training for the development of auditory skills" [2010]. Their tests show that music training prepares and trains the brain in auditory fitness and can help delay the effects of hearing loss.

Musicians develop a talent for tuning out background noise and in a test by Kraus with a small group of 45-65 year old musicians and non musicians, the musicians were 40% better at being able to hear and maintain a conversation in

noisy background environments, such as a restaurant or a pub. The musicians were also more likely to remember the previous sentences in conversation because they were previously challenging their brain to remember music notes and detecting different tones or pitches.

Dr Ralph Holme, the head of biomedical research at Action on Hearing Loss suggested that musicians are far more likely to be able to cope with the consequences of hearing loss but *"it is far better to minimize damage in the first place by using appropriate ear protection."*

There has been no evidence yet that supports picking up an instrument for the first time - mid life - will maintain your hearing, but hearing aids teach and retrain the brain to understand sounds again, so you never know what picking up a guitar could do for your hearing.



## Speech Mapping - the hearing test with a difference!

*We are very proud to offer Speech Mapping to all our customers - both old and new. It takes the traditional hearing test one step further and uses realistic signals such as speech and music to improve both your experience and the hearing test results.*

Not only that, but if you already wear hearing aids, then Speech Mapping can be used to make sure that they are giving you the best performance they can.

For the best results we strongly recommend that you are accompanied by someone you regularly converse with as they too can participate - resulting in both parties being able to appreciate the joys of clearer hearing.

**Below is a timetable of all forthcoming Speech Mapping Events. To book your place, or for more information, please give us a call on freephone 0800 612 7991.**

*Places are limited so don't delay!*

November			December	
22 Salisbury	24 Croydon	30 Buxton	01 Newport	07 Windsor
23 Swindon	29 The Wirral		06 Wokingham	08 Epsom

# Christmas recipes

Are you fed up with the usual Christmas food? Want to try something a little different? Then get your aprons on and start cooking up our fantastic festive ideas!

## Christmas Biscuits

**Ingredients (to make 24)**  
 100g/3½oz unsalted butter, softened at room temperature  
 100g/3½oz caster sugar  
 1 free-range egg, lightly beaten  
 275g/10oz plain flour  
 1 tsp vanilla extract

**To decorate**  
 400g/14oz icing sugar  
 3-4 tbsp water  
 2-3 drops food colourings  
 Edible glitter

### Preparation method

1. Preheat the oven to 190C/375F/Gas 5. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper.
2. Cream the butter and sugar together in a bowl until pale, light and fluffy.
3. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract, a little at a time, until well combined.
4. Stir in the flour until mixture comes together as a dough.
5. Roll the dough out on a lightly floured work surface to a thickness of 1cm/½in.
6. Using biscuit cutters or a glass, cut biscuits out of the dough and carefully place onto the baking tray. To make into Christmas tree decorations, carefully make a hole in the top of the biscuit using a straw.
7. Bake the biscuits for 8-10 minutes, or until pale golden-brown. Set aside to harden for 5 minutes, then cool on a wire rack.
8. For the icing, sift the icing sugar into a large mixing bowl and stir in enough water to create a smooth mixture. Stir in the food colouring.
9. Carefully spread the icing onto the biscuits with a knife and sprinkle over the glitter. Set aside until the icing hardens.



## Mini turkey and cranberry pies

### Ingredients

500g pack shortcrust pastry  
 Plain flour  
 250g/9oz turkey  
 8 tbsp double cream  
 8 tsp cranberry sauce  
 1 egg, beaten

### Preparation method

1. Roll out the pastry on a floured surface so that it's just thinner than a £1 coin.
2. Cut out 8 x 10cm circles using a pastry cutter or small saucer, then cut 8 x 9cm circles for the lids - you may need to re-roll the trimmings.
3. Push the larger circles into 8 holes of a muffin tin, then divide the turkey, cream and cranberry sauce between them. Season well and brush the edges with a little egg.
4. Place a lid on top of each and pinch the sides together to seal. Chill for 15-20 mins.
5. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Brush the tops with more egg, then bake for 25 mins until the pastry is crisp and golden. Serve warm, or leave to cool and enjoy cold.

## Ginger cake with orange zest icing

### Ingredients

225g/8oz butter, softened  
 225g/8oz light muscovado sugar  
 225g/8oz golden syrup  
 225g/8oz black treacle  
 225g/8oz self-raising flour, sifted  
 225g/8oz wholemeal self-raising flour, sifted

4 tsp ground ginger  
 2 tbsp stem ginger (from a jar), chopped  
 2 free-range eggs, beaten  
 300ml/10½fl oz milk

### For the orange icing

150g/5oz icing sugar  
 1 orange, juice and zest

### Preparation method

1. Line a 23cm/9in square cake tin at least 4cm/1½in deep with baking parchment, and preheat the oven to 160C/325F/Gas 3.
2. Place the butter, sugar, golden syrup and black treacle into a pan and heat gently until the mixture has melted evenly. Set aside to cool slightly.
3. Sift the flours, ground ginger and stem ginger into a large mixing bowl and mix gently. Pour the cooled butter mixture into the flour. Add the eggs and milk and beat with a wooden spoon until well combined.
4. Pour the cake batter into the tin and level the surface with a palette knife or the back of a spoon. Bake for 50 minutes, or until the cake has risen and is golden-brown and a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Set aside to cool slightly in the tin, then transfer the cake to a wire rack and leave to cool completely.
5. Meanwhile, for the orange icing, sift the icing sugar into a bowl. Add about two tablespoons of the orange juice and mix to a smooth paste. Add more orange juice, as necessary, until you get a smooth icing of the consistency you desire.
6. Pour the icing over the cooled cake and spread lightly, allowing it to ooze over the edges. Sprinkle over chopped orange zest and set the cake aside until the icing has set.



# Deck the halls with gifts and presents!

Christmas is the time of giving, so why not visit [www.totalhearing.co.uk](http://www.totalhearing.co.uk) and pick up a gift for a friend or loved one. They have everything you need to help you hear better including assistive listening devices such as amplified phones, alarm clocks and devices to help relax and relieve the symptoms of tinnitus. Not only that, they also provide all your hearing aid accessories such as batteries and filters.

## 1. Geemarc AmpliDECT 280 Cordless Telephone

This amplified cordless phone features both a loud ringer and speaker volume, plus has a large display for easy reading. **£59.99**

## 2. Geemarc Wake'n'Shake Alarm Clock

A large display digital alarm clock which can wake you with sound, strobe light or vibrating pad! It can also alert you to the telephone, including timed alarm calls. **£38.99**

## 3. Sound Pillow

Fall asleep to the music or sounds you like with the Sound Pillow. Just connect up your audio device, using the cable provided, and you will hear the sound through the built in speaker. 100% polyester filling, 50% cotton and 50% polyester cover. **£17.99**

## 4. Geemarc Clearsound CL8300 Mobile Phone

The CL8300 features a very loud ringer volume along with adjustable speaker volume, visual ringer indicator and a vibrating alert. It also has an easy to read screen, large buttons for ease-of-use and an SOS function. **£89.99**

## 5. Amplicom Ringflash 200

This alerting device can be used either as a wireless doorbell or can be connected up to your telephone. It can be set to produce a loud tone, display a very bright white strobe light or both. **£39.99**

## 6. Naturcare Relaxation Ball

Need to relax? Suffering with insomnia or tinnitus? The Relaxation Ball offers effective relief through its seven digitally produced sounds: birdsong, brook, heartbeat, rain, waves, white noise and woodland. Also features a 30 minute timer **£18.99**

*Don't forget - to purchase any of the above  
please visit [www.totalhearing.co.uk](http://www.totalhearing.co.uk)*

# The links between hearing loss and dementia

*If you think of hearing loss and the symptoms that come with it, there are usually a few things that most people would associate - but would you think of dementia?*

Studies and recent research have now shown that there could be a correlation between hearing loss and dementia or Alzheimer's disease that exceeds the symptoms you expect to gain as you age anyway.

*Both hearing loss and dementia are associated with old age but rarely associated with each other, until now.*

Dr Luigi Ferrucci and his colleagues investigated into the association between hearing loss and dementia on 639 men and women between the ages of 36 and 90 (none of whom had dementia at the start of the study in 1990).

Out of the 639 patients, 123 were diagnosed with mild hearing loss, 53 had moderate loss and six had severe loss. Eventually when the tests came to an end (after an average of around 12 years) 58 patients were diagnosed with dementia with 37 of those further diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

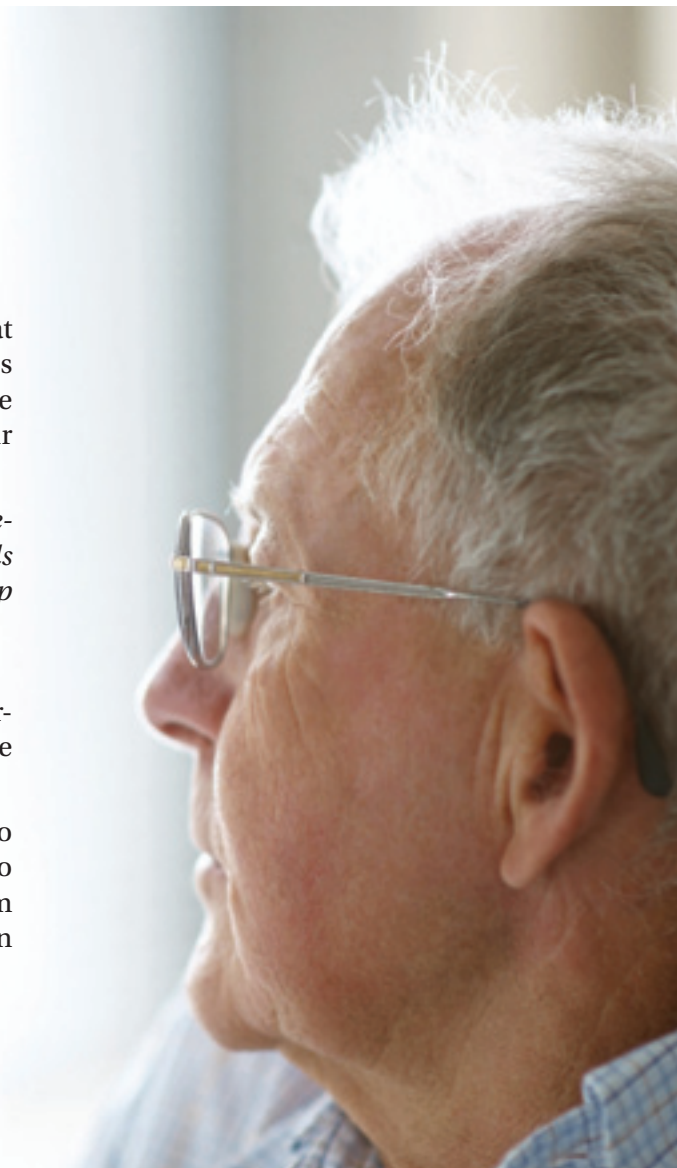
By examining the data, the researchers found that dementia risk increases noticeably if the hearing loss is moderate or severe and patients over 60 were more at risk with 36% of dementia risk being linked to their own form of hearing loss and age.

*"The worse the hearing loss, the worse the risk for Alzheimer's as well. For every additional loss of 20 decibels of hearing capacity, Alzheimer's risk appeared to go up by 20%"* the researchers said.

[[www.businessweek.com/lifestyle/content/heathday/649896.html](http://www.businessweek.com/lifestyle/content/heathday/649896.html)]

These findings suggest that efforts to correct a hearing loss with a hearing aid, could potentially reduce the risk of developing dementia.

The older you are the more susceptible you are to hearing loss and diseases such as Alzheimer's, so wearing a hearing aid could prevent your brain from becoming vulnerable and potentially benefit you in more ways than one.



## Putting a smile on your face - and ours too!

Every day, we receive letters and calls from people whose lives have been significantly improved by properly fitted hearing aids. Here are just some of our favourite letters, from those whose quality of life has improved significantly.

### Share your story too!

If you've noticed some dramatic changes since getting your hearing aids, let us know. Write, or email in, to share your story and it could appear in our next issue!

*I would recommend your company to any one I think might benefit.*

*Once again thank you for sending such a wonderful kind man to help my father.*

*Mrs S, Birmingham*

*I am writing to let you know how satisfied I am with the hearing aid you supplied last December.*

*It is by far the best hearing aid that I have had...I am so satisfied with it that I have purchased a second one for reserve as I depend so much on it!*

*Mr H, Cornwall*

*I just can't wait till I get the aids - like a child waiting for Christmas! My husband, also, was very impressed.*

*Mrs B-B, Oxfordshire*

*I would like to thank you so much for adjusting my hearing aid. I am so pleased and also surprised at the difference in quality of sound and I assure you I will be using it every day.*

*Mrs G - Devon*

*I am quite delighted with the aid and the service and I encourage all my friends locally with hearing problems to go to your company.*

*Many thanks for a job well done!*

*Mr A, Exmouth*

# Hearing aids affected by NHS funding

The government spending review was eagerly anticipated at the beginning of 2011, with significant cuts affecting some departments including education, the arts and the NHS.

In preparation for the cuts taking place, the NHS were instructed to find and devise efficient saving schemes over the coming years and save around 5% a year by 2014-15. According to Denis Campbell, a health correspondent for The Guardian - "The NHS in England will suffer a cut of almost £1bn in its spending power by 2015".

Reports have shown that the cuts are already taking place and affecting the hospitals, with wards closing, operation restrictions being implemented and waiting lists rising. This will cause a problem for patients waiting for NHS hearing aids, as waiting times are already high, especially in comparison to the private sector waiting times.

Recent studies predict that the number of over 65s will increase by 53% over the next 30 years, meaning further strains on the NHS. With no public health programme to prevent noise-induced hearing damage amongst young people, we run the risk of increasing hearing loss in our already increasing ageing population.

Action On Hearing Loss released a report that shows just how drastic the implications of these spending cuts will be. "In 2010, the UK spent £1.34 on research into hearing loss for every person affected. This compares to £14.21 for sight loss, "£21.31 for diabetes, and £49.71 for cardiovascular research."

If only £1.34 was being spent on hearing loss research in 2010, there is a chance that the funding will decrease further still, meaning that hearing loss could be pushed further down the list of NHS priorities, meaning hearing aid waiting times will increase once again.



A quality hearing aid is an investment - not only in the quality of your life but also in your quality of hearing.

## It deserves a quality battery.

Remember, the wrong batteries can harm your hearing aid.

We don't offer the cheaper brands you may find on the internet, but we do offer keen prices!

And with a box of 60 Regional Hearing Services' own brand battery cells costing just £14.99 (and the equivalent Rayovac costing just £28.00) you could save over £26.00 compared to some of our competitors.

## To order yours, call us free on 0800 612 7994

Please quote ref: HN FH 03 when calling. Lines open weekdays, 8am - 8pm (weekends, 10am - 5pm)

## Spread the happiness with our "Recommend a Friend" offer!

		
<b>Food Hamper</b>	<b>£30 M&amp;S Vouchers</b>	<b>£30 Donation to the Charity of your choice</b>

At Regional Hearing Services, we are always delighted to hear from customers whose lives have been changed for the better by their hearing aids.

However, if you have friends or family who also suffer with a hearing loss - and who could benefit from our help - then why not recommend them to us? If they then go on to purchase a hearing aid from us, we would like to thank you for your loyalty and for "spreading the word" by sending you both a "Thank You" gift of your choice from those shown opposite.

Please complete the form below - making sure that you have permission from the person you are recommending before doing so - and return it to us (no stamp needed). If you would like any more information, then call us free on 0800 612 7994 (quoting ref: HN RF 03).

I would like to recommend the person detailed below and, if they then go on to purchase a hearing aid from you, we would like to receive the free "Thank You" gifts as indicated.

### Your Details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No (required) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Free "Thank You" gift:  Food Hamper  £30 M&S Voucher  £30 Donation

### Person you would like to recommend

HN RF 03

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No (required) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Free "Thank You" gift:  Food Hamper  £30 M&S Voucher  £30 Donation

Please return your completed form to us (no stamp needed) at: **Freepost RYLS-SECR-ARBR, Regional Hearing Services, 111-113 Fore Street, SALTASH PL12 6AE**

## CROSSWORD

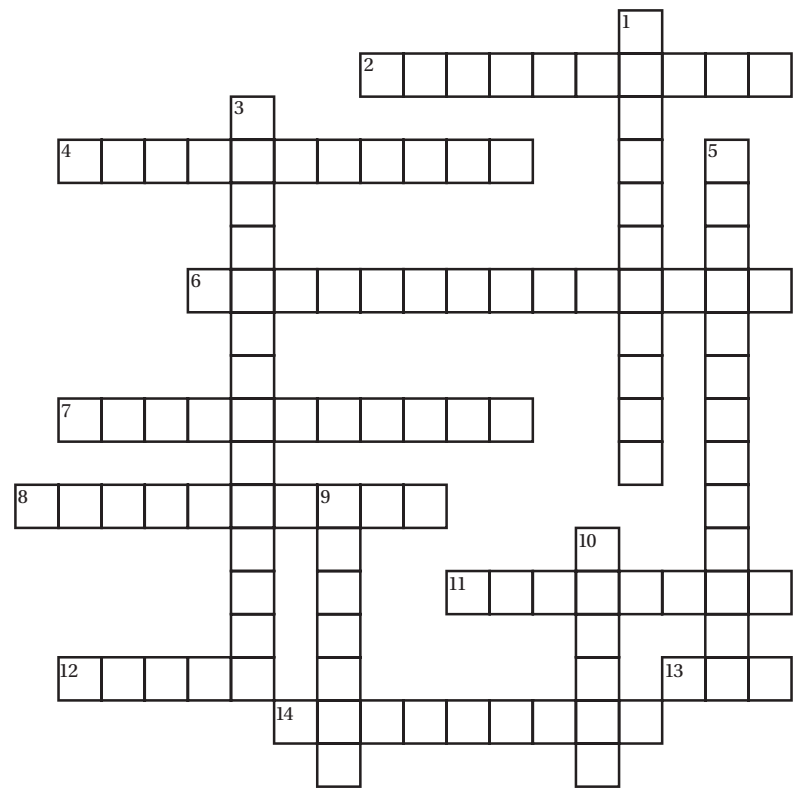
Answers to these clues can be found throughout the newsletter, so be sure to read each article closely!

### ACROSS

- 2 In comparison to a trained hearing aid audiologist, the internet is what? (10)
- 4 According to Nina Kraus; "If you spend a lot of your life \_\_\_\_\_ with sound in an active manner...that can strengthen your auditory system" (11)
- 6 What has the internet done to the way we shop? (14)
- 7 This is currently affecting the arts, education and the NHS? (7, 4)
- 8 Which musicians pay extra attention to pitch cues? (10)
- 11 What syndrome is now being associated with hearing loss? (8)
- 12 40% of musicians were better at being able to hear and maintain a conversation in what kind of background environments? (5)
- 13 Hearing loss is commonly associated with what? (3)
- 14 Tasty! Mini turkey and \_\_\_\_\_ pies (9)

### DOWN

- 1 This allows you to fall asleep to the music or sounds you like (5, 6)
- 3 If you ask someone wearing \_\_\_\_\_ fitted hearing aids, they would be able to tell you just how priceless being able to hear again is (14)
- 5 What is a hearing test with a difference? (6, 7)
- 9 When you buy hearing aids from a professional you will receive what? (7)
- 10 Dementia risk increases noticeably if the hearing loss is moderate or what? (6)



## SUDOKU

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Hard

## COMPETITIONS



### Win a Kindle

Carry up to 1,400 books in your pocket with the latest Kindle e-book reader. For your chance to win this Christmases' "must-have" gift, worth £89, just answer the following question:

**Where is our Speech Mapping Event being held on November 23<sup>rd</sup>?**

Write your answer on the reply card, which you can find in the enclosed Christmas technology guide, and send it to us (no stamp needed).



### Win a Christmas Hamper

For your chance to win a Christmas Hamper full of festive treats, and worth £100, just answer the following question:

**How much per each affected person does the UK spend on hearing loss research?**

Write your answer on the reply card, which you can find in the enclosed Christmas technology guide, and send it to us (no stamp needed).

*The closing date for these competitions is Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011*

**www.totalhearing.co.uk**  
Hearing Aid accessories and aids to hearing

Total Hearing are "hear to help", offering everything you need to look after and care for your hearing health and hearing aids. We also supply a wide range of solutions for the hard of hearing, including house and mobile phones, alarm clocks and devices to help relax and relieve the symptoms of tinnitus.

Plus our prices are very competitive, ordering could not be simpler and delivery is swift and secure!

**For more information visit [www.totalhearing.co.uk](http://www.totalhearing.co.uk) or if you would like to speak to someone then call us free on 0800 612 6230.**

