30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Sue Walter’s Implant and the Formation of Cicada

On 15th August I celebrated 30 years since my first implant operation. Prof Gibson and Dr Barry Scrivener performed the surgery. Good job guys. My old 22-channel implant is still doing well I think. It has been such a privilege to witness the development of the NSW cochlear implant program and see it expand across the world. Along the way I have been helped and encouraged by hundreds of wonderful people and inspired by their efforts to help people hear again.

CICADA also celebrates 30 years this year and I have so many fond memories of our work together, our committee meetings, Christmas parties with magic shows, fire eaters and belly dancers for entertainment, plus Santa (played by Alan Jones, Prof’s twin brother, Halit, Barney O’Sullivan and MORE over the years), expos and information days - not to mention our picnic days where Prof introduced us to the glory of the raw egg-throwing competition, from his old school days!! So many of us ended up with egg on our hands….

At our BBQ day on 24th August, to kick off Hearing Awareness Week, we celebrated this 30th anniversary. The very talented Chrissy Boyce made a lovely cake with a CICADA on it and Prof Gibson and I performed a very neat incision on the cake. Bill Gibson said some very kind words as he showed an old video of my original CI operation- (not for the squeamish!). Also seen on this video, Prof and I talking on the telephone some months after the surgery - apparently they didn’t expect I would be able to hear well enough to have a phone conversation, so he took this video around the world to demonstrate that speech understanding with a CI implant did not necessarily depend upon lip reading skills and face to face contact.

Prof relates that “Sue was the eighth person worldwide to show convincing evidence she could follow speech without needing to lip read. For the first few years Sue used to visit every person about to receive a cochlear implant in hospital. Sue received a left cochlear implant, that’s the other side, in August 2005 and now uses both her ears. She is president of CICADA. Sue now works at SCIC Gladesville, troubleshooting and mailing out loaners and spare parts.”
So this is my CV from Prof, and what a great journey it has been.

I must thank, sincerely, my fellow CICADA members for giving so much of themselves to our cause. Our commitment to advocate for the CI comes right from the heart, as the difference it has made to our quality of life is immense. Living with hearing loss is not easy - within society, there is still a widespread lack of understanding of the issues faced by the deaf. So the hearing impaired become advocates, to try and get the message out that we are just as capable as any hearing person, when given an opportunity.

Implant and the first person worldwide to show convincing evidence she could follow speech without needing to lip read. For the first few years Sue used to visit every person about to receive a cochlear implant in hospital. Sue received a left cochlear implant, that’s the other side, in August 2005 and now uses both her ears. She is president of CICADA. Sue now works at SCIC Gladesville, troubleshooting and mailing out loaners and spare parts.” So this is my CV from Prof, and what a great journey it has been.

Sue’s cake was made by Chrissy Boyce

Alex Gibson and President Sue with her parents Marg and Graham

Prof Gibson and Sue cutting the cake
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Hook Up Online And Share Your News
Please visit us at www.cicada.org.au
Or our Facebook page Cicada Australia Inc.
Darwin friends now have their own Facebook page Cicada Northern Territory

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter by email, please send your details to suewalters@cicada.org.au

Donations over $2 to CICADA are tax-deductible.

CICADA Australia Inc. thanks Cochlear Ltd. for supporting the design, printing and distribution of this newsletter.

From the President
Hearing Awareness Week 2014

My cochlear implant was 30 years old on 15th August. CICADA celebrated at our BBQ day on 24th August at the start of Hearing Awareness Week. I put together over 100 photographs of mentors and memories as a tribute to everyone who has been a part of this journey. I have the utmost admiration for Professor Bill Gibson and his wife Alex, who have drawn together many committed people to grow the CI program into the wonderful service as it stands today. They have also encouraged and supported CICADA since its beginning in 1984. See the report on the BBQ day in this issue of the BUZZ. I will post the slide show on the cicada website www.cicada.org.au

DEAFNESS FORUM of Australia continues to challenge government to make hearing loss a national health priority. During Hearing Awareness Week, a breakfast meeting was held at Parliament House where they presented a report on the findings of an investigation into the potential impacts of privatising Australian Hearing. See the full report at http://www.deafnessforum.org.au/index.php/advocacy/112-uncategorised/245-submissions

They are also advocating for better training of carers who work in Community and Aged Care, so that carers are properly informed on issues of hearing loss and more able to address the needs of deaf clients.

Australian Hearing Hub at Macquarie University held an OPEN DAY for the general public during HAW to showcase the various organisations that collaborate on research. CICADA members arranged an information stand as part of the support network and the event was well attended. The Hon Jillian Skinner MP officially opened the event and spoke about her role in providing funding for medical technology. There was a series of informative talks throughout the day and activities for children.

The official launch of the new merged SCIC/RIDBC organization was held at the North Rocks campus on 25th August. Several CICADA members attended this event along with benefactors, Executive and staff from both organisations. The Hon Jillian Skinner MP, a great supporter of cochlear implant technology for many years attended this also to officially open the combined service. RIDBC has long been recognized as providing excellent educational services to deaf and blind children across Australia. This will now be enhanced with the addition of SCIC to their portfolio. CHRIS REHN, previously the General Manager of SCIC and now CEO of RIDBC will be guest speaker at our CICADA AGM on 2nd November and will discuss the reasons behind the merge.

OUR FIRST SUNDAY EVENT FOR 2015 will be 15th March for Seniors Week. A special event is being planned, so SAVE THE DATE!!

Sue Walters

Deafness Forum Board Members at the Parliament House breakfast

Robyn Jones, Judy Cassell, Roma Woods and Rhonda Greene at the SCIC/RIDBC launch
Monica Bray was guest speaker at our BBQ day on May 25th. After working for SCIC for over 20 years, Monica is now enjoying her new career with Cochlear Global. Monica describes Cochlear as a very complex organization that is highly regulated due to the medical nature of its products, but also as a passionate powerhouse of ideas. Starting from the beginning, was Prof Graeme Clark who never let go of his dream to help the deaf to hear, though he had to battle for many years to get the device to a stage where he could show it worked. Then, Paul Trainor, head of a group of companies called “Nucleus” stepped in and was able to draw together funding to make the implant a commercial product. And in 1983, Cochlear was established as a corporate entity in Australia. They expanded to the USA, Switzerland and Japan within the next 6 years and now have 2700 staff worldwide, offices in 20 countries and distributors in over 100 countries.

In 2010, Cochlear opened their new global headquarters and Asia-Pacific Head Office at Macquarie University in Sydney.

Monica works in the Global Human Resources Department and her particular role is the Global Product Learning manager. When new products are released, Monica’s job is to train the Cochlear staff, who take it out into the public domain and inform the people who use the product - surgeons, clinicians and recipients, so they can get the most benefit from the product and feel well supported. Monica also runs 3-day courses for new employees at Cochlear Ltd, teaching them all about the company, about hearing loss and implants. Monica has a lot of insight from working with CI’s over the years and is passionate about her work- she can pass on a lot of valuable information and inspire people to do their best. See Monica’s full presentation on the CICADA website:

The MCare Watch is a device that was created for elderly people with serious health issues who want to remain independent and feel safe venturing out on their own. It is a watch that can make 2-way calls and can receive calls from 20 different numbers. It can answer calls automatically and is hands-free, having a built-in microphone and speaker. It has an SOS button, which can call up to 3 numbers when pressed to make sure someone responds. The watch is waterproof and has a GPS location finder. It is rechargeable and only takes 2 hours to fully charge. You can buy the watch upfront or pay by the month. Sounds like science fiction, but it IS a reality

Deaf Sports Australia

Keep fit

This organization fosters participation of deaf citizens in many different sports right up to National and International level. They run an Active Kids program to increase awareness of the health and social benefits of playing sport. The 2016 Australian Deaf Games will be held in Adelaide from 9-16 Jan.

If you want to see what is happening in all areas of Deaf Sports, look at their calendar on the Deaf Sports website.
http://www.deafsports.org.au

STOP PRESS

Function Dates for 2015

Sunday, March 15th
Sunday, May 24th
Sunday, September 6th
Sunday, November 1st AGM
Dr Halit Sanli
Biomedical and Electronic Engineer SCIC

Dr Halit Sanli was our guest speaker at the August BBQ. Halit is frequently seen around the environs of SCIC, but few people are aware of his skills and his importance in a range of issues relating to cochlear implants.

Halit joined the SCIC program in September 1989, as an electronic engineer, having previously worked as an extraction engineer in the North Sea and Libya. He started out in the basement of RPA to design equipment to measure and assess children’s suitability for cochlear implants, as a young child cannot tell you what they are hearing.

Today most of his time is occupied with intraoperative testing, which is carried out during implant surgery to test the integrity of the electrodes, checking that every electrode is giving a response so that if a problem is encountered, the surgeon can take corrective action on the spot. He also assists with the correct placing of the electrodes. About 96 percent of surgeries run normally, but in some cases the surgeon may find difficulty, such as an obstruction to the cochlear, ossification, or abnormalities of the cochlear. In these cases the tests done by Halit at the time of surgery are very useful.

Halit also carries out postoperative integrity testing on the implants of people who may be having problems with their implant, hearing strange sounds etc.

A database has been kept by Halit of surgery details of each patient that he has been involved with, about 3,000 surgeries. SCIC is the only organization in the world that has someone who carries out these tests during the CI operation.

CapTel
A brief presentation was given by a representative from Access Com, the distributor of the captioned telephone in Australia. Caption telephones are designed for people with a hearing loss and they’re designed to help make telephone calls easy for you. It looks like a normal telephone but has a monitor on the front where the captions of the caller’s words appear. About five lines of text can appear, depending on the size of the font chosen. Customer support service Monday through to Friday can be accessed through the telephone.

At the moment CapTel is only available for rent. Access Com takes a holding deposit of $50 that is refundable if you find that the technology doesn’t work for you. The technical support fee is $55 per year.

More information can be found at www.accesscomm.au/

Sunshine story:
Deaf woman to hear again by 100th birthday
Mumbai mid-day April 2014

Mollie Smith has struggled with hearing problems for decades but has just had a cochlear implant to allow her to hear again. Born a month after the start of the First World War, the great-grandmother’s earliest memories were of the sound of droning zeppelins overhead.

Mrs Smith’s hearing began to fade when she was in her 70s, followed by her sight 20 years later, leaving the active pensioner from Rugby, increasingly isolated. She feared that due to her age she wouldn’t be eligible for a cochlear implant, and jumped at the chance when one was offered. It was implanted in her left ear at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham. It means she will now be able to hear in time for her 100th birthday in September. “It’s the best early birthday present,” she said.

Mollie Smith, a 99-year-old has become the oldest person in Europe to receive an implant.
24th Annual General Meeting of Cicada Australia Inc.

Agenda

Cicada's AGM, the last BBQ for 2014, will be held at SCIC, Gladesville, 2nd November, commencing at 11 am.

Agenda for the AGM

* Welcome to members and guests (Sue Walters, President)
* Apologies
* Acceptance of the AGM minutes from the 3rd November 2013
* Matters Arising
* President's Report – Sue Walters
* Treasurers Report - Chris Boyce

Office Bearers and Committee Members to vacate their positions

* Ratification of Office Bearers and Committee members for 2014/15
  (if nominations received are not in excess of vacancies available, no election is required)

Elected President takes the Chair

* Vote of thanks to committee
* New committee and year ahead
* Other Business
* Close of meeting and welcome to guest speaker Chris Rehn

NSW Support Groups

Cicada Illawarra

I can 'report' the Group is going from strength to strength, and this is due simply to ALL the recipients and prospectives that come along to our BBQ events. As we near the end of 2014 and I look 'back' over our attendance's this year, it's quite obvious that you all enjoy the social get together's, so we will keep moving forward in 2015. I would just like to make 'special' mention of Lyn, Dianne and my Sydney mates, Faye & Robert Yarroll who's continuing efforts make these events so enjoyable.

Our 5th BBQ for the year will be held at the Illawarra Live Steamers on 26th October and I'm hoping to see you all on the day. Bob Ross

Please contact Bob Ross for further information
Mobile: 0418 630 466
Email: rossybikein@gmail.com

Cicada Annual Raffle

Keep sending them in

Thanks to everyone who has responded by purchasing raffle tickets, or those who have given money in lieu of. There is still time support Cicada by purchasing and returning the tickets if you have not already done so. The money raised helps Cicada keep in touch with its members and well as carry out its other support activities. The raffle will be drawn at the AGM on 2nd November.

Change of Address

Let us know

Each year we have a number of members who change address and forget to let us know. This means that we are no longer able to send out issues of the Buzz and HQ magazine to them. Please send details of address changes to the secretary Judy Cassell PO Box 5028, South Turramurra, NSW 2074 or email judycassell@cicada.org.au

Newcastle

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The attendees at Cicada Illawarra Support Group BBQ day 31/8/14
Bob Catlin
1921 - 2014

Cicada was saddened to hear of the death of Bob Catlin who passed away on Saturday, 20th September. Bob had been a regular guest at our morning teas, and BBQ’s up until a few months before his death, at the age of 92. He was still driving himself to our functions. Bob was an inspiration to us all. He worked until he was 90 and was always positive and enthusiastic. We will miss his smiling face.

Ken Rice and Kath Westbrook

Kids with two cochlear implants learn more words
University of Melbourne www.futurity.org/cochlear-implants-children-language-740462/

Children with hearing loss who are fitted with a second cochlear implant early in life develop better language skills, according to a five-year study. “Children in this study with bilateral CIs developed vocabulary and spoken language significantly faster than children with only one CI. This has enormous implications for their long-term future,” says Julia Sarant, lead researchers in the audiology and speech pathology department at University of Melbourne.

Severe-profound congenital hearing loss is a significant cost to society. In 2005, specialised education cost on average $25,000 per child, loss of productivity cost $6.7 billion, and social security benefits were paid to approximately 129,000 individuals who were unemployed due to hearing loss.

The study, published in the journal Ear and Hearing, was conducted across Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, and New Zealand, involving cochlear implant clinics and early intervention centres with more than 160 children.

The cochlear implant will be transformed into a breathtaking stainless steel-sculpture at the heart of another great Australian design. Queensland engineering firm Bligh Tanner has won Engineers Australia’s Freefall Experience Design Ideas Competition, a national competition to design a showcase installation for the Freefall Pin Oak Forest at Canberra’s National Arboretum. The winning design is a transparent flowing sculpture of corten, stainless steel and rock. Moving through the trees and terminating as a spiral, it was described by the judging panel as a “superbly elegant” and “immersive” concept that “encourages people to explore the sensory experience of the forest.”
Now an Indian device to screen newborns for hearing loss

FirstPost Kolkata August 2014

An Indian woman entrepreneur has designed a non-invasive, portable device that detects hearing loss in babies. The mass-screening tool developed by Bangalore-based Neeti Kailas has received the 2014 Rolex Award for Enterprise. Every year, around 150,000 hearing-impaired babies are born in India and without any definitive screening system in place, it goes undetected. The battery-powered device works using auditory brain-stem response (ABR), tapping into ongoing electrical activity inside the brain via electrodes placed on the scalp. According to Kailas, what sets the innovation apart is that the testing system suits Indian hospitals and clinics - places that are usually noisy. The products available in the Indian market are manufactured abroad and therefore are not designed to filter out the background noises. And because it’s indigenous, it would be about one-fifth the cost of the foreign devices available. To facilitate a wide reach in rural areas, its user-friendly design can be handled with ease by minimally skilled public health workers. Though the device is in the prototype stage, the prize money will help Kailas to propel the venture to the clinical trials stage by the end of the year.

App a solution for kids with hearing loss

Edith Cowan University News June 2014

An app initially developed to cut down doctors visit for one little boy could play a role in fighting one of Australia’s largest public health issues. The hearing test was developed by ECU PhD student Luke Brook for his five year old son Cooper, who was diagnosed with hearing loss at around 12 months of age. Mr Brook decided on an app for use on tablets or smartphones to assist in screening and monitoring hearing loss in children through an easy to use and engaging interface. “The main benefits of the app are in the initial screening of children living in Indigenous communities where undiagnosed hearing loss is a serious problem. However it’s also useful for monitoring children with a diagnosed hearing loss to keep tabs on ear infections which can be common in children wearing hearing aids.” The app uses the popular children’s story The Very Hungry Caterpillar in a friendly, easy to use interface in a test which takes less than 10 minutes. On completion results are sent to health professionals where formal diagnosis can be made and treatment organised. Telethon Speech & Hearing provided facilities for testing and verification of the app as well as families attending the centre being involved in the research process. Telethon Chief executive Peta Monley said “It is a significant problem especially for Indigenous children who tend to have middle ear problems more frequently. Early intervention for middle ear disease is critical through testing and diagnosis as the disease can lead to permanent hearing loss and a host of other developmental problems.”

Ronan’s listening in with rare new ear implant

Sunshine Coast Daily August 2014

“ I CAN tell straight away that he can hear things.” The joy in Sarah Bell’s voice is palpable when she talks of the life-changing development which has finally given her six-year-old son Ronan the same opportunity as other kids. Ronan was born with single-sided deafness. The auditory nerve in his right ear failed to develop, meaning the ear will never be able to pick up sound. Ronan is only the second child in Queensland to be implanted with Cochlear’s BAHA Attract System. The hearing aid uses bone conduction in the right ear and transports the sounds to his properly functioning left ear, eliminating the “head shadow”. The new BAHA technology eliminates the stud in favour of magnetic attachment of the sound processor to the implant. A proud Mrs Bell said the difference in her son was phenomenal. “He’s a lot more confident at answering questions now. Children sometimes tease him about his hearing aid but it’s never bothered him... he just takes it in his stride,”

Structural engineer Rod Bligh led the winning team and was inspired by a surgeon he met in Tasmania who explained cochlear implants and the complexity of the human ear. These concepts will also come to life via an interactive system that will sense its surroundings, interpret and store incoming data and interact with people on site. This creates a heightened sensory experience for visitors, and allows the sculpture to engage directly with its microclimate – all possible with a number of robust speakers and sonic actuators. Bligh Tanner’s entry says: “Nodes of information relating to the 8 Colleges of Engineers Australia are reflective of the electrodes activating the hearing nerves along the cochlear implant. In contrast to the openness of the viewing platform, which reaches out to Canberra and the nation, the lower core of the spiral provides a protective and quiet ‘cocoon’ experience.” Arboretum executive director Fay Steward said the design complemented the Arboretum’s mission to provide visitors with an all-round viewing experience. “It isn’t just about trees, it’s about experiences.” Construction of the winning project depends on Engineers Australia’s search for funding; the organisation is planning an opening date in 2019 to coincide with its 100th anniversary.

YOU DON’T SAY: Ronan Bell swaps gossip with his proud twin sister Eilish and brother Rory thanks to a groundbreaking bone-conducting hearing aid
Technology talk

Jamie-Lee Lewis in global brain scanner study

Northern District Times June 2014

Following on from “World-first Brain Imaging with Entertainment” in the Feb 2014 Buzz, the new brain imaging called magnetoencephalography (MEG) was used on Jamie-Lee, daughter of rugby league legend Wally Lewis, and part of the Australian water-polo team. The $1.5 million scanner is so sensitive it has been compared to the ability to measure the sound of an ant’s footsteps walking across a crowded football field.

Invisible Cochlear Implants

MIT News Magazine April 2014

Current cochlear implants require that a transmitter about an inch in diameter be affixed to the skull, with a wire snaking down to a combined microphone and power source. Researchers at MIT’s Microsystems Technology Laboratories collaborated with physicians from Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary to develop a new low-power signal-processing chip that could lead to a cochlear implant with no external hardware. It would be wirelessly recharged and would run for about eight hours per charge. They also developed a prototype charger that plugs into an ordinary cell phone and can recharge the signal-processing chip in roughly two minutes.

Existing cochlear implants use an external microphone to gather sound, but the new implant would use the natural microphone of the middle ear, which is almost always intact in cochlear-implant patients. Normally, delicate bones in the middle ear, known as ossicles, convey the vibrations of the eardrum to the cochlea. The new device would employ a tiny sensor that detects the ossicles’ vibrations, relaying their signal to a microchip implanted in the ear. That microchip would convert it to an electrical signal and pass it on to an electrode in the cochlea. Lowering the power requirements of the converter chip is the key to dispensing with the skull-mounted hardware. The researchers showed that the chip and sensor can pick up and process speech played into the middle ear of a human cadaver. They also tested the new waveform on four patients with cochlear implants and found that it did not compromise their ability to hear.

TECHNOLOGY TALK GENERIC

Stem cells can restore hearing ability

Science World Report and BioResearch Open Access August 2014

Spiral ganglion cells are essential for hearing and their irreversible degeneration in the inner ear is common in most types of hearing loss. Adult spiral ganglion cells are not able to regenerate. A newly discovered type of stem cell may prove helpful in replacing tissues damaged through hearing loss. Scientists have found that spiral ganglion stem cells present in the inner ear can be used to restore hearing ability. New evidence in a mouse model shows that spiral ganglion stem cells capable of self-renewal and can be grown and induced to differentiate into mature spiral ganglion cells as well as neurons and glial cells. These cells are normally poorly regenerated in the mammalian ear. The researchers concluded that the self-renewing properties demonstrated by spiral ganglion stem cells make them a promising source of replacement cells for therapies designed to regenerate the neural structures of the inner ear.

Twin hearing study helps discover gene that influences hearing ability

MedicalXpress and Journal of Human Molecular Genetics August 2014

The largest ever genome-wide association study on hearing ability has identified the salt-inducible kinase 3 (SIK3) gene as a key influencer in how well we can hear, particularly at high frequencies. This significant new finding by King’s College London, co-funded by charities Action on Hearing Loss and Age UK, could lead to future treatments. The study involved 4,939 adults from across Europe, including the G-EAR consortium and a group of 1,022 volunteers from TwinsUK. Researchers looked for tiny changes in their genomes that correlated with their hearing ability, finding a single change in the gene SIK3. SIK3 protein was then shown to be present in the cochlea of mice, which is consistent with the gene being involved in hearing. Dr Frances Williams, who led the research, said: ‘Hearing loss in adults is a complex condition involving both genetic and environmental factors, but we still know very little about the genes involved which is why this research is so important.

Untreated hearing loss makes the brain shrink

At the Rim May and Hearing Aid Company of Texas August 2014

It is well-documented that our brains shrink in size as we emerge into our senior years. But the shrinkage seems to be fast-tracked in older adults with untreated hearing loss, according to the results of a study by researchers from Johns Hopkins and the National Institute on Aging. The study gives urgency to treating hearing loss rather than ignoring it. Researcher Frank Lin and his colleagues used information from the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging to compare brain changes over time between adults with normal hearing and adults with hearing loss. 126 participants underwent yearly magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to track brain changes for up to 10 years. Each also had complete physicals at the time of the first MRI in 1994, including hearing tests. At the starting point, 75 had normal hearing while 51 had impaired hearing, with at least a 25dB loss. Lin and his colleagues found that those participants whose hearing was already impaired at the start of the sub-study had accelerated rates of brain atrophy compared to those with normal hearing. Overall, those with impaired hearing lost more than an additional cubic centimetre of brain tissue each year compared with those with normal hearing. They also had significantly more shrinkage in particular regions, including brain structures responsible for processing sound and speech. This might be due to an “impoverished” auditory cortex, atrophied from lack of stimulation. Being higher risk for brain atrophy means hearing impaired individuals should be proactive about their hearing health. Early detection is key in successfully treating, and sometimes reversing, hearing impairments. Even kids, teens and young adults should be tested regularly to catch any problems early on. You could make a big difference in your mental capacity as you get older, reducing your risk for cognitive issues like dementia.