

Brian

Loss of hearing came to me around the age of 50 – 55. I had various hearing aids fitted at Westcombe and Shelley Road, Boscombe, and as the hearing went down and they could no longer help, it was suggested I might be suitable for a cochlear implant. I hadn't at that time even heard or knew what it was. They explained and they said see what they say at Southampton University, and if you are suitable, you will get one.

From there I waited a little while, came to Southampton and started having various tests, hearing tests and progressed from there to the point where I was a suitable subject and I went to the Southampton General for an op to have one fitted. All very pleasant and everyone on the way was very kind and very nice

If we go back to previous to having the implant, to when I first started to be aware that I had a problem with deafness, initially you put it off – or I did, and I blamed everybody else. It wasn't me that couldn't hear, either they didn't say it clearly or I'd misheard but they'd said it wrong. By the time a few people corrected me and made it clear that I had a problem, yes, at work confidence goes. I employed people which made a problem working in the building industry. Site meetings with clerk of the works, general foremen, I wanted them looking directly at me which wasn't always feasible. It did become very difficult. Even when I had hearing aids, initially they helped but they got to the point that I had gone through the various hearing aids available as I deteriorated, I really did need help.

At home there was arguments across the table about things, one would say something and the other one hasn't heard and then you know, and you had to be facing - not always convenient. Shopping, you couldn't go into town and discuss anything, not at all, not even remotely. I couldn't go to a bank and speak to anyone over a counter. All of that has now changed, I can manage and I am getting better all the time and it is still early days, it is great.

I have been fitted with a hearing aid/implant combined. A lot people have only had the implant, but because I have got not a total loss of hearing, I still retain bass sound in both ears, it was more beneficial and suggested having a combined one

would give a more rounded sound overall and it would help. I was happy and pleased with whatever.

I then had the combined implant, arrived here a month later, it was switched on, and Mary started tuning, and from there on it has been all progress. Each appointment's improved and I am very, very happy and pleased. I think it is wonderful.

Since having the implant everything has changed, everything has changed for the better. I can hear bird songs again, I can hear people. Previously I was only hearing bass sounds, sounds I didn't like: rattling saucepans, heavy vehicles on the road. All nasty noises that we could do without, aircraft. Now it is a whole new world, it's gone back to how I remember it, it is tremendous.

A lot of you out there will be like I was, will have lost either high or low frequency or both, don't worry about that, if you get the opportunity, go - because everything from the moment you have had it will be major improvement on your life. It has transformed mine. I have started mixing again, going to hospital to visit neighbours and relatives that are in hospital, whereas I wouldn't have previously, I would have said sorry and Jan the wife would have gone instead, even though it's my relative. You have got all to gain, nothing to lose. If you get the option, you jump at it. It's wonderful.