

50th Anniversary Celebrations

Sound Seekers celebrated the start of our 50th Anniversary year with a launch party on April 29th at Marlborough House, home of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.

The event featured the unveiling of two bespoke HARK! mobile audiology clinics destined for Ghana and Zambia.

It was attended by the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Mr Kamalesh Sharma who spoke highly of Sound Seekers work; the High Commissioner for Ghana HE Mr Zed Grant, High Commissioner for Zambia, HE Mr Anderson and many Sound Seekers supporters.



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ENT Conference, Liverpool

A milestone event in the year's activities was our conference, which took place at the Liverpool Arena and Conference Centre on 10th July. Entitled 'Hearing Loss in the Developing World', it brought together leading experts in the field.

The conference ran as an integrated strand of sessions alongside the major British ENT conference known as BACO. This enabled us to reach a wider audience than would otherwise have been possible, as delegates from the BACO conference were able to attend our sessions.

ENT Conference Speakers and Subjects:

[Peggy Chalmers: 50 Years of Sound Seekers, An Historical Overview](#)

Andrew Smith: The Global Picture

[George Brobby: Audiology Services in the Developing World—The Ghanaian Experience](#)

Mohamed Elmraid: Micronutrients and Deafness in the Developing World

[Deepak Prasher: Noise Induced Hearing Loss in the Developing World](#)

Andrew Freeland: A Possible Cause of Profound Deafness in Tanzanian Children—Could it be prevented?

[Llew and Francine D'Souza: Audiology Outreach Services, The Practical Aspects](#)

Malcolm Garner: The Education of Deaf Children in the Gambia

[Henry Nmai: Delivering Technical Aspects of Earmould Technology in a Development Setting](#)

Serah Ndegwa: Running a Diploma in Audiology in an African University

[Ian Mackenzie: Health Lessons in the Fields of HIV/AIDS](#)

Panel discussion led by Hamid Daya: ENT Camps—Can we do better?

If you would like to receive more information about any of these subjects please contact admin@sound-seekers.org.uk

Report from the AGM

Sound Seekers' Annual General Meeting 2009 was held on November 26th at Marlborough House.

The meeting was attended by numerous supporters, commissioners and contacts and provided an insight into our activities over the past year.



The highlight of the event was hearing Kate Hoey MP speak about her work in developing nations, particularly Zimbabwe.

As someone who has invested a great deal of time in foreign affairs, Ms Hoey's interesting and insightful speech struck a chord with all of those who have played a role, or have an interest, in international development.

We are also delighted that she has pledged to support and highlight the importance of Sound Seekers' work through her role in parliament.

If you would like the opportunity to attend and vote at our next AGM in 2010, you can do so by becoming a Sound Seekers member for just £38 per annum.

Contact admin@sound-seekers.org.uk or visit our website for more information.

Gambia Report from the Field by Malcolm Garner

HARK! Gambia has been in operation since August 2007 and has now seen more than 2000 patients. It has been a major success and of these approximately 10% have been given hearing aids. It has operated on a fortnightly schedule visiting clinics, and feedback from clinics and patients has been very positive. A regular clinic is also now held in the audiology room at St John's School making good use of the new sound proof room at this facility.

Contributory factors for the success of the HARK! field visits are regular radio sensitivity broadcasts in advance of a visit, to raise awareness of the HARK Programme, and a strong educational link with the addition of Andrew P Jatta, a teacher of the deaf on the HARK! Programme.



Children are referred to him having being diagnosed as deaf during the HARK field visits and he is also able to refer pupils he discovers are deaf during his school trips. Andrew also visits the homes of deaf children and offers advice to their parents. Feedback from schools and parents has been very positive with many complimentary comments regarding the valuable advice and support he has provided.

Overall it was pleasing to see that the HARK is still being well used and maintained (though a vehicle service is due). The Team are still working well together and their work is of high quality. All those asked were very positive about the effectiveness of the HARK Programme and are very keen for it to be maintained.

A Vocational School for Deaf Children in

Sound Seekers has entered a partnership with the Kibarani School for the Deaf, the Kenya Ministry of Education, Kenyan Society for the Deaf, and the Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa, to build a greatly-needed secondary school for deaf children, located in Kilifi, in the coastal region of Kenya - an area with a population of 2 million people.

Although there are 74 primary schools for the deaf, there are only 3 secondary schools, with a total intake of just 80 new students per year. There are thousands of deaf children not attending school as a consequence.



Above: some of the students from Kibarani



Left: the first new classroom to be built

Sound Seekers has to date released funding to enable the building of two classrooms, a dormitory block and toilets, together with the installation of solar panels and equipment to enable the collection and storage of rain water, thus helping to prepare the school for some of the problems posed by climate change.

Make the jump for Sound Seekers

Sound Seekers has teamed up with Skyline and are looking for 50 adventurous volunteers to undertake a fundraising jump to help us celebrate our 50th Anniversary.

So far 15 daring audiologists from Specsavers, Starkeys and Siemens have made the jump. Debbie Healey from Specsavers Hearing Centres did an amazing job encouraging her colleagues to join her in the challenge.



There are three types of jump available – an ‘Accelerated Free Fall’ where you can experience the thrill of skydiving solo from up to 12,000 feet, a ‘Tandem Skydive’ from 10,000 feet attached to a professional instructor and a ‘Static Line’ jump which is performed solo from up to 3,000 feet- and you can jump from any one of over twenty British Parachute Association approved airfields across the UK. No experience is necessary as all training is given.

"I have never experienced anything like it. It was literally the most exhilarating experience of my life."

To take part or more for more information visit www.skylineparachuting.co.uk

Spinning & Cycling

Congratulations to David Blakeman for completing his London to Paris Bike Ride in aid of Sound Seekers work and to Andre Lass for organising a spinning marathon to raise money on our behalf.

Between them they raised an impressive £623.



Flora London Marathon

Consultant Clinical Scientist (audiology) and author of over 50 publications, Andrew Reid - completed his first London Flora Marathon on 26 April, and chose Sound Seekers as his charity. As a result of his efforts he has raised a staggering £2,260 for Sound Seekers' projects.



When asked why he had chosen to run for Sound Seekers he said,

'Sound Seekers do great work in the developing Commonwealth countries. Having been involved in audiology for over 30 years, both on the "coal-face" and nationally, it is an honour to help them'

Fancy a challenge?

If these tales of endeavour have inspired you then why not add 'do something adventurous' to your new year's resolutions?

Sound Seekers have teamed up with Skyline events to offer you the chance to take part in a range of exciting challenge events.



You can choose from fancy dress 5k runs, the London to Paris bike ride, trekking the Inca Trail, cycling across Vietnam, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro and many more, all in the name of charity!

Visit <https://www.skylineregistrations.co.uk/overseas/bookonline.aspx?charity=68246> for more details or contact Amy on 020 7233 5805.



Season's Greetings

If you are looking to spread a bit of festive cheer this Christmas there are plenty of ways that you can celebrate whilst supporting Sound Seekers.

Your company can beat the Christmas post and boost it's green credentials by ordering a Sound Seekers e card <http://soundseekersecards.yolasite.com/>

If you register at [easyfundraising.com](http://www.easyfundraising.com) you can raise money for Sound Seekers simply through doing your Christmas shopping. <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/Register/?char=12524>

Is someone in your family tricky to buy for, are you stuck for an idea for your office Secret Santa, or do you have the friend who already has everything? Why not buy them a Sound Seekers virtual gift:

- £10 could provide a reconditioned hearing aid and batteries.
- £20 will provide text books and wall charts for a school for deaf children.
- £85 will buy a maintenance 'Toolkit' so audiology equipment can be cared for locally.

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The Commonwealth Society for the Deaf

