

Whispers

the joy of
HEARING



MARCH 2017

Newsletter of Better Hearing Australia [Sydney] Inc

Dear Members, Supporters and Friends of BHA,
Welcome to our first Whispers for 2017.

Heartiest congratulations to our Patron, Emeritus Professor Bill Gibson AM, who received an AO in the Australia Day Honours list. A truly worthy recipient of this award.

Bill has been a friend and patron of Better Hearing Australia (Sydney) since 1988 and we are delighted to inform our members that his biography is now available.

Bill Gibson: pioneering bionic ear surgeon (NewSouth Press, 1 March 2017) provides a unique perspective on this great man who has given hope to so many hearing impaired people around Australia and beyond.

The foreword to the biography, supplied by Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO, concludes with the following quote: 'Professor Bill Gibson is an outstanding man, a great humanitarian and deserving of this well-researched biography about his exceptional contribution to medicine'.

A detailed story and how to order a copy of Bill's biography are included inside.

This year we will commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Better Hearing Australia (Sydney) Clear Speech Award so I encourage you all to nominate your preferred candidate for reading the news or presenting reports on the television network. A nomination form will be included in the June Whispers and a special function is being planned to celebrate this significant event.

Recent studies have shown that there is a link between hearing loss in older adults and dementia. Communication with friends and family is more difficult and can accelerate dementia, potentially through the increased brain effort that has to be directed to understanding sounds and speech. As many of the detrimental effects of hearing loss on brain function are found in the early stages, when losses are mild, efforts should be concentrated on preventing or treating hearing loss at the very early stages. A national

hearing screening for everyone aged 65 and over would help in preventing further hearing loss and also dementia

In the meantime, to help make it easier for your brain, get your hearing checked, get hearing aids if necessary and whenever possible, turn off the background noise!

The first "Social Tuesday" event was held on 28 February 2017 and featured a train trip to Leura, followed by lunch at the Zest Café. The next event will be a lunch at the Palace Tea Room in the QVB on 28 March 2017. Details in the "Social Calendar" on the back page of this issue.

VALE - we have been saddened by the recent passing of Ron Wood a former life member of Sydney branch. Ron will be missed and fondly remembered by all his friends at Better Hearing Sydney.

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give (Winston Churchill) so please spare a day for BHA.

Best wishes
John



Our long serving members and volunteers, Dawn and Malcolm Minter are clearly enjoying themselves during their regular Zumba sessions. No staying at home for these two twinkletoes!!

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS OF SERVICE TO BHA

It's rare that anyone can achieve 80 years of membership with one organization but Shirley Hanke has done that.

Not only does Shirley read our Whispers newsletter [smile], she also communicates via email and the following message was recently received in our BHA inbox.

We felt it was of such significance that we had to reproduce it in its entirety as an acknowledgement of this extraordinary person.



"Dear Whispers

I am reading Whispers December 2016. It is just a thought! I am now 90 years of age and could I be the sole surviving member of the pre World War 11 Lipreading Classes??

I lost my hearing suddenly soon after my 11th birthday in 1937. In 1938 I commenced lipreading lessons, after school, at the Deaf, Dumb & Blind Institution at Darlinghurst twice weekly from two wonderful teachers Adelaide Burns and Dorothy Coles.

Two years later I attended evening lipreading classes, I think given by teachers from the Deaf School. I attended these classes for some time.

I then joined Mrs Jackson's classes at Waverton in 1942 or 1943 and when the classes increased they were moved to Bond Street in the city.

The classes at Darlinghurst were still operating but I had dropped out of them when we moved to the North Shore. The Deaf, Dumb & Blind Institution buildings were taken over by the Australian Air Force during the war and I think the lipreading classes kept going. I do recall there were 2 separate lipreading groups.

I always had the impression that it was Mrs Jackson's idea to call the group the NSW Lipreaders League but could be mistaken.

What I recall of the lipreading lessons is that the first one was 'pbm' and the first sentence I lipread "Would you like pea soup for lunch?" and at every lesson Mrs Jackson would tell us "Her brother knew Ned Kelly!" - a bit of mirth from the back row at the class who would be waiting for it!!

I dropped out of the Lipreaders League before it became Better Hearing. I was too busy travelling and married. Then I became the 3rd person in NSW to have a cochlear implant in 1985 (the second one in 2004). It was a miracle hearing sound after 47 years of deafness. I rejoined Better Hearing ten or more years ago just for a few refresher lessons from Pat King, an excellent teacher.

Just memories"

Shirley Hanke

THE BIOGRAPHY OF PROFESSOR BILL GIBSON IS NOW AVAILABLE

Emeritus Professor Bill Gibson AO has been a friend and patron of Better Hearing Australia for nearly twenty years, so we are delighted to inform our members that his biography is now available.

Bill Gibson: pioneering bionic ear surgeon (NewSouth Press, 1 March 2017) provides a unique perspective on this great man who has given hope to so many hearing impaired people around Australia and beyond. The book tells the story of his early life in England, including his knowledge at the age of five that he wanted to be a doctor. Inspiration while growing up came from stories of his father's role as a 'medic' during World War II and also the general practice he ran from the family home in Dawlish.

Professor Gibson left one of the leading ENT consultant positions in the UK to emigrate with his family to Australia in 1983 so he could become the inaugural Professor of Otolaryngology at the University of Sydney. He performed some of the first operations on recipients using the commercialised bionic ear, pioneered by Professor Graeme Clark and his team in Melbourne in 1978. This biography provides vignettes of more than forty of Bill's Gibson's cochlear implant recipients, including Sue Walters, the first bionic ear recipient in New South Wales. In 1987, Bill Gibson operated on four-year-old Holly McDonell, the youngest child in the world to receive the bionic ear.

Professor Gibson received a sack of hate mail when he first implanted cochlear devices in

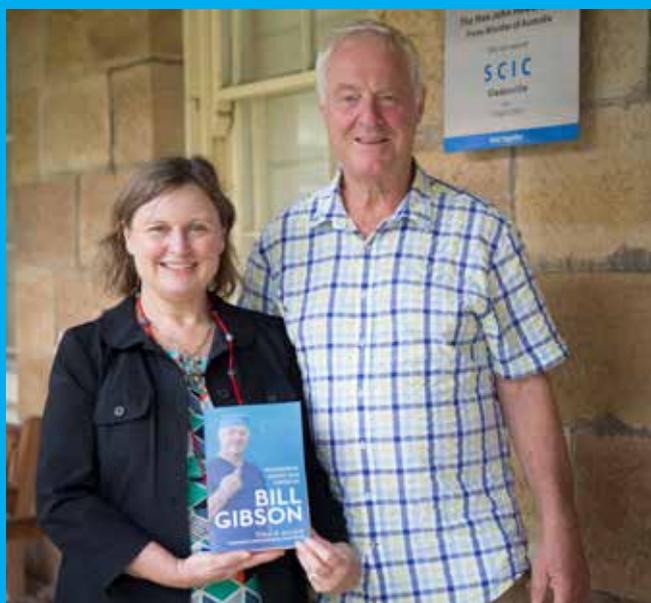
children, particularly those bone deaf. However he had the strength of character to keep going. He predicted that the optimal time to perform cochlear implant surgery on a born deaf baby was nine months of age, which is now accepted wisdom. Thousands of children around the world have their hearing because of his bravery.

Between 1984 and 2014, Bill Gibson performed the bionic ear operation more than 2000 times, making him one of the most prolific surgeons in his field. Among his cochlear implant recipients were Roma Wood, Don Rouvray and several other BHA members. Professor Gibson is no longer operating but continues to treat the loyal patients who make appointments to see 'Prof' at the Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre in Gladesville, where his title is 'Founding Director'.

The foreword to the biography, supplied by Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO, concludes with the following quote: 'Professor Bill Gibson is an outstanding man, a great humanitarian and deserving of this well-researched biography about his exceptional contribution to medicine'.

Members of Better Hearing Australia will be delighted to know that Professor Gibson's AM was upgraded to an AO in the recent Australia Day Honours.

A book order form can be downloaded from: www.cicada.org.au (\$25 + P&H). Copies of the biography are also available from bookshops across Australia and from on-line booksellers (RRP \$35).



Tina Allen with the subject of her biography, Professor Bill Gibson, at the entrance of the Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre in Gladesville.

Whispers

DIARY DATES

MARCH

Tuesday 28: Social Tuesday Lunch at The Palace Tea Room, QVB.

The outing will be in the Queen Victoria Building, Level 1 Shop 20, for lunch, Devonshire Tea or High Tea.

We will meet there at 12 noon.

APRIL

Tuesday 18: On Social Tuesday, in the BHA Concord Clubroom.

*A tasty morning tea will be available at 10am, followed by **Louise Kelly** talking about her recent trip to **Sri Lanka** and showing us some of her photos. Sri Lanka is a vibrant multicultural country with wonderful wild life. It is one of the top five biodiversity hotspots in the world, and has elephants, leopards, sloth-bears and several varieties of primates. In the surrounding oceans, there are mighty blue whales, sperm whales and lively dolphins, making it one of the best locations for whale and dolphin watching. There are also amazing Buddhist temples, exotic food and rugged scenery. The talk will begin at 11am.*

MAY

Tuesday 16: The BHA Social Group will be visiting the Australian Museum, 1 William Street, Sydney (Admission: \$15).

*We will meet for lunch at 11.45am in the Museum's "Rooftop Café", which has wonderful views over Hyde Park, St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney Harbour and beyond. An interesting exhibition on the artist sisters **Helena and Harriet Scott** will be running during May. From the 1850s, these ladies collected, studied and drew the butterflies and botany of New South Wales in precise detail. Together they produced an archive of more than 600 intricate and beautiful paintings and drawings, some of which are on display in the exhibition.*

JUNE

Tuesday 20: At 10am, a delicious morning tea will be served, followed by Malcolm Minter hosting a Jewellery making event at our Concord Clubrooms .

Malcolm will show us how to create our own necklaces, bracelets etc. Bring along your own loose beads.

Saturday 10th -Monday 12th: Epping Model Railway Exhibition

The Brick Pit Stadium, Dartford Road, Thornleigh

JULY

This year we are having a "Christmas in July" event.

Plans are still to be finalized, but details will be available in the "June" Whispers News sheet.



**Christmas in
July**