

**Gillian**

I had a road accident in my teens which resulted in years of ear trouble but I could hear perfectly well until I got into my forties. Normal hearing aids didn't help me, so I had a bone conducting one and it worked perfectly and it was fine until my late fifties. I began to think that I needed some more help so I went back to the hospital who told me they really couldn't do much more for me. I had heard of a BAHA which has a titanium rod, so I sussed this out and went privately to Kent to have it done. Before I had it, I had to test the equipment [on a softband] and it was perfect, but after the operation it never worked really well and I think there was more damage in my ear than was at first expected. So my hearing began to go really badly after this.

My husband was a scientist and he had this scientific journal regarding a cochlear implant and I read it but I didn't take much notice, I really didn't think I would ever need one.

Well, around this time I happened to read the paper, and there was a person that had had an implant in Southampton and was highly delighted with it, so I went online and found out as much as I could and approached Southampton. I went down to see them and had the testing and they said my hearing was too good but if it wasn't I could come back. Which, within the year I suppose it was, it had got much, much worse and I went back and I went through all the procedures with the staff who were absolutely wonderful and I had the implant and I have never looked back.

Afterwards, when I was first switched on - it is just like a miracle really, because somehow you have forgotten all about sound. It's terribly difficult to realise that you are hearing again, and initially it sounds very tinny. I remember being told 'you will get very tired because you are not used to listening' and I thought, oh, I don't think so, but I certainly did get extremely tired initially, because all the new sounds begin to come back and you have got to put them in place.

Since I've had it, I have never looked back, it's just as though - it just a miracle. You can join in everything again and it is just like, I suppose, if you wear glasses you put them on in the morning, you pop on your implant and everything returns to normal.