

My hearing loss was from the constant noise before ear muffs and wearing out four tractors developing hundreds of hectares of peat when developing two peat farms and contracting, and then making farm machinery until 9 pm each night, between 1950 and 1970, which was before ear muffs were known. On a tractor one has the head turned to the right to watch the implement, so the left ear gets the engine noise more loudly.

My left ear got blocked with fluid behind the ear drum. Several who should have known about how to fix it naturally, didn't know. Two surgeons wanted to install a grommet, but I and two hearing aid people didn't agree with them. I knew of failures.

Tolbecs Ear Centre, Theresa O'Leary NZRN, Ear Nurse and Therapist, 74 Naylor St, Hamilton East. 07-856-0002, clean ears very professionally, and get wax out of ears after other hearing aid specialists have checked and said they were clean. Theresa recommended 'Vicks Inhaler' for clearing noses and unblocking ears. It worked better than others I'd tried. Their Debbie is the best ear cleaner and ear specialist that I've been to. She reduced my Tinnitus.

In about 1965, a doctor pulled a piece of wax out of my left ear. It was stuck to my ear drum, so damaged it. Tolbecs use a small vacuum cleaner which is fast and not damaging.

Their hours are 9 to 12 and 1 to 5 pm, Monday to Friday. They have a selection of ordinary telephones for the hard of hearing, but the design of many has the hand piece over the speaker which makes the sound go out in two directions creating distorted sound which makes hearing worse. I made a weight to have the hand piece up, but still ring, then changed to having a standard \$40 Digiton phone, which is a much better phone than other standard ones. Two of them I found best to hold one at each ear and hear better than any of other phones, and cost only about \$40 each instead of \$250 for one.

The Telecoil Loop system setting allows our TV to be heard perfectly at normal volume, rather than too loud for others. In fact, if necessary, the Siemens hearing aids allow the wearer to hear perfectly while no sound at all comes out of the TV speakers.

The Siemens left ear hearing aid had never worked correctly, but Cobus got it working perfectly. He even phoned Siemens' head office in Australia while I was there, then re-adjusted them to get the latest setting adjustments which Siemens emailed to him.

His testing equipment is far more advanced than any of the five other companies I've been to. On top of these things, he charged the least by far. I must add that he is honest, which four others were not (I have the evidence and paid them to fit their brands they wanted to sell to me, rather than adjust the Siemens I owned, which Cobus did). All others tried to sell me new hearing aids that could not do what I asked for, and charged a few hundred dollars to set them up. I returned all four, each after one night's trial, but got no refunds. If I did this again I would pay by cheques and if necessary cancel them.

Tinnitus adversely affects hearing and is a nuisance when it makes it hard to go to sleep, because it seems louder when there are no other sounds.

Tolbecs recommended Cobus Marais who managed Dilworth Hearing in Hamilton, who was excellent, but all Dilworths branches were then bought by Bay Audio who cheated me and others and owe me \$300 plus my time wasted with them, so Cobus Marais left them and started

Cobus Marais has titles galore and has more and better hearing knowledge and equipment than the five others I have been to since 1998. At my first visit to Cobus in August 2015, he could have sold me new hearing aids because I was unhappy with the Siemens I had sold to me by Bay Audiology and were not correctly adjusted. Bay Audio could not adjust them in 2015 because they had lost the Siemens agency and their equipment, but didn't tell me that. Instead they said that Siemens had 'gone bankrupt and closed down'. Cobus Marais adjusted my Siemens hearing aids to be better and more comfortable than done by Bay Audiology and others. Another company I went to after Bay Audiology told me they could not adjust them, and tried to sell me new ones for \$10,500. The far better Siemens were only \$6,700 in 2013.

Bay Audio tried to sell me an inferior brand that I tried for a night and returned, but I was not refunded the \$300 fitting they charged. They would have cost \$10,500, and like most others, had fewer settings than the ten settings that Siemens have which also has many models. Many brands have only one model. Resound has several and according to one agent is better quality, whereas my two Siemens

both had to go back to Auckland for repairs, as have many other Siemens from another agent.

Cobus Marais set my Siemens so that the second setting excluded constant noises in vehicles, crowds, and air conditioners, all amazingly nice. He also adjusted them to be able to hear the car turning indicators better and set the Telecoil Loop system I bought second hand very cheaply (\$50) from the wonderful Hamilton Hearing Association, 27 O'Neill St, Claudelands, Hamilton 3214. Ph 852-5725. They now have a hearing aid specialist, and used hearing aids from donors.

Which ones are best

The best thing that the best hearing aids (Siemens and Resound have is a setting to reduce the continuous noise at meetings and vehicles constant road noise. Not all hearing aids have this wonderful feature, which I would not like to be without.

I've had hearing aids since 1998 and have learned a lot, including how to reduce tinnitus. Read the chapter on it. A Thompson's Organic Magnesium capsule taken before bed at night helps sleep and reduces my and others' tinnitus.

Examples

Hearing aids increase the volume of other noises, so background noises become louder and make it harder to hear a person right next to one at a noisy meeting. Constant car noise is stressful. Both can be turned down if you have hearing aids that can do so, and go to a specialist who knows how to adjust them.

Not hearing a vehicle's turning clickers is dangerous. They can then remain on! Adjustments can be made to hear them better. Some \$10,000 aids have only three adjustments. Costs include setting them up which can take an hour and be needed again twice a year.

Remote controllers get forgotten and lost, and have no advantages, but have disadvantages.

One hearing aid brand has 10 adjustments on one side which is harder to remember than the left and right each having five.

The phone that types what the person is saying to you has slowness, spelling and other problems which has made some return theirs to the Hamilton Hearing Association who are very good about help and servicing.

When a patient has wax blockage against the eardrum, it is often because they have been probing the ear with such things as cotton-tipped applicators, bobby pins, or twisted napkin corners. These objects only push the wax in deeper where it doesn't belong, it can move fungus, bacteria and viruses from the outer ear into the inner ear, increasing the risk of infection. It can also block your ear canal, leading to hearing loss, or even cause a ruptured eardrum. It's a vicious cycle, too, because the more you rub your ears with cotton swabs, the more histamine will be released, which makes your skin irritated and inflamed. This, in turn, may make you want to insert a cotton swab again, leading to additional dryness and irritation.

Water entering the ears from showering can also cause problems, so place cotton wool in them or hold your hands over your ears.

Read Epley Balance & Vertigo in the Human Health section. If Tinnitus, is a problem, get an Epley vertigo test done by your doctor before testing your hearing and before buying hearing aids.

Then there is The Ear Room in Herbert Avenue, Hamilton. They sell only Resound aids because some others have problems such as not honouring warranties and

The Ear Room are not registered for ACC damaged ears.

Bequeath your hearing aids and Loop System to your Hearing Association. The Hamilton one has an excellent hearing aid fitter and sometimes has second hand aids so a lot cheaper.