

THE INFO's

Roy, John and Mary were very good friends and belonged to a club they had formed called the "INFO's" (Information Noted For Others). The group had come about because in the school holidays they had been so bored. When they all came together they decided to make the holiday really worth while. Colin and Elaine, the other two members, came up with an idea; to pick a theme each holiday and collect all the information about it they could. "Like reporters!" said Mary, quite excited. John had a computer and said he could even produce a small newsletter that they could circulate. Roy, not wanting to be left out, offered to be the editor. Suddenly life was quite exciting.



At the first meeting the five youngsters suggested different themes, but all were very happy agreeing on Colin's idea of noises and their consequences for the first issue. Colin had suggested noise because his mum had Tinnitus (noises in the head and ears) and all the youngsters were very fond of her. Not only because she let them meet in her house, supplied them with lemonade and biscuits, but she was such a caring person. Each of the youngsters had ready a reporter's note pad and pencil. It was agreed they all collect as much information as possible, and that they meet at least once a week to compare notes, which they did. Two Weeks Later: The INFO's met, amazed at all the info they had collected in such a short while. Roy was talking to his great grandfather, who was in the army, and explained the loud noises that they had had to suffer from the guns. To Roy's surprise his great-grandfather finished off by saying some of his friends now had Tinnitus, because their ears had not been protected from the noise.

John, having the computer, wrote out a short questionnaire, all-relating to noise, and asked his dad if he would hand them out at the factory where he worked. The response was excellent. Many people who are very sensitive to noise suffer far more than others and even wear earplugs to protect their ears. Some had worked in different factories and complained that they weren't given ear protectors, despite the level of noise being higher than is acceptable, and again there were those who had Tinnitus.



Mary decided to go round to her school friends, to see what they thought of noise. Alas, most of them loved discos that vibrated their bodies, and Walkmans that everybody else could hear as they walked past. In fact, hardly any of them were aware of the dangers of excessive noise. This made Mary more determined to produce the INFO's newsletter, before her friends suffered like Colin's mum. Colin wrote to The British Tinnitus Association (BTA) and The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) for information on noise and Tinnitus and while waiting for this to arrive decided to do an interview with his mum. She had to admit it started the day after she went to a party. The disco was so loud they couldn't even hear when they shouted at one another. The next day, her ears were still buzzing. Weeping slightly, she went on to say, "If only somebody had warned me of the dangers of noise I would never have gone, or I would have at least put some ear plugs in." Colin comforted his mother. He hadn't realised until now what she had been suffering. She told Colin how the

buzzing is there 24 hours a day and some days it nearly drives her mad, but quickly added, "That is when I'm low and everybody has low days. Other days I work hard, because it is no good sitting listening to the noise. I keep myself as involved as possible and on occasions I even forget I have it. I have had a check-up at the hospital and there is nothing wrong with me except for the Tinnitus. So that is something to be grateful for and I now try to help others at my local Tinnitus Group". The INFO's were all very pleased with what they had collected, but

were concerned about the effects of noise on the uninformed population. None of them had really been aware of Tinnitus, other than Cohn, whose mum had tried to protect him from dangerously loud noises. But now, thanks to the youngsters' efforts, more people would learn, be warned and take action, realising any sound that's too loud can cause Tinnitus. For those who already have Tinnitus, they now know where to get information to help them cope with it. This really made their school holiday very exciting. They were very pleased with what they had produced and looked forward to the next holiday and another theme.

