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**A headset that takes
the power out of bangs**

To protect the hearing of those whose work exposes them often to loud noises, the Explosives Research and Development Establishment of the Ministry of Technology at Waltham Abbey, Essex, has devised a headset—looking much like a bulky pair of headphones—which

cuts out the unpleasant power of such noises while allowing the wearer to listen to normal sounds in the usual way.

It thus overcomes the limitations of the humble earplug which protects the ear from loud noise but gives the wearer little inkling of what is going on in normal conversation. In the set, each ear muff, which has a nominal attenuation of 50dB, has a built-in microphone, amplifier, and earphone, powered by a battery in the headband, to transmit sounds to the ear.

This arrangement conveys ordinary sounds directly, but the characteristics of the amplifier are such that it cuts off sound with an intensity above 95dB.

This means that the wearer can hear speech and other low-level sounds stereophonically and without distortion, but is not deafened by a loud noise. The set, which is self-contained, weighs 1lb 12oz and is being manufactured by the instrument division of Cosmocord Ltd, Eleanor Cross Road, Waltham Cross, Herts.

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