

Mayflower News



Lockdown Special No 2



Love in the time of Coronavirus





From the President

It's Sunday, March 29 and I'm taking advantage of the "extra hour indoors" to start what will be Lockdown Special No. 2.

We're drawing to end of the first week of "lockdown", and it hasn't been without its excitement (I should get out more.... if only!!). The highlight was our Business meeting last Thursday. Secretary Ian has been very busy making sure we can all get to grips with Zoom, such that 31!!! of us managed to join the on-line Business meeting. We're planning on holding a Zoom meeting every Thursday from now on, in the hope that members will feel free to pop in for however long they'd like to stay (no "Apologies" required!!!), to share their news. We'd like to think that it's an innovative way of keeping in touch and of being there if anyone needs anything. So, keep an eye open for your "invitation".



Of the many uplifting discussions I've had with friends over the last week, one chat with Eleanor Wheeley brought up a subject I'd never heard of before, but in retrospect seems quite appropriate at this moment, given there's going to be much time for introspection and reflection. The art of *kintsugi* is essentially about acceptance and appreciation of imperfection. Reading between the lines, a message of tolerance and kindness? I suspect we're going to learn a lot about ourselves in the coming weeks!

Responding to an appeal of support for a distant relative, the Mayflower machinery sprang into action, and we're truly heartened to have at least three of our members volunteer to help this lady (you know who you are and a personal thank you from me).

As it turned out help wasn't needed by this particular lady, but at least the exercise proved to be a trial run for possible future appeals for help - and we weren't found lacking.

Plea from the heart of the (Owen) home

In the light of President Yvonne's plea to include in Mayflower News all vital appeals arising from difficulties spinning off from this virus, Sylvia Owen has sent an urgent message.

"Mayflower Family members, please help. As if I didn't have enough to put up with (whatever could she mean?), I would like all those not imprisoned by age (both of you) to leave your cell to search the streets, and the remainder of you to search your homes.

A vital part of the family's alternative to the present boredom has vanished.

"It was last seen here in immaculate condition with its hundreds of compatriots - but not any longer! It was all white (decorator's Soft White, compared with Dulux Brilliant White).

It may have clung with affection to the clothing of anyone who has visited Owen Towers recently and is now lying discarded and unwanted somewhere in this town.

Some men may appreciate its gentle curves, and the ladies may well envy its pert upward tilts (I said TILTS!). You could say it was as vital as the white clouds would be to the London skyline behind Tower Bridge, and indeed it would be at home there amid the rest of the cumulus formation. Just at the moment, however, it has left a space in our family scene.

So if you happen to come upon the missing last piece of the Christmas present jigsaw puzzle we have otherwise completed as part of our exhausting daily exercise, I am sure that the other 999 pieces would welcome its return --- then we could break the rest of it up so I could get my dining room table back!!"

So, whilst we await news of possible extensions to the "lockdown", we'd just like to remind members that Mayflower is FAMILY!! PLEASE, if there is anything that you need, get in touch. We have the technology.... (that's a Six Billion Dollar Man reference by the way, in case anyone is worried we'd be sending round robots!).

PS. Front page is Hugo and his Donnie (me) - missing each other a lot!!!

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“From the Eye of the Storm” - More from the Blood Transfusion Service’s Pandemic Director Richard Rackham

Saturday 21st. The Executive Team cancelled its call at 9am, so my first call is with Public Health England (PHE) at 10. This confirmed cases internationally and across the UK and discussed new advice both for public health and for NHS practice – fascinating discussion on “aerosol-creating dental procedures”. A colleague joined into the NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) call at 11am, and after this we had a chat to compare notes before I dialled into the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) call at 12.30, in which Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland Health Departments check in so we know that we are all maintaining the same advice, practices and standards. This pace is going to take some maintaining if it goes on for any length of time.

Went downstairs for lunch after these calls and there is a strange smell wafting up the stairs... James is burning himself some sausages. Life chez Rackham continues as normal.

Sunday 22nd. I cleared some space yesterday. Until now I had been doing all these calls sitting on my bed to avoid the background noise of assorted televisions, radios, games systems, mobile phones and James eating. I now have a small workspace in a spare bedroom. Today is Mother’s Day, the boys have clearly forgotten, and as I move to read emails and do calls, Nicky is bringing me tea and toast – something isn’t right there, but I don’t have time to think about it too much.

The numbers of positive tests are going up on the PHE call, and the pressure

points for the NHS are discussed on the NHSEI call. The call with the DHSC is mainly about data and how we get accurate data when people aren’t being tested. As the numbers grow, some issues in the system are coming to the fore.

When the calls were finished, I spotted that James wasn’t eating, but it’s OK. He was just between meals.

Monday 23rd. We are getting concerned about blood donor sessions. Overall numbers are down by 15% and holding now – the BBC has even done a piece on it (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51999480>). However, as the Government has been making announcements, we have had venues for blood donation withdrawn by councils, leisure centres, fire stations and many others. The Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government (referred to on all calls as ‘MHCLG’ – “What do you want to do when you grow up Johnny?”, “I want to be an MHCLG”... perhaps not) is writing to all Local Authorities. I think that a clamp down on movement is coming soon, and if the comms isn’t carefully crafted it could drop us into a shortage situation. I’ve written to DHSC and NHSEI and I’m hoping that will do the trick. I wasn’t subtle, and in Civil Servant speak, may even have been assertive. My work email has got so full now that it is taking two people full-time just to keep it under control – so we’ve set up a central email that several people can access. I never thought I’d be that popular. I did think that David Randall would not be at all surprised that I wasn’t keeping up with my

emails though. No PM statement at 5pm, I get a text that he will be speaking at 8.30. News confirms this about an hour later. Lots of suspicion that it will be a lockdown UK announcement.

8.30 – it is lockdown. Mostly. A number of exemptions... but blood donation isn’t specifically there. And “places of worship” are to be closed. Good grief, blood donor sessions are famous for being in church halls. Loads of us on a call at 9.15pm working out how we deal with this. I wrote to DHSC and NHSEI again – I think I was a level above assertive this time.

I feel wrung out, I’ve been on the phone pretty much continuously since 7.30am and, apart from watching the news about coronavirus with the PM’s statement (during which I ate my dinner), I’m still on the phone at 10.30pm. I feel quite emotional. Is it the sense of failure to get blood donation into the PM’s message? Or is it that I am so tired that I could sleep stand... zzzzzz

Tuesday 24th. I try to get various senior folk on the phone from about 7.30am, they aren’t responding. Either they are busy, or they recognise my number. Finally, I get through to one of the Civil Servants in our sponsor team (the people from the department that primarily interact with us) – she doesn’t sound quite so certain of herself as she did in calmer times. I outline my concerns and she promises to escalate to a higher power.

Unsurprisingly, the blood donor situation dominates the Executive call this morning, although we do have some other problem areas. Our courier drivers have a significant number of staff who refuse to deliver things to hospitals, and we have some staff who apparently have received a text to say that they should stay inside for 12 weeks. There seem an awful lot of people, who previously have taken no account of their health, have suddenly become very conscious of it. David Lloyd Gyms obviously have a real bonanza coming up.

During the call with the DHSC this lunchtime, I made the point that blood donor sessions were pretty essential, and I think that this was taken on Board.

Wednesday 25th. There was no Executive call this morning, the Executive team were having an 'Away Day', but it was done using Zoom, so more of a 'Home and Away Day'. So, I was the Executive as far as the Coronavirus response was concerned and I approved the SitRep for distribution. At the Exec, which was the meeting to prepare for the Board meeting the following day, they spent most of the day on the Coronavirus response – but I wasn't told what was said.

The organisation's Chairman had decided that she wanted me to personally update the Board on the following day, but she had found that the press wanted to attend. Rackham in diplomatic mode then – that should be fun. On the DHSC call I was promised that the guidance that supported the Prime Minister's statement would clarify the issue around blood donation venues.

The issue of personal protective equipment (PPE) for blood donor sessions was raised quite strongly. There is little clinical or safety requirement, but the confidence of staff and donors is important, and I did raise it very early in my tenure as Pandemic Director. There was a lot of pushback at the beginning and now, of course, there was no stock. I pushed again for the PPE to be issued, but there was some serious debate. This time I think I won the day.

Thursday 25th. Board meeting day. Starts with a meeting on PPE though, and although the 7000 masks that we were promised yesterday didn't arrive, it is expected that the 35,000 that we have ordered will arrive today. This Zoom thing is alright isn't it? Before Board I have a meeting with my team (Zoom), PHE (telephone), and with DHSC about trader readiness for EU Exit (Zoom, and yes, we're still doing EU Exit) and then Board (Zoom).

The journalist wasn't on the call, but I had already planned to be diplomatic and so I was. I think the presentation went reasonably well. Zoom is quite amazing because, for the first time in my 14 years at NHSBT, the meeting was running ahead of schedule. My approach to PPE on donor sessions was accepted (despite the initial Executive pushback). One of the Non-Executive Directors raised the issue of higher than predicted levels of absence being experienced (in support of my early view that we should plan for at least 30% absence) and that was generally accepted. Then one of the Executives said that they were concerned about ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation – a technique that removes blood from a patient's body

and artificially oxygenates it before pumping it back, it provides respiratory support to patients whose lungs are unable to provide adequate function: it uses a lot of blood product). I had raised this about three weeks ago too. I managed most of these without doing what my kids call a "facepalm" (Wikipedia has a good definition) because they can see that on Zoom.

A colleague contacted me afterwards, confirming that they thought it had gone well and that I should be glad that my ideas had found such firm acceptance. Some people may know that I have a tendency toward sarcasm and so I quoted J. F. Kennedy back to him "Success has many fathers, but failure is an orphan". But since I've discovered that it was Mussolini's son-in-law who originally said that, so I suppose that my sarcasm deserves the poetic justice of my quoting a fascist who took part in Mussolini's March on Rome in 1922. Truly, hoisted by my own petard (Shakespeare that one, just for information). We are approaching the end of our family self-isolation, and Nicky, who has been doing training and paperwork from home, has been faithfully dialling into team calls and telling me about the clinical situation for organ donation out there.

As ICU beds are coming under pressure, transplant centres are reducing workload. So, her colleagues are starting to be deployed into the front line in hospitals.

It looks as if Nicky will be deployed to ICU at Queens Hospital in Romford. She reports for duty on Monday.

Another couple of meetings, one with DHSC (telephone) and one with Heads of Centre (Zoom) and then to the end of my working day. The end of day call with my team has them insisting that I have Friday off. It will be my first day off since the Brentwood Half-Marathon – and that wasn't exactly a relaxing day. Others are also doing the DHSC calls over the weekend, so I get a weekend off too.

Tonight, is our club's business meeting. Another Zoom meeting (I think my sixth today, it feels like the world has always worked this way). What strikes me is that people haven't used this remarkably familiar technology before. I've been using this for... oh, actually, only five days... but it feels like forever. Isn't it odd how quickly you just get used to things?

Gone viral, happily



Nicky, fourth from left

Sylvia and Peter Owens' daughter Nicky, a Basildon Hospital theatre sister found herself and her colleagues featured on ITV's main programme on Friday evening as they danced their way through a brief pre-12-hour shift. Another nurse had volunteered them to answer TV's Ant and Dec to put people on the lighter side of life. The result: pop star Olly Murs saw the

dance to his singing and made sure that it went worldwide viral with 600,000 hits in no time. Then back to stern reality. Nicky found herself in a three-hour specialised session being retrained for intensive care of future dangerously ill Corvid-19 patients. It's a topsy-turvy world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIlyXE76bx8>

Mr McEvoy, going for the pirate look, although no sign of his parrot!! Well, not from this angle



Imagine my surprise on answering a FaceTime call from Steve, to see a bare chest (be still my beating heart), and a reclining, eye-patched Mr McEvoy.

For those not in the loop, a week last Friday Steve went to Specsavers to get his eyesight checked out as he'd noticed a deterioration. Fortunately, the optician was less concerned about flogging another pair of glasses, and more concerned about what they found on closer examination – a detaching retina!

To heap any more praise on the NHS might seem a little sycophantic, (they've already had "Clap for the NHS"!!), but after an immediate referral to Southend Hospital, and an appointment for surgery on the Monday following, you can but stand back in admiration.

Despite the Herculean tasks bearing down on them, NHS staff came up trumps. Steve is well on the way to recovery following a successful reattachment and of course is extremely grateful. *Ed*

Snippets!

Sue's back on form

Good news from the Vaufrourd family where daughter Sue has fully recovered from her coronavirus illness and is back to schoolwork as joint headteacher at Downham. Her husband Pat is still out of contact however, with a few days still to run of his self-safeguarding "sentence".

Move held up

The move by John and Jackie Malbon from South Green to a Perry Street bungalow has been put on hold by coronavirus but it has brought one happy spin-off. Their new "next doors" have shown they are going to be excellent neighbours by offering to look after the plants that garden-loving Jackie had already delivered to the new address. The "blitz spirit" is alive and well.

Eternal youth

Reports are circulating that a number of Mayflower Rotarians in the older age bracket have lost their birth certificates and, despite stay-at-home entreaties from Downing Street have been seen at Waitrose. Most, however, are playing it by the book and leaving it to kind young neighbours and under-age families.

Our life's just been hi-Jackied

Jackie Malbon who helped to fill Mayflower News during the Owen-era returns to reflect on changing life as we know it . . . or think we knew it.



OK. Just to put your mind at rest, let me reassure you that it is certainly safe to read this piece.

In view of the fact that I, along with many of the Mayflower Family are currently "social distancing" I am responsibly attired in the following: Disposable gloves (left over from our picture framing business), face mask, well actually a pair of old tights craftily double folded (being a "large" does prove useful) my well-worn cooking apron which, given the current food concerns may well cease to be of much use and a pair of "mucking out boots" no longer needed to watch 15 year old grandson's Sunday football games. If it gets chilly as this missive progresses, I may even wear my custom-made Stones Supports scarf! I am keeping my Spurs one for "better times" (Spurs supporters will know what I mean.

So now I have put you are ease, let's look at the situation that we all find ourselves in. A large majority of Mayflower members are of that very interesting age, where they are much revered for being experienced, good mentors. Full of wisdom and very often proving to be good at golf. BUT they are considered a "bit of a risk" when it comes to heavy lifting, standing around in the cold, climbing ladders and facing a worldwide pandemic.

This is where groups such as Rotary really come into their own. Ignore the

selfish panic buying that is worrying all of us. My hope is that there will be a tipping point when people start to get into the rhythm of just "topping up". Many of us remember the rationing, still there after WW2, and how people helped each other regardless of their own circumstances. We have already witnessed the fellowship that is Rotary shining through. With offers of help and regular forms of contact coming to the fore, all being much appreciated.

Lots of us are getting very "hands on" with our messaging and snapchat and this could suddenly make us all Computer (II)literate (or as good as is needed). Keeping in touch is vital when the impact of being cut off from family and friends really hits home.

How lucky are we then, that the expertise that lurks within the club is "let loose" with the aim of providing us with a regular newsheet? This will keep us all well informed and hopefully entertained (the complete antithesis of the Government's regular news bulletins. Can't be bad can it)?

My best wishes to you and yours. Stay well, and most importantly . . .

Stop those pesky little puppies running off with the loo paper!!!

And people stayed home

And he read books and listened.
And he rested and exercised.
And he made art and played.
And he learned new ways of being.
And he stopped.
And listened more deeply.
Someone meditated.
Someone prayed.
Someone was dancing.
Someone found his own shadow.
And people started to think differently.
And the people were cured.
And in the absence of people who live ignorantly.
Dangerous.
Meaningless and heartless.
Even the earth began to heal.
And when the danger ended.
And the people met again.
They wept for the dead.
And they made new decisions.
And they dreamed new visions.
And they created new ways of life.
And they completely healed the earth.
Just as they were cured.
(K. O'Meara - Poem written during the plague epidemic in 1800)

David Randall's own Covid-19 diary

- 17 days since I hosted a wake for 90 people at the cricket club
- 17 days since I last had close contact with the grandchildren
- 14 days since the Brentwood Half-Marathon

With no symptoms since then, I believe it is right to say that no infection was contracted at these events [Richard Rackham can confirm if that is correct]

I still have a number of critical close encounter dates that reach 14 days this week - so here's hoping.

My how the world has changed in 14 days!! Stay well. *David*

Kintsugi - 金継ぎ "golden joinery"

Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with lacquer, dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum. As a philosophy, it treats breakage and repair as part of the history of an object, rather than something to disguise. As a philosophy, kintsugi can be seen to have similarities to the Japanese philosophy of *wabi-sabi*, an embracing of the flawed or imperfect.



Japanese aesthetics appreciates marks of wear on an object. This can be seen as a rationale for keeping an object around even after it has been broken, and as a justification of *kintsugi* itself, highlighting the cracks and repairs as simply events in the life of an object rather than allowing its service to end at the time of its damage or breakage.



The vicissitudes of existence over time, to which all humans are susceptible, could not be clearer than in the breaks, the knocks, and the shattering to which ceramic ware is also subject. This poignancy of existence has been known

in Japan as *mono no aware*, a compassionate sensitivity, or perhaps identification with things outside oneself. Not only is there no attempt to hide the damage, but the repair is literally illuminated... a kind of physical expression of the spirit of *mushin*. *Mushin* is often literally translated as "no mind," but carries connotations of fully existing within the moment, of non-attachment, of equanimity amid changing conditions.

And if ever there were a moment to adopt "equanimity amid changing conditions" – it's now. *Ed.*

The American Medical Association has weighed in on Trump's Corona strategy:

The Allergists were in favour of scratching it, but the Dermatologists advised not to make any rash moves. The Gastroenterologists had sort of a gut feeling about it, but the Neurologists thought the Administration had a lot of nerve.

Meanwhile, Obstetricians felt certain everyone was labouring under a misconception, while the Ophthalmologists considered the idea short-sighted. Pathologists yelled, "Over my dead body!" while the Paediatricians said, "Oh, grow up!"

The Psychiatrists thought the whole idea was madness, while the Radiologists could see right through it. Surgeons decided to wash their hands of the whole thing and the Physicians claimed it would indeed be a bitter pill to swallow.

The Plastic Surgeons opined that this proposal would "put a whole new face on the matter." The Podiatrists thought it was a step forward, but the Urologists were pissed off at the whole idea. Anaesthetists thought the whole idea was a gas, and those lofty Cardiologists didn't have the heart to say no.

In the end, the Proctologists won out, leaving the entire decision up to the arseholes in Washington.

More Snippets!

Angry John silenced!! Can someone rescue John Murray? Covid-19 has done what others have failed to do, silenced him. He was furious to the point of wanting to smash his computer screen when gremlins in the works prevented him from being part of last week's on-line zoom Rotary meeting. He could see people talking but was unable to speak for himself. Can anyone help him?

It will come as no surprise to know that the ever-thoughtful John has been keeping the fridges of some older fellow Rotarians well stocked. Thanks John. So much appreciated.

Howard's boost. A top-up with a transfusion last week has lifted Howard Watson who sounded in good form on a phone message this week. He, like others who have to have regular blood tests, are engaged in dodge-the-crowds tactics. The downside of the normally excellent facilities at St Andrew's in Stock Road over the past week have been the queues with people milling around each other when they are expected to be at least two metres apart. Scary for those involved.

You've got to laugh

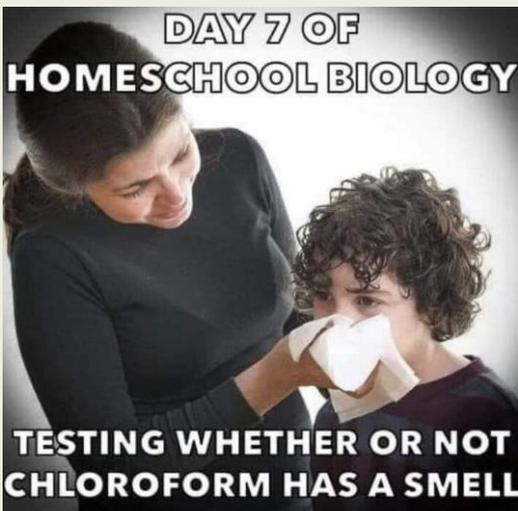
I came across this on Facebook – just stunning and given the scant likelihood of our seeing it “live” – it’s a good substitute!! The link below will take you to a Facebook page. Click on the video, second down. *Ed*

Explore all of Titian’s mythological masterpieces together for the first time in nearly 500 years.

https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=national%20gallery%20live&epa=SEARCH_BOX

**WHEN THE COVID-19 HORROR IS OVER,
WE WILL GO BACK TO OUR NORMAL LIVES.**

**NEVER FORGET THAT DURING THE CRISIS,
WE WERE NOT DESPERATE FOR LAWYERS,
ACTORS, ATHLETES OR CELEBRITIES.
WE NEEDED TEACHERS, SHOPWORKERS,
NHS STAFF, DELIVERY DRIVERS, CARERS
AND THE MANY OTHERS WHO WE NORMALLY
TAKE FOR GRANTED.**



Just double click on the link and select “Open”



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Donald Trump goes on a fact-finding visit to Israel. While he is on a tour of Jerusalem, he suffers a heart attack and dies. The undertaker tells the American diplomats accompanying him, "You can have him shipped home for \$50,000, or you can bury him here, in the Holy Land, for just \$100." The American diplomats go into a corner to discuss for a few minutes. They return with their answer to the undertaker and tell him they want Donald Trump shipped home. The undertaker is puzzled and asks, "Why would you spend \$50,000 to ship him home, when it would be wonderful to be buried here and you would spend only \$100?" The American diplomats reply, "Long ago a man died here, was buried here, and three days later he rose from the dead. We just can't take the risk."

You may have seen this one before, but it doesn't disappoint, and it's a change from the topical!!

<https://youtu.be/6dmhF1rqaZk>

And finally, because we'd like to end this edition of LS on an upbeat note.....

<https://www.facebook.com/joslimmingworld.keating/videos/2783083541918923/UzpfSTeZOTAxNTMxMTM6MzQ3MTk5NDc4Mjg3MDgzMw/>