

Capital Region

Many aspects of life have changed as the lockdown continues and some of these for the better. The air is less polluted, the skies seem bluer and there's less noise from aircraft flying overhead and cars speeding down the roads. Wildlife, too, is adapting and is now exploring places where we humans once walked. Deer have appeared in Harold Hill, east London and goats have ventured from the Great Orme into Llandudno's town centre, munching on people's gardens as they go. We are popping up in unusual places too.

Moles were the subject of a Jeremy Vine Radio 2 discussion in April. Apparently we are now going into parks because we no longer hear any noise from human footfall or traffic vibrations. Food is always important to Moles. They have to eat every three hours in order to consume their own weight in food every day, and parks are now a paradise for worms etc. and also quiet places to feed. It's good to know that the public are being educated in our ways.

Last month we rightly thanked a number of NHS and other healthcare workers, as well as those working in essential services, for their sterling efforts during this horrible Coronavirus crisis. This list was not exhaustive and some may wish to remain anonymous. One name missed off that list was Paul Brown and I invited him to write something about how the crisis was affecting him. So, here's an interesting personal insight into what life is like today for an NHS worker. Paul and his wife Jane are Wingers and his story has some heartwarming content.



Paul Brown



“I have been working as an Ambulance Care Assistant for around five years, the last 15 months with the South Central Ambulance Service. Our main task prior to this pandemic is patient transport involving everything except emergency calls. This work includes renal dialysis, general outpatient appointments, end of life, dementia, and mental health. It is very rewarding and more often than not involves the older generation. You meet people from every walk of life - war heroes, wealthy, titled, poor and everything in between. Often the only contact some patients have outside their home is when we arrive to take them to their appointment. It is a great leveller as often you realise that your worst day would probably be a good day for them. Loneliness is a big factor and we are very aware of safeguarding vulnerable people at risk.

Covid-19 changed everything and our role quickly became focused on taking the strain from front line crews by the transportation of Covid patients. At first we were all a little apprehensive, believing that we were going to become infected and risk those at home and those close to us. Stress levels and anxiety became a factor for many crews and those at risk or with families at risk, and they quickly self isolated. The work environment makes it almost impossible to distance or avoid contact with those patients. Although it is often depressing and sad, we also witness the successes and I personally took a staff nurse from a local hospital home after she successfully beat the virus despite having been in ITU with a very poor prognosis. Uma was clapped off the ward by nearly 100 colleagues and this was even reported on the ITV news with yours truly nearly recognisable behind the goggles, apron, mask and gloves!! (Uma Pradhan left hospital after 30 days being treated for Covid-19, 23 of which were in critical care). We have been lucky with two positive and four possible (not tested) crew. The support of the general public has been fantastic with lots of free coffee, chocolates and cakes donated.

I live in Eastbourne, East Sussex with my wife Jane and stepson and daughter-in-law, who is also an NHS midwife, so the daily disrobing routine is very important and finally tuned and orchestrated by Mrs B. Another positive is that I get to ride the Wing to work whenever I choose. Our base is also in Eastbourne so only a 20 minutes ride away or going the long way, 30 minutes. Workload is intense, six days out of seven,

mainly in Sussex but often across Surrey, Kent and the London hospitals too. Relaxation is a cold beer in the garden, a walk with the dogs and polishing the Wing, of course.”



Paul Brown's Wing at Work

With two missed Mole nights, Capital’s Virtual Drop Out on Facebook and WhatsApp is thriving and there are now weekly competitions. Easter came and what could we do? Yetti decided on an Easter Bonnet competition. There were some great bonnets, all made with whatever we had at home. Well done all but after the online voting was counted, Ginny won. Her prize was to spend the lockdown with Yetti ... some said it was a booby prize.



*Best
Bonnet*



*Best
Bonnet's
Friend*

Next bit of fun was St George's Day. This time it was best Fancy Dress, again with whatever handy we had at home. There were some well thought-out attempts. The 40 online votes were counted and the winner by a few votes was Top Banana aka Sir Ragabanana. This time the special prize was sent to him and his helper Bunny by post.



Sir Ragabanana

Now what could we get up to next? A Mimeathon was suggested and creativity flowed. The winners of this musical extravaganza were Holly and Helen Perkins, dressed as St Trinian's dropouts and filmed by Dad Tony, singing Pink Floyd's 'Another Brick in the Wall'. Their prize of 'The Pop Culture Audio Trivia Game' was posted to them and will no doubt provide endless fun.



Mimeathon Winners

The Mimeathon runners-up were The Taylor Family aka Bear Necessities, and in third place, Martyn, as Freddie Mercury with the Hoover, cleaning up to the Queen's 'I Want to Break Free'.

The VE Day celebrations on 8th May brought with it a 1940s dress competition. This challenge was interpreted widely with the eventual winner being Allen White, who drove his homemade tank out of his garage and down the road. Runners-up were John and Julie, and in third place, again, Martyn in his knitted swim trunks.



Martyn's Shorts

Before my sign off, we all congratulate Nigel on being voted in as the new Chairman of the Club and give our hearty thanks to Tim for all his work as Chairman over the last six years. We wish them both well.

The final quip comes from Wayne this month: “I need to social distance myself from the fridge so that I can flatten my curve.” Hopefully this aspect of having to stay at home will become just a memory soon.

Is it beer time yet?

Miss (Helen) Whiplash