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## DEAR ALL

### Midsummer

Yes, we have reached midsummer at last. I expect very many of you studied Shakespeare at school. I understand that A Midsummer's Night Dream is one of his most read plays by school children. Written in the mid-1590s, the world was, of course, a very different place than it is today. There were some lovely lines in the play *"And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays."* and *"The course of true love never did run smooth."*

I hope that with the easing of restrictions everyone is finding life a little better and that you are enjoying the long summer days but that everyone is still taking care to remain as safe as possible.

### What's new this Issue

On 5<sup>th</sup> July the NHS will be celebrating its 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday and we have been invited to contribute to the occasion by NHS England. Information about this event and how members can be involved will be circulated shortly to all regions by Central Office.

I seem to be as busy as ever. I am continuing with my telephone calls to branches which have resulted in some interesting and enjoyable conversations. We have an increasing interest in Zoom with guidance now on our website and some branches holding meetings. Banbury, for example are planning fortnightly meetings starting next week.

### Update on live talks – 390 members registered for 16th June

I am pleased to say that the numbers taking part in these fortnightly events are growing steadily. Another excellent talk took place earlier this week. The live chat before and after the talk being a very enjoyable part of the experience.

Registration couldn't be easier just visit [www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF](http://www.mirthy.co.uk/NHSRF) If you have any difficulty with this at all please contact me. The next 3 talks will be:

**30 June – 11am** My Poisons – A darkly humorous look at 19<sup>th</sup> Century Medicine - Graham

**14 July – 11am** Travels with a Penguin to Antarctica – Pen

**28 July – 11am** History and Mystery of Hypnosis - Alan

Mirthy Talks





## LIFE IN LOCKDOWN



The sun is shining brightly  
It must be time to rise  
I yawn and try to see the time  
With sleepy, blurry eyes

I pad down to the kitchen  
Get breakfast on the go  
There is no need to hurry  
We're in lockdown as you know

I stand and wonder idly  
What day it is today  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday  
I really couldn't say

But then, it doesn't matter  
Each day is much the same  
Some housework and some crochet  
Some sewing; it's a shame

That we can't visit family  
Or see a friend who's ill  
The only consolation is  
That one day soon we will

So, let's not be downhearted  
Someday we'll meet again  
And after all the sun we've had  
I'll bet it pours with rain!

*Stella Sturgess, Northampton Branch*

### Lost Love

I will take my grieving heart out  
And lock it tight away  
I will not feel the pain of loss  
No not for one more day

I will go forth from this day on  
And greet life with both hands  
New faces, smiles, new folk to meet  
Twill feel like foreign lands

I've lost what was so dear to me  
I never will forget  
What's gone from me and out of reach  
You're lost to me and yet

The sadness breeds new thoughts and hopes  
For what is yet to be  
New hills to climb, rivers to cross  
Horizons there to see

But part of me is locked away  
Gone from the light of day  
It is with you but always will  
Be treasured on life's way

If you can feel where you have gone  
Then think of me my dove  
Our souls might pass in starry skies  
And rekindle their lost love

Though you have gone and left this life  
I pray that we might meet  
Just one more time my heart cries out  
It would be bittersweet *Ed*

### My Rememberer

My forgetter's getting better  
But my rememberer is broke  
To you that may seem funny  
But, to me, that is no joke.

For when I'm 'here' I'm wondering  
If I really should be 'there'  
And, when I try to think it through,  
I haven't got a prayer!

Often times I walk into a room,  
Say "what am I here for?"  
I wrack my brain, but all in vain  
A zero, is my score.

At times I put something away  
Where it is safe, but, Gee!  
The person it is safest from  
Is, generally, me!

When shopping I may see  
someone,  
Say "Hi" and have a chat,  
Then, when the person walks away  
I ask myself, "who was that?"

Yes, my forgetter's getting better  
While **my rememberer** is broke,  
And it's driving me plumb crazy  
And that isn't any joke. *Anon*



Oh dear!



## Pamella Hills, The Royal London Branch

“If you can get into St. Thomas’ Hospital to do your nurse training, you can do it in the QAs” said my Commanding officer. I came to England from Jamaica at 11 years of age. I dreamed of becoming a nurse, but I didn’t take the regular route into nurse training.

Lying on my bed one day reading my Jackie magazine aged 16 and a half, I came across an advertisement for joining the Queen Alexandra Royal Army Nursing Corp (QA). I completed the section requesting information and posted it, not really expecting to hear anything further. However, a letter duly arrived inviting me for a test.

I had to wait until I was 18 to do nurse training. At that age, a year is a very long time. I decided I couldn’t wait that long; I would join the Queen Alexandra Royal Army Nursing Corp as a Ward Assistant. I suppose today’s NHS equivalent would be the Health Care Support Worker.

That decision made, I now had to tell my parents who had no idea what I had been up to and I needed their written permission to join the QAs.

I then had to convince my mother I wasn’t going to war. This was during the times of the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland and she was convinced I would be sent there. After much pleading from me, my mother eventually signed the paperwork giving permission.

So, in March 1973 I arrived at Aldershot to commence my 3 years journey in the Queen Alexandra Royal Army Nursing Corp.

Once I reached the age of 18, I did make tentative enquires about nurse training but didn’t get anywhere, perhaps I didn’t talk to the right people. I was young, green and very shy. However, I was enjoying my army days, with postings to Hampshire, Yorkshire and 2 years in Germany and making new friends, some of who I am still friends with today.

I applied to St Thomas’ Hospital and was accepted to do nurse training. One day I was called in to see my Commanding Officer. She had been contacted by St. Thomas’ Hospital requesting a reference for me. She wanted to know why I wasn’t doing my nurse training in the QAs.

I was duly sent off for test and selection. However, not only did I not pass, I had already put in my resignation from the QAs. You had to give 18 months’ notice to leave. Perhaps I didn’t work hard at the test because I had already secured a place at St. Thomas’.

And so, began my journey with the NHS when I commenced my State Enrolled Nurse training at St. Thomas’ Hospital July 1976.

*Editor note: On a very rainy day in January 2017 I made my way to The Royal London to do a presentation to retirees in the hope of forming a Fellowship branch. There was positive response with a couple of people offering to help form a committee. Pamella was not there that day as she was abroad on holiday. She contacted me on her return and expressed strong interest in leading the proposed new branch. I can confirm she does an excellent job with support from colleagues.*



There are certainly some beautiful sights to see. Visit [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk) to book a visit or, if you prefer, in the comfort of your own home enjoy one of their virtual tours for example Sandringham, Norfolk.

## Diana Patrick MBE, Kettering Branch



I was born at St Mary's Hospital, Kettering on 1st March 1958, St David's Day, the second daughter to Emilio and Imperia, sister to Maria Laura. My parents were both Italian immigrants. Dad, born in 1921, ended up in an English military hospital at the end of WW2. The stories as to how he ended up here vary (and I never actually had the conversation with him directly, which now causes me great regret) but I know that he had been very seriously wounded at the Russian front, fighting for the Allies. At the end of the war and once discharged from hospital, he made his life in England. He met mum, born in 1928, when she was on a two-week

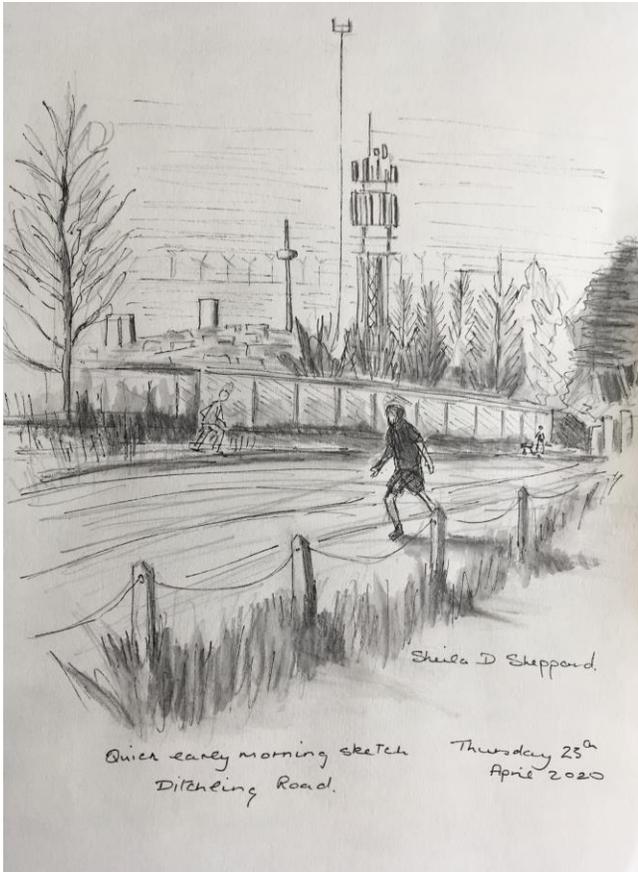
holiday in 1950 to visit her sister who was already living in Kettering. They married in 1951, Maria was born in 1952 and I followed six years later.

My parents embraced England for all it had to offer and were soon nationalized to become British citizens. Apart from my surname then – Di Domenico – I hardly knew myself as Italian in those days. Mum went to night school to learn English; my parents never spoke Italian to Maria or me and we had egg and chips for tea. I do feel quite sad, especially of late, that my ancestry was so under-played in the 60s & 70s. I went to Hawthorn Road Primary School and then to Kettering High School. At 18, after 'A' levels, I was aiming for university, Nottingham, to study sociology. My parents were thrilled. However, a boy from Burton Latimer was 'courting' me and I decided, much to my parents' utter dismay, that university was not to be. I was at a life changing crossroad and I needed to replace university with a career p.d.q!! The criteria were that I did not need to leave Kettering and that it was people facing. On those two specifications alone, nursing was offered to me by the Careers Office literally two weeks before I was due to head to Nottingham. I started PTS – Preliminary Training School – in January 1977, one of 15 keen 18-year olds, all female. I qualified as an SRN in 1980 and was the Gold Medalist in my year. I left the nursing register in 2015, having worked all my nursing life at Kettering General Hospital. Areas I worked in include theatres, paediatrics, surgery (days & nights) and latterly in the endoscopy unit.

Nursing was a wonderful career. I never regretted the turn I took at the crossroads at the age of 18. It probably still is a wonderful career, but it would be massively different to the nursing I knew and loved. Alongside my nursing career, I was fortunate to have been the original NHS Fundraiser at Cransley Hospice. I came across the advertisement for the position one evening in May 1999, when I was skimming the job vacancy pages of the then nightly Evening Telegraph. Originally a 2-year post at 20 hours per week, I retired from the position, which had gradually become full time, in September 2016. An amazingly happy and humbling 17½ years of my life.

In June 2014, I was awarded the MBE for Services to Healthcare and Charity in Northamptonshire. This was an honour that cannot be described by pen on paper. Having essentially retired from the NHS, I fill my time like so many who retire do and wonder how I ever had the time to hold down two jobs consecutively for a large part of my working life. In addition to KNHSRF, I belong to Rotary, WI and the Cransley Hospice Community Choir. I enjoy zumba & yoga, reading, walking, trips in my caravan and sitting in the garden (or anyone else's garden come to that!) I do a little paid work as an exam invigilator and I am on the staff bank at Northamptonshire Healthcare FT.

So, what happened to the boy from Burton Latimer, who was hot on my heels in the 1970s. John and I married in March 1979. We have two sons, Ross and Scott, and a lovely grandson Bertie, who will be a year old in July. I am very much a glass half full person and I am more than satisfied with the cards that life has dealt me. Kettering has been a decent place to live and raise a family, and the NHS provided me with two rewarding careers. I consider myself to be one of the lucky ones.



## Thursday 23rd April

On reaching the top of the hill, I pause for a moment to sketch. No traffic sound, I inhale pure unpolluted air and a blackbird is singing. I look between a small tree and an enormous metal configuration of phone masts. The view over the City is spectacular.

I wave to a lady across the road walking her dog. I didn't know she had a dog. I don't know her name, but I'd like to know the name of her dog. A man, electric bike abandoned, sweating, pumps out respiratory vapours as he turns his wheels up a steep hill by using physical exertion. "Where have all these people come from when I'm out doing my once a day?"

A lovely sketch and text by  
**Sheila Sheppard, Brighton Branch**

## A delightful contribution from Ruth Gould of Northampton Branch who writes regularly for her branch newsletter

The last time I wrote which was back in April, I was telling you about the Great Tits that were building a nest in the nesting box we have on the garage wall. Well great news. They have raised a family and we had the privilege of watching the fledglings leave the nest. We have never in the five years (we think) they have nested ever seen them fledge. It took over an hour for them all to fledge which, if we had not been in lockdown, we may not have seen and it was a joy to watch. The first one was climbing up the garage wall, watched by an anxious parent, which drew our attention to the fact they were all about to fledge. That one made it safely to the roof and then managed to fly off to a tree. This was followed by a lot of ducking in and out of the nest box hole by a little beak followed by a head and eventually a tiny bird which flew to a nearby tree. All the time the parents were calling and encouraging the baby birds to leave the nest and trying to entice them out with juicy caterpillars and seeds. They did this perching on the edge of the nest box hole and just sticking their beak in and then flying away just out of reach although they did go in and feed them as well. Three were not quite as adapt at flying when they emerged but they all made it to the safety of the lilac tree eventually where we could hear the adult and young birds calling to each other. There was a flurry of activity for the rest of the day while the adults were still feeding the young for a while but within twenty-four hours it quietened down and they have now gone. ... ..





### **Boston Manor House, Brentford, Middlesex**

The manor house was built in 1622-3 for the newly widowed, and shortly to be remarried Dame Mary Reade, whose late husband was granted a patent of possession for Boston Manor from James I. To the north of the house the Clitherow family added extensions that contained the kitchen services and quarters for the domestic staff.

John Bouchier Stracey-Clitherow was the last private owner of Boston Manor which he sold in 1923. The house and the surrounding 20 acres (8.1 ha) was purchased by the Brentford Urban District Council which was opened as a public park in 1924.

The house was badly damaged during World War II by a V1 dropping across the road. For a time, it was used as a school. It was an ordinary state infant school and I happily attended there from 1951-53. You can see me above dancing around the maypole on May Day. I'm right at the front on the right.

After extensive restoration work, the house was re-opened in 1963 by Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother as a visitors centre and Museum.

Due to its unique architecture and decoration it has been often used as a setting for period films.

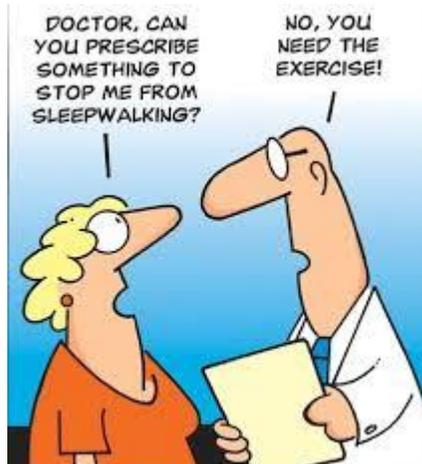
It is currently undergoing further restoration and it is planned to be open to the public in 2021. I will, of course, be making a visit.

Ed

#### **Answers to last issue's Food and Drinks quiz**



1. Walkers
2. Pot Noodle
3. Starbucks
4. Dr. Pepper
5. Pizza Express
6. Carte D'Or
7. 7 Up
8. Angel Delight



And finally, keep well everyone. If you would like to contribute to the next issue or you know of anyone who would like to be added to the mailing list or sent a hard copy then please do make contact via phone 07960 425956 or email [london.eastanglia@nhsrf.org.uk](mailto:london.eastanglia@nhsrf.org.uk)

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