



**MILTON KEYNES
STOMA SUPPORT GROUP
(MKSSG)**

**Newsletter number 19
July 2021**

Dear Member

There has certainly been no need to go abroad to 'seek the sun', given the incredibly hot weather we've had recently. At the time of writing it's still very hot although, if the weather forecast is correct, by the time you read this we may all be sheltering from storms. Whether you are indoors or out, we hope you will enjoy this newsletter, with its entertaining page 2 (and 3 this time!) feature, general news, humour, recipe and, not least, pictures to prove that Jenny's garden is as resplendent as ever. (Yes, they really are this month's photos taken in her own garden!)

Wherever the next summer month takes you, we hope you keep well and have fun – and of course we'd love to hear about it. In particular, if any of you visit Dobbies please tell us what you think of the restaurant arrangements with a view to our group resuming our monthly coffee mornings. As yet, we have not made any decisions about arranging to meet again at Dobbies. When we do we can bear in mind your comments as well as any possibility of further restrictions being brought in again.

Our Zoom meetings were originally set up in lieu of our Dobbies gatherings to ensure we keep in touch and they are continuing. If you weren't able to join us last time we hope to 'meet' you in August. Details will follow in an email as usual.

* * * * *

Stoma Care matters

There is still a problem with members getting their supplies delivered. In particular, the delivery firm Amcare are experiencing software problems and are difficult to contact. In the case of one member the emergency was temporarily resolved when the manufacturer of the supplies in question, Medilink, stepped in to provide stop-gap support. If you are having problems don't hesitate to contact your GP, our stoma care team (contact details below) and/or also let us know as we may be able to help and we can keep other members informed.



Stoma Care Direct Line: 01908 996951

(This is an answer machine but it is checked very regularly and they will always return your call. Please ensure you leave your name and contact number.)

*Alternatively, you can email them using their **team email:**
stomateammkuh@mkuh.nhs.uk*

Brain teasers

1 You have six glasses lined up as shown, with three containing orange juice and three empty. How can you make the glasses alternate between full and empty glasses by moving only one of the glasses?



2 A window cleaner is cleaning the windows of a huge apartment block in the middle of a big city. Suddenly the window cleaner slips and falls to the ground. He had not been wearing a safety harness or any other equipment, yet he walks away completely unscathed. How?

3 You have two strings of different lengths and some matches. The longer string will burn for exactly ten minutes if you light one end of it. The shorter string will burn for exactly one minute. How do you use your two pieces of string to a burning time of exactly five minutes and thirty seconds? (Answers will be in the supplement to the August newsletter.)

Justine's airport adventure

Member Justine recalls her experience at Malaga airport on her return from holiday. Many of you will have met Justine at one of our quarterly meetings or at Dobbies. She is a naturally friendly person but, as we learn here, one 'not to be messed with'. This is her full account – written in her own inimitable engaging style.



Did you fly in from Paradise? Nah, Luton airport!!

*I was recently lucky enough to fly to Spain to see my bestest friend in the world. Our daily WhatsApp calls are good, but it's not the same as having a big HUG from my main girl. Thanks to my sister (the name I gave my ileostomy, they're both full of sh*t!), I had contacted good old SleazyJet in plenty of time to confirm my extra luggage allowance due to medical need. Normally, when I fly with easyJet, simply stating 'medical bag' is sufficient to silence any official questions regarding my 2 luggage bags and I have been waved through to the aircraft. Now that easyJet are cutting down on everyone's luggage allowance (and I'm wayyyy too mean to pay for a suitcase), I wanted to ensure that I had permission to bring all my daily medications, injections, tablet boxes, prescriptions, my appliances, tapes, pastes, sprays, stickers, wipes, potions, lotions, spare clothes, etc. I was going for 2 weeks so I always take double what I'd need at home and then double it again!! In all honesty, I could get away with taking far less but I like to be prepared!*



EasyJet emailed me back, a lovely young girl called Victoria. She said I had an allocated seat and a cabin size bag AND a suitcase! WooooHooo! The journey out from Luton was great, I'd checked my luggage in to save lugging it around and had the bare essentials in my tote bag and the staff were friendly!

It is worth pointing out that whenever I have to fly with Ryanair, they always send me a personalised email confirming that I am entitled to a cabin size bag weighing no more than 6kg for medical supplies. EasyJet emailed me a generic message stating 'that's fine'. Stupidly, I didn't think to question the significance of the message...

Anyhow, I had a wonderful 2 weeks with my bestie and soon it was time for me to travel to Malaga airport. I stayed alone in an AirBnB the night before my afternoon flight due to work commitments on my bestie's part. I got the train to the airport with no problems and that's when the fun started..... 300 metres from the entrance to Malaga airport to be precise.



A security guard was posted at the only door that was operational. His English was limited to a NO growl or a YES growl. Helpful, I thought... He was stopping anyone who was not going to be flying from entering the building. He wanted to see everyone's boarding pass. And their passport. And travel insurance. And their mortgage deeds. Well, that's what it seemed like ... It took about 15 minutes to get

past the beast on the door and because I had 90 minutes before check-in even opened, I decided to go into the ladies to repack my suitcase. I'd got the bare essentials in my trusty tote bag and I'd left the majority of my belongings at my bestie's house in readiness for my return visit in August so there wasn't a lot of stuff to actually repack. My main suitcase folded down into my cabin sized bag so it was only that little thing to check in. I found a relatively comfortable seat in the main concourse of the airport, retrieved my Kindle from the depths of my tote bag and waited. And waited. And waited. After 75 minutes elapsed, I made my way to the check-in desk and I formed a queue. Just me, but a queue nonetheless! I was joined by many, many other people eventually but I didn't care – I was HEAD of the queue!

I watched the check-in staff prepare the check-in desk for me. I was head of the queue! I had 200+ other travellers behind me, I am their leader!!! WooooHooo! And then I met Juan. Juan was THE check-in man for easyJet and has obviously been in the job for 42 years. I say obviously because that's how he was acting.... Anyone else would have labelled him a know-it-all.





I duly presented my boarding pass and my passport and easily swung my cabin bag onto the conveyor belt (the one that sends luggage into oblivion...). He asked me the usual questions and I answered in a timely, reasonable manner, I have to set an example to the 200+ people behind me, I am their leader after all! And then it happened ... Juan asked for €40! I asked why and he said 'you have a case for checking in, you haven't purchased this before now so you must pay'.

Silly, silly man.

Those who know me will know that I have the biggest, most frightening sense of indignation when it comes to injustice or me and mine being wronged. I turn into a snarly, unscareable, loud, righteous, indignant, confrontational person who will demand to speak to managers, supervisors, CEO's or anyone in a position of power if I know I'm right and they're not. Other times, I just cry!

I asked 'I beg your pardon?' Juan repeated himself so I asked him if he was joking! I asked him to show me whereabouts on my boarding pass it states ASSISTANCE REQUIRED which is easyJet's code for medical need and he pointed it out to me. And then I asked if he was aware of what it meant. He said he did, so then I asked the million dollar question....

'SO WHY, IN FRONT OF 200+ PEOPLE, ARE YOU ASKING ME TO PAY FOR AN ITEM OF LUGGAGE THAT SHOULD BE ON RECORD AS BEING APPROVED FOR CARRIAGE, FREE OF CHARGE???'

Juan stupidly took the hard route to answer. He repeated 'It's a bag and it needs to be paid for'.

No way, not happening, not in my lifetime, ever, nada. I politely informed him (in my Phil Mitchell soundy-like low voice) that I have emails from customer service that state, QUITE CLEARLY, that I can not only bring a full size suitcase, but a cabin bag too. I also have a signed medical certificate from my GP stating I need extra luggage allowance and if he, Juan, doesn't comply, I will happily inform every ability facilitating group in the UK of his personal incompetence and discrimination.



Juan looked a little bit worried. He flushed slightly. His hand trembled. His eyes shifted from me, to the queue, and back to me. I winked at him and grinned, albeit slightly menacingly! He said 'OK, that's fine, there's no charge' and with that he waved me through and my battle was won!

EasyJet were later informed by email of the potential embarrassment their staff member could have caused me and hopefully, will offer awareness training to all check-in staff. I'm really pleased that Juan saw the error of his ways and will think twice in future. Other (quieter, shy!) people would have paid!

Some final thoughts

- *The moral of my story is that most airlines will allocate a passenger AND a companion an accessible seat if they are informed of an additional need. You do not have to name your condition, just tell them you will require a seat near to the toilet facilities.*
- *Most airlines will also offer an extra luggage allowance for your supplies, again, you need to let them know and due to my experience, I will always ask them in future to email me confirmation to be printed out.*
- *Your supplier, doctor or stoma nurse will get you a travel certificate. This explains to security staff (in 10+ different languages) that you wear an appliance and that you require privacy if a pat down is needed.*
- *Airport security staff are well versed in being asked to provide me with a private room with a female member of staff before I open my hand luggage to them!*

Thank you, Justine, for this very lively contribution!

Parks Trust Self-guided Walks

Milton Keynes has been renowned for its walks using the redways and paths away from main roads. Recently it was awarded 3rd place in the Ramblers' Britain's Best Walking Neighbourhood. Some of the walks can be downloaded online under the link address 'Self-guided Walks – The Parks Trust'. There is a sheet for each walk which includes clear written directions and a map of the route. The locations of interesting features to look out for on the way are marked on the maps and corresponding descriptions of the features included on the sheet. An extract from a sample route is included in the supplement to this newsletter. If you try any of these walks please let us know!

News from the suppliers

This month we are featuring a manufacturer who is new to us as a group, but we will certainly be inviting them along to our meetings in future! We know some of you do use their products though and for those who don't and may find support garments useful, all contact details are given here, phone and online, for you to check out what they have to offer.

CUI Wear is a leading British based manufacturer and supplier of specialised medical support garments and ostomy underwear, with over 30 years' development and manufacturing experience in medical and consumer textiles. The company name CUI stands for the three types of stoma: Colostomy, Urostomy and Ileostomy and our garments are suitable for all three types of stomas.

We have a team of dedicated UK Support Specialists that have your best interests at heart and can offer free advice and fitting consultations. Every patient is treated with care, dignity and respect, with attention to individual needs. Our support garments provide a reassuring balance between comfort and support and are available on NHS prescription (at your GP's discretion).



*You can view our full range of CUI hernia support garments and ostomy underwear by visiting our website www.cuiwear.com or contact our Customer Service Team on **Freephone 0800 279 2050** or email: customersupport@cuiwear.com for a product brochure. If you wish to purchase CUI garments, again please visit our website www.cuiwear.com or contact our Customer Service Team who can take your order by telephone.*

Schooldays humour

Teacher: How old is your father?

Pupil: He is 6 years.

Teacher: What? How is this possible?

Pupil: He became father only when I was born.

Teacher: What is the chemical formula for water?

Pupil: H I J K L M N O.

Teacher: What are you talking about?

Pupil: Yesterday you said it was H to O.

Teacher: How do you spell 'crocodile'?

Pupil: k-r-o-c-o-d-i-a-l

Teacher: No that's wrong.

Pupil: Maybe it is wrong, but that's how I spell it.

Teacher: Ian go to the map and find North America.

Ian: Here it is.

Teacher: Correct. Class, who discovered America?

Class: Ian.

Contributed by Morag.

Recipe: Smoked mackerel paté

Here is Jenny's tried and tested simple recipe for smoked mackerel paté – specially ideal for hot summer evenings with a nice glass of wine. Cheers!

5oz butter

8oz smoked mackerel fillets

Pinch cayenne pepper

Lemon or chopped spring onions to garnish

1 tsp creamed horseradish

Juice 1 lemon

Salt and pepper



Cream the butter with the horseradish until very soft.

Remove the skin from the mackerel, flake and add to the butter.

Beat to a fairly smooth paste, add the lemon juice, cayenne, salt and pepper to taste.

Place the mixture into a small tureen and garnish with lemon twists or a few slices of chopped spring onions.

Serve with thin – or thick if you prefer! – slices of toast.

Jenny's 'Notes from the garden'

July has to be my favourite month in the garden, when all that hard work done previously rewards you with a mass of flowers and summer scents. If you make sure that you water regularly and maintain a routine of dead-heading and feeding, then the plants will keep blooming so that, in the current heat wave, you can sit back and admire their beauty. I thought I would share some of my all time summer favourites.



Notes on the flowers, from left to right. **Fushcias**: these will flower all summer long with blooms that can be small and delicate or big and blousy. **Begonias** will also fill a tub or hanging basket and flower incessantly. The corms can be stored over-winter and used again and again. **Gloriosa Lily**: originally from S.Africa but provides a stunning display. **Roses**: nothing to compare with a scented red rose! **Sweet Peas**: such a fragrant and repeat flowering climber – no garden should be without them!

Green bin collections

On the subject of gardens, Milton Keynes Council have just announced that they are pausing food and green waste collections from Monday 26 July until further notice because many of their waste team are isolating. We are asked to put food waste in the black bags and keep garden waste in our gardens.

ONS survey

Lynne's household was recently contacted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to take part in their Covid-19 Infection Survey undertaken on behalf of the government. The purpose of the survey is to monitor how well the vaccines work and how well the combination of people having had Covid-19 before and after getting vaccinated stops the virus spreading. Here Lynne tells us what's involved.

Households are randomly selected. There is an option to participate for one week but we agreed to take part for one year: the monitoring is initially each week then monthly. A person from the ONS comes to the house (they wear PPE and stay on the doorstep) and we each do a swab test each time and 'report' on what we've been doing in the past seven days (later, month). It will help in building a picture of local infections and ensuring local responses are appropriate and effective. We are well briefed, told the data is protected by law and treated as confidential, and we could pull out at any time if we wished. We're very happy to participate though as it seems such a small thing to do to try to support the fight against Covid-19!

* * * * *

We are still in very uncertain times. We simply can't know if we are in for further or reimposed restrictions or if things will improve sufficiently for us to meet up. As soon as we feel it safe to consider meeting up we will get in touch but until then our newsletters will continue. As always, we would appreciate any contributions from you for our August newsletter, no matter what the topic or the length. We need all contributions by/on Thursday 19 August latest please. Email or text is easy for us if you can, or please don't hesitate to use our phone number (you may be asked to leave a message for us to call back).

Best wishes

Jenny, Lynne, Morag, Tim, Tony
MKSSG Committee

Contact details: www.mkssg.org.uk • mkssg.sec@gmail.com • 07843-768386 (leave a number for us to call you back) • a *closed* Face book page (search for the group and request to join)

Supplement to July newsletter

Extract from a Parks Trust self-guided walk sheet

Pilgrims' Trail Map Milton Keynes

This map is intended to help you navigate the Pilgrims' trail detailed with many insights in *The New Pilgrims' Trail* pamphlet (Milton Keynes Park's Trust). Use it on your smart device as you walk along or print out and take it with you.

Trail
Footpaths
Cycle Paths
Bridleways

The trail is approx. 6.3 miles from Bradwell Abbey in the North to The Prince George Pub in the South

Shorter **one-way** sections are:

- Bradwell Abbey to Lodge Lake: 1.5 miles
- Lodge Lake to Grumpy Cook Cafe: 1 mile
- Grumpy Cook Cafe to Shenley Wood Car Park: 2 miles
- Shenley Wood Car Park to the Prince George: 1.8 miles

All data and photos (except where indicated) by John Hunt, Feb 2021: mapperou@gmail.com
Further copies of this map may be downloaded from: mapperou.com/images.html

1 Bradwell Abbey – home to Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre, the site of a 12th century Benedictine priory, the Chapel of St Mary displays unique wall paintings depicting medieval pilgrimage.

2 The Concrete Cows – were created in 1978 by artist, Liz Leyh. The original cows now live at Milton Keynes Museum. The cows in this park are replicas created by artist Bill Billings.

3 Millennium Circular Cycle Route – a 12 mile circular route around Milton Keynes. The Pilgrims Trail joins this route through the picturesque Loughton Valley.

4 Loughton Valley Linear Park – a beautiful section of parkland managed by *The Parks Trust*. Like most parkland in MK it was designed to hold floodwater to protect housing. Now home to a huge amount of wildlife, including kingfishers and woodpeckers. Examples of medieval fields and old springs can still be found here.

5 Lodge Lake – a very popular fishing spot in MK and home to many birds, including herons, swans and little grebes.

6 Stepping Stones – located south of *Lodge Lake*, these large stepping stones across the shallow stream are great fun for children and adults to jump across.

7 All Saints Church – The medieval building of All Saints sits in the heart of Loughton and is home to a lively family church. Interior reburbished for multi use as well as worship.

Some of the walks are circular so that you park and return to your parking spot at the end of the walk. Others are linear (such as the one shown above) so that you start at one spot but finish away from it. For these, either you need to arrange to have two cars and leave one at each end or, if you do part of or the whole walk, remember you will do the same distance back again to return to your car. We are planning to do some walks and hope some members will be able to join us. We will be giving specific details of the first one in our August newsletter. However before then a few of us are planning to do a 'test walk' in a week or so, probably the Pilgrims' Trail (which you'll see from above is just over 6 miles one way). If you would like to join us on that one do please get in touch with us by Wednesday 28 July. All are welcome.

Answers to brain teasers in our June newsletter

- 1 A man was walking in the rain. He was in the middle of nowhere. He had nothing and nowhere to hide. He came home all wet, but not a single hair on his head was wet. Why is that?

Answer: The man was bald.
- 2 You've escaped a maze and there are three doors in front of you. The door on the left leads to a pit of hot lava. The door in the centre leads to a room filled with deadly gas. The door on the right leads to a lion that hasn't eaten in three months. Which door do you choose?

Answer: The door on the right. A lion who hasn't eaten for three months would be dead.
- 3 Guess the next three letters in the series GTNTL.

Answer: ITS. The complete sequence is the first letter of each word in the sentence.
- 4 The number 8,549,176,320 is a unique number. What is so special about it?

Answer: This is the only number that includes all the digits once in alphabetical order.