



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

**Newsletter number 20  
August 2021**

Dear Member

We have yet another packed edition of our newsletter for you, with a good variety of topics, news and the usual puzzles; we hope there is at least something in the newsletter to interest and amuse everyone. As you are aware, our Zoom meetings were originally set up in lieu of our Dobbies gatherings but it was a very welcome return to our face to face gatherings on Monday, 18 August, our first chance to meet up again for 18 months. And what a turnout! Although we know a few members were not able to make it we feel that, apart from those, all our 'usuals' were there. We hope those of you who came enjoyed renewing acquaintances and, all being well, we will be seeing you and even more members at the next Dobbies gathering on Monday, 20 September. We'll be sending out a reminder nearer the time but we hope you'll put the date in your diaries in the meantime.

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**Stoma Team news**

As we mentioned in our June newsletter a new member, Helen, has joined the team. Here Karen tells us a little more about her. (In the photo from left to right: Karen, Grainne, Helen and Elena.)

*Helen joined us as our new Stoma Care Specialist Nurse at the end of May. She came to us from Bedford Hospital where she has most recently been working on the neonatal unit. She also has*



*experience of working on adult surgical wards looking after patients with a new stoma and in critical care. She has settled into the team very well and we are delighted to have her on board. Her neonatal experience will be a real asset to us as we look after neonatal babies as well as paediatric and adult ostomists. She is participating in some virtual stoma training courses at the moment which she is finding very helpful and enjoyable.*

We are delighted to hear that the team is back to full strength. We wish you all the very best Helen in the role, and we hope perhaps we may 'properly' meet you and welcome you to the group one day.

On a different matter, we recently asked Karen to tell us about arrangements should we need to visit Milton Keynes hospital, and here are the details (as of 20 August) she passed on to us.

*All adult inpatient wards across the hospital have reintroduced visiting with the exception of wards 21A and 24 (which remain a patient-only area for post operative patients).*

*Visiting on the wards is by appointment only and restricted to one visitor, per patient, per day for 45 minutes (one hour in total including 15 minutes for arrival and departure) with a limit placed on how many visitors will be allowed on a ward and its bays at any one time to ensure social distancing can be maintained. Visiting hours are from 14.00 to 19.00 each day.*

*All visitors need to book an appointment by calling the ward between 09.30 and 11.30 the day before. Visitors will be given a booking reference number to gain access to the ward at the agreed visiting time. Visitors should only attend if they are not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms and have an appropriate face covering (with exemptions taken into account).*

If you need help at any time, don't hesitate to contact the stoma team: **Stoma Care Direct Line: 01908 996951** (an answer machine which is checked very regularly and your call will be returned, but please ensure you leave your name and contact number); or email: **stomateammkuh@mkuh.nhs.uk**

## Day trips: Coton Manor Garden, near Guilsborough, Northamptonshire, NN6 8RQ

Now that the Covid restrictions are being eased we are once again beginning to stretch our wings and venture out for the day. We are hoping to provide you with some suggestions of places to go within one hour's drive of Milton Keynes – and we hope that some of you might contribute some of your own favourites. Jenny starts the ball rolling with her visit to Coton Manor Garden (approximately 32 miles each way from Milton Keynes).



*I had watched the recent Carol Klein series Great British Gardens and having learnt that this garden had won the Nation's Favourite Garden award I felt that it was time to investigate. I'll quote from their website as it provides a very accurate description.*

*'This beautiful garden at Coton Manor occupies a hillside position extending down from the 17th century manor house constructed of mellow Northamptonshire stone. The 10acre garden has luxuriant borders that delight the plant enthusiast whilst everyone will enjoy the garden's charm and special atmosphere, with colour and interest throughout the season. Beyond the garden is a magical 5acre bluebell wood and a wild flower meadow.*

*The Stable Yard café serves [excellent!] homemade lunches and teas. The extensive nursery has over a thousand varieties of plants, many of which are unusual and are propagated from the garden.'*

*The garden also has a beautiful small lake as a centre piece, with the added delights of pink flamingos strolling freely around the lawns.*

*This has to be one of the most delightful gardens that I have visited – and I will certainly be returning as the different seasons unfold. I thoroughly recommend that you go and see for yourself.*



## Brain teasers

- 1 Each of the following words can be rearranged to give a name. What are the four names?  
HURT LONE EVENLY ROMANCE
- 2 Paper plates can be recycled to make new plates. Nine used plates are required to make each new plate. There are 145 used plates.  
How many new plates can possibly be made in total?
- 3 If Sally gives Thomas £3 they will both have the same amount of money. If Thomas gives Sally £3, Sally will have four times as much money as Thomas.  
Who has what?

Contributed by Lynne.

## Book review

This is Morag's review of the book *We Have Lost the President* by Paul Mathews. Her review proves that a book chosen almost at random can certainly exceed one's expectations!



*I chose this book because it was on special offer and I didn't expect too much from it. However, I thoroughly enjoyed it. It's a comedy mystery full of wry humour and likeable characters.*

*It's 2044 and Britain is a democracy, with the royal family exiled to Canada. The internet has crashed and there are no mobile phones. The President, Jan Polak, has vanished overnight from Buckingham Palace and no one has a clue where he is. He must be found before his crucial announcement on Independence Day, of whether he will run for office again or the Republican Party needs a new nominee. There are 50 vice presidents waiting in the wings, one of whom is the president's identical twin. The main characters are Pond, Howie Pond, the President's official spokesman and reluctant secret service agent and his girlfriend, who happens to be a journalist.*

*Which of them is going to find the President first? The two policemen guarding the gates of Buckingham Palace made me chuckle.*

*I was gripped throughout the book and didn't want to put it down.*

**Available:** Kindle edn £4.99; Paperback £11.99. 311 pages.

## News about suppliers: Amcare

The problems with Amcare continue. Their contact number repeatedly tells you to hold but after a considerable time there is no answer. Supplies seem to be delivered but there have been delays in this. We have emailed their company service director on your behalf but as yet have received no reply. If you use Amcare and wish to contact them, we advise you: if you do ring, do not *rely* on reaching them on their number; do ensure you order supplies in good time; and do let us know how you get on. The message from Karen is: 'Please could you reassure your members that we do keep equipment here at the hospital and although it may not be exactly the same products as they are using we would be able to supply them with an alternative so they know that they have another option in an emergency'. (Contact details for Karen/stoma team are on the first page of this newsletter.)

## Jenny's 'Notes from the garden'

In the first edition of our newsletter last year I wrote about how a packet of sunflower seeds sent out by my supplier had really raised my spirits in the first lockdown. So when this Spring Morrison's were giving out free 'Seeds of Hope', I willingly accepted a packet and duly planted them. The packet described them as being 'dwarf sunflowers' growing to a maximum height of 60cms so I put them in the border and watched them grow ... and grow ... and grow some more! They may not be the 6ft tall variety but they are built like Sumo wrestlers and are certainly not 'dwarf' – so I am stuck with very much the wrong plant in the wrong place as they have swamped everything else in the bed (upper photo) – and to add insult to injury they have yet to flower.



But on a more positive note the rest of the garden is still full of colour and, if it ever stops raining, can still be appreciated as the later blooms from dahlias (photo right) and asters take over from the earlier flowering plants.



Early September allows us to plan for our Spring planting and the garden centres will be displaying new selections of bulbs to tempt us – and so the cycle goes on!

## Humour



Cartoon contributed by Morag.

How do you handle dangerous cheese?

Caerphilly.

What did Cinderella say when her photos didn't arrive on time?

One day my prints will come.

What did the pirate say on his 80th birthday?

Aye Matey!

Why do bakers work so hard?

Because they need the dough!

How do you cook sausages in the jungle?

Under a gorilla!

Jokes contributed by Jenny.

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We feel sure many of you have had interesting experiences, but perhaps think others 'won't want to know'. If an experience was interesting for you at the time then tell us or write to us about it and we'll be very happy to work with you, helping to write an article and adding pictures that other members will enjoy reading about. We would appreciate any contributions from you for our September newsletter, no matter what the topic or the length. We need all contributions by/on Friday 17 September latest please. Email or text is easy for us if you can, or please don't hesitate to phone.

Best wishes

Jenny, Lynne, Morag, Tim, Tony

MKSSG Committee

**Contact details:** [www.mkssg.org.uk](http://www.mkssg.org.uk) • [mkssg.sec@gmail.com](mailto: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 August newsletter

### Answers to brain teasers in our July newsletter

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?



*Answer:* Pick up the second of the full glasses and pour the contents into the second of the empty 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?

*Answer:* He was cleaning the windows inside the apartment.

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?

*Answer:* Take the longer string and fold it exactly in half. Light both ends. It will take exactly 5 minutes for both halves to burn. Then do the same with the shorter string. It will take exactly 30 seconds for the two halves of this to burn.