

The Partially Sighted Society Wellbeing Newsletter

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Hello and welcome to our second lockdown newsletter which is a collaboration between myself and our wonderful group of trustees. In this version, our treasurer, Keith Binks, provides an insight into what it is like to have a Covid test with a visual impairment. Our chairman, Gerald Reid, has provided a quiz to get our brains working, and trustee Peter Moore has given us some Football Gaffes to chuckle at. A suduko and crossword puzzle have been added to the mix.

During these last 10 months our offices have been opened and closed to visitors more times than my fridge door when my son is at home! But, throughout, our small team of 2.5 people have been here all the time manning the phones, providing help and advice, taking orders and keeping in touch with all our friends with visual impairment across the country. When we have been able, our sight tests and low-vision assessments have continued.

As Benjamin Disraeli said 'there is no education like adversity' and this has certainly been a time of learning for us as an organisation. Our online shop is now up and running efficiently - which has been a big learning curve - and we have some exciting plans in the pipeline for when we can all get together again - in person.

In the meantime, take care and keep safe.

Anita Plant, CEO, The Partially Sighted Society

TESTING TIMES

by Keith Binks

It started with a sneeze. Then a few more and a runny nose.

My son, a young PE teacher in a Doncaster secondary school, had had a cold for a few days. So had his girlfriend, also a teacher. They both lived with us. It's not unusual to pick up sniffles from the multiple bugs that circulate a crowded educational environment, especially in December. From my long experience in teaching, I accepted the inevitability of being exhausted and 'under the weather' just in time for the Christmas holiday.

On Friday evening we enjoyed that joyous glugging sound of merlot sloshing into our wine glasses. "Nearly end of term guys – cheers!".

My son took his first sip, then with a confused expression, a second. "I don't think I can taste this", he said with concern. We all tensed slightly. My wife took out a tub of Vick and suggested he smelt it. "Nothing at all" he said.

Moments later he had a test booked at a local centre and the job done within an hour. The next morning an email confirmed what we all expected – POSITIVE.

Bedrooms were quickly shuffled to lock him away in the vain hope we could avoid infection. The reality was 'TOO LATE'.

His girlfriend lost taste and smell later that day and her cough was more persistent.

My mild cold symptoms were setting in.

By Sunday morning his girlfriend had also received a positive test result.

The roast beef and Yorkshire pudding tasted as good as ever to me and my wife had no obvious covid symptoms, but wasn't 100%.

We decided to get tested anyway.

With masks donned and NHS app open on our phones with QR codes ready to be scanned, my wife drove us to the Maltby Testing Centre - a mere two miles away. As we parked up and steeled ourselves for the ordeal, I wondered if they'd be geared up for people with visual disabilities.

As we maneuvered to the entrance I was amazed to hear the laughter and conversations of a large group of teenagers close to the Testing Station, simply standing around

socialising and without distancing. "They're here a lot, it's just where they hang-out", said the receptionist. WHY? Having taught youngsters all my life I guess I shouldn't have been surprised!

My first issue was re-finding the QR code, in the dimly lit passage, which had now disappeared from my phone, followed by the need to complete some essential information on a form. It was a good job I had my wife with me.

In fairness the staff were friendly, helpful and reassuring, but for obvious reasons had to keep their distance. We should have gone to separate cubicles but I needed my wife's help with the practicalities of accessing and using the swab.

The clinical assistants were okay with this but I was a little concerned that if she didn't already have it, I could potentially

be passing the virus to my wife as a result of the process.

They suggested I go first. My wife passed me the swab she'd unpackaged. I was told I first had to scrape my tonsils for at least 10 seconds and it would be easier to use the mirror provided. It wasn't. I couldn't see anything in my mouth. So it was guess work and feel. I pushed the swab where I thought my tonsils would be and then – involuntarily gipped! – several times.

This led to me biting the swab and brushing the inside of my cheek. “Never mind, let's start again with a fresh swab”, said the nurse, sympathetically.

I realised I had probably been ramming the swab stem way too far down my throat. The second time, still gipping, I managed it. I then had to push the same swab up my nose

for a scrapping from the back of my nostrils. Much easier, but as I removed it the nurse said “oh dear the cotton end swab has come off”! My first thought was it must be stuck up my nose. My wife exclaimed, “no its still there, you've stuck the wrong end up your nose”! I'd turned it round deliberately assuming there was a swab on each end, one for each scrapping – apparently not.

Round 3 – another new swab! The nurse suggested it might be better if my wife took over the operation. Reluctantly I agreed. This time I tried hard not to retch in her face – but failed. However, with watery eyes we eventually completed the process. I waited patiently and relieved whilst my wife, now well practiced, completed her own procedure.

We eventually fulfilled the whole process, thanked the

patient staff and headed home.

The next day the results came through. I was positive, but remarkably my wife was negative. Even more bizarrely, despite our close proximity, she never displayed any symptoms over the following weeks. Had she been one of the 30% false negatives and asymptomatic, or somehow avoided picking it up from us three? Unfairly, she was the one who had to hibernate in our bedroom for two weeks, whilst us three moved more freely around the house.

If you're reading this as a person with vision loss, I can reassure you that the Testing Centres are safe and well managed, but if you need to go, and I hope you don't, I would recommend taking along a relative or friend to assist you if necessary. Oh – and make sure you can locate your tonsils before you go!

DID YOU KNOW?

Glasses with yellow tinted lenses are often a great help to people living with sight loss. But why is this?

The yellow tint has the effect of enhanced contrast in certain daylight conditions. This is because the yellow tint blocks some blue light from sunlight. Blue light comprises the portion of the visible light spectrum that has the highest energy and shortest wavelengths. This high-energy visible (HEV) blue light also is more likely to cause glare when it enters the eye, compared with other visible light that has longer wavelengths.

The 'blue blocking' filtration provided by yellow tinted lenses also occurs with amber and copper-colored lenses. These darker tints can block significantly more blue light than yellow lenses - but they also prevent more light from entering the eye, which reduces visibility in low-light conditions.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

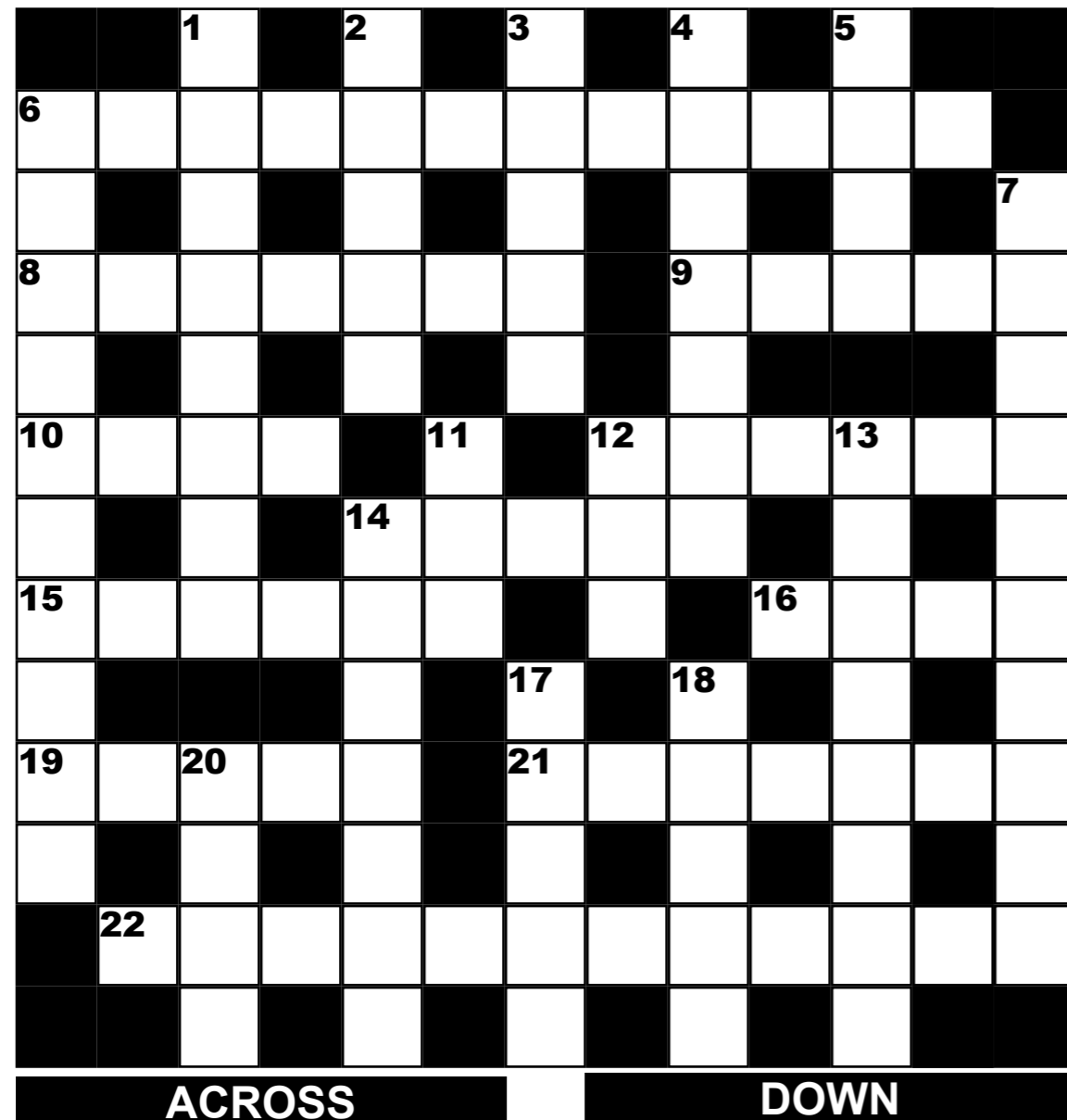
1. How much does a 'stitch in time' save?
2. How many pennies are there in an old style English pound?
3. In which Scottish lake is a monster said to live?
4. How many people would normally make up a jury in England and Wales?
5. What nationality was the composer Frederick Chopin?
6. What were commuters urged to go to work on in the 1960's?
7. What is the RAF's famous aerobatic display team called?
8. Which English city is familiarly known as 'Brum'?
9. What is the plural of 'dwarf'?
10. If you had 'tinnitus' what would you be suffering from?
11. What is the world's best selling perfume?
12. Scorpions are immune to their own venom. True or False?

SUDOKU

4							1	
2	1		4		5		7	
			2	8			5	3
							3	8
5		6	1	4				
	9	7				5		
	8				2			
	7	4		9				
			3	5		7		

Answers to Sudoku, Crossword Puzzle and Quiz are on the back page. No cheating!

Laugh-out-loud Football Gaffes



ACROSS

DOWN

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>6. From where horses may be hired (6-6)</p> <p>8. Piglike(7)</p> <p>9. Solitary (5)</p> <p>10. Public school (4)</p> <p>12. Heavenly body (6)</p> <p>14. Tug (5)</p> <p>15. Warmer (6)</p> <p>16. Blue dye (4)</p> <p>19. Presses (5)</p> <p>21. Objection (7)</p> <p>22. Drink-driving deterrent (12)</p> | <p>1. Outdoor jacket (8)</p> <p>2. Texture, pattern (5)</p> <p>3. Willow (5)</p> <p>4. Handcuff (7)</p> <p>5. Mixture (4)</p> <p>6. Irish pixie (10)</p> <p>7. Ainer (10)</p> <p>11. For each (3)</p> <p>12. Type of plastic (3)</p> <p>13. Rubbish (8)</p> <p>14. Fabric wall-covering (7)</p> <p>17. Foreign cavalryman (5)</p> <p>18. Plate decoration (5)</p> <p>20. Clothing (4)</p> |
|---|---|

‘Leeds is a great club and it’s been my home for years, even though I live in Middlesbrough.’ Jonathan Woodgate

‘I can see the carrot at the end of the tunnel.’ Stuart Pearce

‘I took a whack on my left ankle, but something told me it was my right.’ Lee Hendile

‘I couldn’t settle in Itay - it was like living in a foreign country.’ Ian Rush

‘Germany are a very difficult team to play .. they had 11 internationals out there today.’ Steve Lomas

‘I always used to put my right boot on first, and then obviously my right sock.’ Barry Venison

‘I definitely want Brooklyn to be christened, but I don’t know what religion yet.’ David Beckham

‘The Brazilians were South American, and the Ukrainians will be more European.’ Phil Neville

‘All that remains is a few dots and commas to be crossed.’ Mitchell Thomas

‘One accusation you can throw at me is that I’ve always done my best.’ Alan Shearer

‘I’d rather play in front of a full house than an empty crowd.’ Johnny Giles

‘Sometimes in football you have to score goals.’ Thierry Henry

'My parents have been there for me ever since I was about 7.' David Beckham

'I would not be bothered if we lost every game as long as we won the league.' Mark Viduka

'Alex Ferguson is the best manager I've ever had at this level. Well he's the only manager I've actually had at this level. But he's the best manager I've ever had.' David Beckham

'If you don't believe you can win, there's no point in getting out of bed at the end of the day.' Neville Southall

'I've had 14 bookings this season - 8 of which were my fault, but 7 of which were disputable.' Paul Gascoigne

'I never wanted to leave. I'm here for the rest of my life, and hopefully after that as well.' Alan Shearer

'I'd like to play for an Italian club like Barcelona.' Mark Draper

'You've got to believe that you're going to win, and I believe we'll win the World Cup until the final whistle blows and we're knocked out.'

Peter Shilton

'I faxed a transfer request to the club at the beginning of the week, but let me state that I don't want to leave Leicester.' Stan Collymore

'I was watching the Blackburn game on TV on Sunday when it flashed on the screen that George (Ndah) had scored in the first minute at Birmingham. My first reaction was to ring him up. Then I remembered he was out there playing.' Ade Adkinbiyi

'Without being too harsh on David Beckham, he cost us the match.' Ian Wright

'I'm as happy as I can be - but I've been happier.' Ugo Ehiogu

SOLUTIONS

4	5	3	9	6	7	8	1	2
2	1	8	4	3	5	9	7	6
7	6	9	2	8	1	4	5	3
1	4	2	5	7	9	6	3	8
5	3	6	1	4	8	2	9	7
8	9	7	6	2	3	5	4	1
9	8	5	7	1	2	3	6	4
3	7	4	8	9	6	1	2	5
6	2	1	3	5	4	7	8	9

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS: 6. Livery-stable; 8. Porcine; 9. Alone; 10. Eton; 12. Planet; 14. Heave; 15. Hotter; 16. Anil; 19. Urges; 21. Protest; 22. Breathalyser

DOWN: 1. Overcoat; 2. Grain; 3. Osier; 4. Manacle; 5. Olio; 6. Leprechaun; 7. Ventilator; 11. Per; 12. PVC; 13. Nonsense; 14. Hessian; 17. Spahi; 18. Doily; 20. Garb;

QUIZ

- 9
- 240
- Loch Ness
- 12
- Polish
- An egg
- The Red Arrows
- Birmingham
- Dwarfs OR Dwarves
- A ringing in your ears
- Chanel No. 5
- False

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