

24th May 2020

On the Covid Frontline

This comes from Nigel Beeton, (pictured below in his PPE) who works in Radiology in a hospital in the East of England, and who is one of the resident poets on Parish Pump!

During this time of the coronavirus crisis, he is writing a weekly diary of his life at the hospital



I had another new experience today – my first (and hopefully my only) coronavirus test.

I had to sit in a little room about the size of a toilet cubicle, and a very cheery nurse (who I know very well from her normal job when she isn't testing) came in dressed in PPE and stuck a swab up each nostril. I think the word is

'uncomfortable' rather than painful –

don't let me put you off being tested if you need a test – and it was all over in a trice. Now I've got you all worried that I'm suffering from the virus. Fear not, I am as fit as the proverbial butcher's dog, but sadly one of my colleagues from CT has now tested positive and I was working quite closely with her last week, so they thought I and a few others should get the test to be on the safe side.

I have to be thankful to have got through to the second half of May with 237 staff, a significant proportion of whom in direct contact with the public and with coronavirus sufferers, and not to have had a single one of them infected with the virus. We hope and pray that she will make a complete recovery, at the last bulletin she was still reasonably well.

I am, as you all by now know, immensely proud of these wonderful people who get up each morning knowing the risks, but still they come. I also hope that my own test is negative, not just for the usual reasons but because it would compel me to self-isolate, and I have a very good reason to want to be in the hospital next week.

That reason is because next Thursday marks the end of a career in full-time radiography which began on 13th September 1978 when a scared young 18 year old entered the Luton and Dunstable Hospital in Bedfordshire to commence my training. Nearly 42 years later, I am retiring. Things are not quite the way I'd planned – but by the time the virus struck it was too late to change the actual dates because my replacements (yes, two!) have been appointed.

A lot of people quite understandably are fearful of hospitals and dislike them. Well, the buildings are rarely pretty and the experiences to be had therein (such as having your nose swabbed) are frequently those we can do without, no matter how hard the staff try to make them pleasant. But when you work in hospitals, believe me, they really get into your blood.

The whole atmosphere of a hospital as a workplace is, and always has been, uniquely wonderful. Especially when, as recently, the chips have been down, that sense of camaraderie is one that I would miss. So, I'll be back later in June for a couple of days a week, but by then the responsibility for the safety of all those patients and staff will have passed on to other shoulders, and I shall just be a part time worker bee! Be warned – that will leave me more time to write my doggerel for the Parish Pump!

That, of course depends on the pandemic not worsening again, and upon the staff staying well, otherwise it'll be back to the PPE for me!

THIS SUNDAY – 24th May!

The Duke of Cambridge will urge people who are concerned about their mental health or that of others to reach out and start a conversation, in a contribution to this Sunday's Church of England national online service, marking the end of Mental Health Awareness Week.

As in previous weeks, the service will be available from

9am on Sunday on the [Church's website](#), [Facebook page](#) and on [YouTube](#).

The service, led by the Revd Professor Gina Radford, a Vicar in Devon and a former Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England, will include a series of prayers for all those whose mental health has been affected, their relatives, friends and carers.

She will say in her sermon that Mental Health Awareness Week has had a 'particular significance' this year as more people struggle with mental health and well-being.

"For some people of faith this is particularly challenging," she will continue.

"Surely, we might ask, my faith should get me through? But we need to face the reality that we are human – we are body, mind and spirit. We are all susceptible to mental ill-health, just as we are to physical ill-health."

The hymns, some of which have been recorded remotely this week, are from the choirs of St Martin-in-the-Fields, directed by Andrew Earis. All were recorded separately in accordance with the rules on physical distancing. Tim Hughes kindly gave permission for the UK Blessing to be used, featuring contributions from more than 65 churches and movements across the country.



A message from Chief Education Officer for the Church of England

The Revd Nigel Genders, writes:
With almost two months having passed since most pupils attended their school building, it is clear that the risks surrounding Coronavirus cannot and will not be quickly resolved. It is of paramount importance that children's education and all that schools offer can continue as fully and as soon possible, while always balanced with the health risks that this may entail.



As has been the case for many schools, Church of England schools have remained open to the children of key workers and to vulnerable children, with teachers working extremely hard to provide as much support as they can for children who have come to school and those who have remained at home during the lockdown. However, remaining at home for a prolonged period will affect the mental, spiritual, physical and social wellbeing of children. We are particularly concerned about the impact on children from the most disadvantaged families and the potential this has for a widening in the attainment gap.

As parents and staff are concerned about both the feasibility and the wisdom behind a phased return from the 1st June, we can be pleased that the scientific evidence behind these proposals has been set out in order to give confidence. The phased plan to bring back a limited number of year groups initially will rely on ongoing monitoring to keep track of the situation.

It is right that schools themselves will decide how this phased return works in practical terms. We will continue to work to support school leaders at a local level as they move towards a phased reopening at the pace dictated by local circumstances and the overarching science.

School staff are doing a wonderful job of continuing to provide educational and pastoral support to students at a time of unprecedented challenges, and we should continue to support and pray for them as they do so.

Welcoming more people

Many churches across the country have reported that more people are visiting their services streamed live online, than have ever come to their church buildings in normal times. We thank God for this opportunity to welcome them as we express and share our faith in Sunday worship. It is clear that this is a time of great challenge but also an unprecedented opportunity.

The UK Blessing video is praised by Prime Minister

Boris Johnson has called the video of people from 65 churches singing 'The UK Blessing' a 'sensational singing masterpiece'. In a personal letter to Tim Hughes, the Christian worship leader who organised it all, the Prime Minister awarded him his daily Points of Light Award - a prize which has been running since 2014 to recognise individuals who have had a positive impact on society.



Boris Johnson said: "At a time when our churches are closed, I am filled with admiration to hear how you have used the power of music to bring together Christians of all denominations from across our United Kingdom. 'The UK Blessing' is truly uplifting and has touched millions around the world with its message of hope and its beauty." [The video](#) features people from 65 churches and has been seen over 2 million times on Youtube. Tim Hughes is based at Gas Street Church in Birmingham.



"Don't walk behind me;
I may not lead.
Don't walk in front of me;
I may not follow.
Just walk beside me
and be my friend."

Source: Parish Pump

