

MERTON SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB

BULLETIN

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http://www.mssc.org.uk/

Merton Sports and Social Club for VI People

(Charity No. 283843)

The Guardian Centre

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**MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Dear MSSC members and friends,

My thoughts and best wishes are with you all during this strange, unpredictable period. To those of you who have so kindly put yourselves out to offer help with shopping, running errands and dog walking, you deserve a massive thank you. I know just how much your generous support is appreciated. Those offers of help still stand, so if you are someone who would benefit from a friendly chat or you need help with getting groceries or with exercising your guide dog, please get in touch.

It goes without saying that I and the rest of the MSSC Committee hugely regret the sudden and untimely halt to all club activities, especially at such a fertile time of growth when we were seeing increasing levels of participation, particularly in tandem cycling. It would be great if we could look ahead and anticipate the easing of the current restrictions, but truthfully nobody can accurately predict when that will be. Furthermore, when restrictions are eventually lifted, we cannot expect that we will return immediately to “business as usual”. We will have to keep fully up-to-date with official advice and consider very carefully how we run our activities whilst observing hygiene and physical distancing protocols.

As with the April bulletin, this edition contains nothing about MSSC events and activities coming up. However, thanks to Terry, who has edited this edition, you will find a selection of articles which we hope will be of interest.

In the meantime, stay well and keep safe.

Richard James

Email: chair@mssc.org.uk

**WALKS AROUND THE WRYTHE & OTHER CANINE CAPERS**

**There has been a lot of change in my household recently. During the week, I used to have my breakfast at seven in the morning and have a short but boring walk, on the same route, round the same park, with my master, Andy before he went to work. Now he is at home every day and His boss (but not mine) Bev, feeds me in the morning, and I get to go back to sleep if I want. At first, I thought great, playtime all day, but instead I keep an eye on my master whilst he stares at this screen and talks to people I can’t see. However, later in the day, I get to go on much better walks every day. Andy could’ve talked to me and told me what’s been going on, but I think he has forgotten that I have a vocabulary of over 200 words.**

**At last, my Master and Bev have worked out we do not need to go to different places in the car, like we used to at weekends, because there are great walks locally. My favourite is a walk I have named the ‘Four parks and a Cemetery’ walk (a great title for a film).**

**The sounds on walks have changed for the better. The unpleasant noise of traffic and planes, which I hate, has reduced considerably and I can now hear the birds chattering away. I didn’t realise how many species of birds there are in this area. Bev has said that she wants to download an app so that she can find out which birds are singing. She also said she was taught at school to recognise a tree from its leaf and what a shame that she has forgotten most of them because there are loads of beautiful trees in Carshalton. Did you know that one of the oldest plane trees in London is in Carshalton?**

**I have also noticed that the River Wandle is cleaner and I can enjoy a dip in the shallow bits, particularly at Wilderness Island. I get to chase the squirrels at Grove Park and I meet lots of dogs. It seems that many dogs are more relaxed these days, although some are kept on leads and I have learned to respect the fact that they want to keep their distance.**

**Carshalton Park is the third park on the walk. There is a pond there called Hogpit Pond, which was created in the 1770s to supply water to the River Wandle for mills in Mill Lane, it always used to be dry but it is now filled again with water and, over the past few weeks, I have developed the confidence to try swimming in it, as it is deeper than I normally like.**

**We then walk through the cemetery behind All Saints church before the fourth park, which is Wrythe Recreation ground, the park near where I live. A couple of weeks ago, round the corner from my house, there was a family of ducks on the grass verge and the humans who lived in the street were sitting out in their front gardens watching the unusual scene. Personally, I was tempted to run over and say hello, but I wasn’t allowed: social distancing, I think it’s called.**

**I do miss walks with my pals who also work as guide dogs. I admire them so much and I hope it is not too long before I get to meet up with them again.**

**Gambit Williamson**

***(translated into English by Bev Williamson)***

**TANDEM RIDING WITH MY DAUGHTER**

*(A father’s discovery of a new way to go cycling)*

Until I bumped into Richard at a Merton Vision Family Day at the Guardian centre last summer, I hadn’t really considered Tandem riding myself. It was something that other people did, and it seemed expensive and a difficult thing to do. However, it quickly dawned on me, as I spoke to Richard, that Tandem riding would be a brilliant way to go cycling with my visually impaired daughter at some point in the future.

Thanks to another MSSC member I met at a club social, I soon got the chance to have a go at piloting a tandem, when I went out with him on his tandem for a longer than planned ride. I really got

a feel for what tandem riding is about and how different it is from riding a solo bike. There are certain changes in technique required, but the key difference is how much the pilot and stoker need to communicate and talk to each other about what they are doing.

I now have use of a tandem called a Kiddie-crank, which is designed to be ridden by an adult pilot and child stoker. My little girl was really keen to go out on the bike with me. She tells me the thing she likes most about tandem riding is chatting, so all around the route, we are chatting while we are cycling. She has started to do more pedalling now she is getting the hang of riding a bike, and she especially likes going through the subway under the A3: that puzzles me, but it might be because she likes hearing the echo of the subway. It’s been a great time of Father and daughter bonding which has been a bit of a surprise and an unexpected bonus. On the other hand, cycling with my son is a bit different: he told me that I talked too much… so I try to keep a bit quieter when I am with him on the bike.😊

**PERSEVERANCE**

**The following article has been provided by Terry’s sister who works in a school in South Devon. Part of her role is to research a monthly theme for the staff and pupils to contemplate. In April, the theme was “Perseverance” which seems particularly apt for these uncertain, challenging times.**

**"It always seems impossible until it's done." Nelson Mandela**

**"The best way to treat obstacles is to use them as stepping-stones.  Laugh at them, tread on them and let them lead you to something better." Enid Blyton**

Perseverance seems quite a relevant topic at the moment: learning new technology and new systems has been a significant challenge in addition to navigating 'lockdown' and changes within so many of our day-to-day structures.  This overload can make it feel like a bit of an uphill struggle at times.

Is it all just hard work then?  Psychology Today talks about the significant influence of Dopamine in the "Neuroscience of Perseverance", keeping people motivated to persevere and achieve, "dopamine floods your body and mind with a rush of satisfaction and reward".  The good news is we can increase our dopamine levels to aid perseverance by adopting some new strategies. As I understand it, achieving our goals can gain a release of the 'feel good' hormone, so structuring in regular, small, obtainable goals along the way helps to encourage us to **persevere.** Frequent goal achievements help to keep our dopamine levels topped up as, if we do not accomplish something every day, our reserves diminish.

Psychology today suggests: "*Something as simple as putting fresh linens on your bed can be a dopamine goldmine.  Each step in the process: from pulling all four corners of a fitted sheet around the mattress; to putting the pillows back in their cases; to then tucking in the sheets to create "hospital corners" are all chances to give yourself mini-hits of dopamine. When you have the bed completely made you get a big spike of dopamine and a sense of accomplishment. You can break every task you face in daily life into mini-achievements that each release a hit of dopamine.*"  It is therefore worthwhile, considering what other achievable 'stepping stones' could be embedded in our daily routine.

Please find some links below I hope are useful:

Psychology Today (23.4.20) full article by Christopher Bergland [here](https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/the-athletes-way/201112/the-neuroscience-perseverance)

The Science of Perseverance, Michael Pollock [here](https://outlook.office.com/mail/HMSecretary%40trinityschool.co.uk/drafts/id/Pollock%20https%3A/www.michaeldpollock.com/mindset-motivation-perseverance/)

Ted Talk, Angela Duckworth [here](https://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_perseverance/discussion?referrer=playlist-what_is_success)

Class Dojo Perseverance video [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOaFwwLyTRo)

Assemblies.org, Kelly Holmes [here](https://www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/1609/going-for-goals-the-story-of-kelly-holmes)

The Guardian.com [here](https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2016/jan/12/science-resilience-how-to-teach-students-persevere)

"Courage doesn't always roar.  Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying 'I will try again tomorrow.'"

Lindsey Lloyd-Jacob M.B.A.C.P

**COVID-19 F.A.Q.s**

RNIB and other Sight Loss Charities have added further information to the Sight Advice FAQ, an online one-stop-shop for sight loss related questions. Here you can find answers relating to COVID-19, whether it’s how to get groceries, benefits and welfare advice, access to reading services, connect with others in the community or specific advice for parents of children with a visual impairment.

Visit the COVID- 19 category on the Sight Advice FAQ and either browse the questions or use the search box to find the information you need.

<https://www.sightadvicefaq.org.uk/independent-living/Covid-19>

For dedicated advice and support, you can also call RNIB’s Helpline on 0303 123 9999 (Open between 8am and 8pm weekdays and from 9am to 5pm on Saturdays).

For further information on RNIB services, available during these challenging times, visit <https://www.rnib.org.uk/coronavirus>”

**GUIDE DOGS LAUNCH NEW HELPLINE**

GDBA is providing answers and information for people with sight loss and their families during the coronavirus outbreak. They can help you identify ways to continue living actively and independently, refer you to their other services or help you access services from other providers. Please call 0800 781 1444 between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.

GDBA has also changed the way it provides services in response to social distancing, with every channel being used flexibly to give you choice and access to expertise and advice promptly.

For example, Guide Dogs staff can now arrange to contact you

regularly by phone to provide individual support through the social

isolation period. To access this and other services available, please call 0800 781 1444 between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday, or visit https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/covid19.

**LOCAL SUPPORT**

Are you a Merton resident? Are you blind or partially sighted and struggling to follow social distancing guidelines when you go out for a walk? If so, there is a possibility that Merton Vision will be able to find a volunteer to assist you. Please note that this is not sighted guiding - the volunteer will help you keep your distance through verbal guidance. If you are interested, please contact Merton Vision on 02085405446 or email info@mertonvision.org.uk.

Wherever you live, you can find out what support is available to you locally on a website which lists all the national and local groups helping out during the COVID-19 restrictions. The website address is:-

[covidmutualaid.org](http://covidmutualaid.org/)

**SHOPPING**

By now, we hope you will have been able to sort out your shopping needs, but for a summary of what the main supermarket chains are doing to help disabled customers, including dedicated shopping times, deliveries and food boxes, please visit

<https://www.rnib.org.uk/connect-community/connect-news-and-stories/essential-links-and-information-supermarket-opening-times?utm_source=social&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=c19&utm_content=supermarkets>

### **LOCKDOWN HUMOUR**

We finally have some clarity. It’s no wonder we are confused …

Here are the (un)official Coronavirus guidelines:

1. You MUST NOT leave the house for any reason, but if you have a reason, you can leave the house.

2. Masks are useless at protecting you against the virus, but you may have to wear one because it can save lives, but they may not work, but they may be mandatory, but maybe not.

3. Shops are closed, except those shops that are open.

4. You must not go to work but you can get another job and go to work.

5. You should not go to the doctor’s or to the hospital unless you have to go there, unless you are too poorly to go there.

6. This virus can kill people, but don’t be scared of it. It can only kill those people who are vulnerable or those people who are not vulnerable people. It’s possible to contain and control it sometimes, except that sometimes it actually leads to a global disaster.

7. Gloves won't help, but they can still help so wear them sometimes or not.

8. STAY HOME, but it's important to go out.

9. There is no shortage of groceries in the supermarkets, but there are many things missing. You won’t need loo rolls every time, but you should buy some just in case you need some.

10. The virus has no effect on children except those children it affects.

11. Animals are not affected, but there is still a cat that tested positive in Belgium in February when no one had been tested, plus a few tigers here and there…

12. Stay 2 metres away from tigers (see point 11).

13. You will have many symptoms if you get the virus, but you can also get symptoms without getting the virus, get the virus without having any symptoms or be contagious without having symptoms, or be non-contagious with symptoms.

14. To help protect yourself, you should eat well and exercise, but eat whatever you have on hand as it's better not to go out shopping.

15. It's important to get fresh air, so go for a walk, but don't go to parks and don’t sit down, except if you are old, but not for too long or if you are pregnant or if you’re not old or pregnant but need to sit down. If you do sit down, don’t eat your picnic.

16. Don’t visit old people but you have to take care of old people and bring them food and medication.

17. If you are sick, you can go out when you are better, but anyone else in your household can’t go out when you are better unless they need to go out.

18. You can get restaurant food delivered to the house. These deliveries are safe, but groceries you bring back to your house have to be decontaminated outside for 3 hours, including pizza.

19. You can't see your older mother or grandmother, but they can take a taxi and meet an older taxi driver.

20. You are safe if you maintain the safe social distance when out, but you can’t go out with friends or strangers at the safe social distance.

21. The virus remains active on different surfaces for 2 hours ... or 4 hours... 6 hours... I mean days, not hours... but it needs a damp environment, or a cold environment that is warm and dry... in the air, as long as the air is not plastic.

22. Schools are closed, so you need to home educate your children, unless you can send them to school because you’re not at home. If you are at home you can home educate your children, using various portals and virtual classrooms, unless you have poor internet, or more than one child and only one computer, or you are working from home. Baking cakes can be considered maths, science or art. If you are home educating, you can include household chores within their education. If you are home educating, you can start drinking at 10am.

23. If you are not home educating children, you can also start drinking at 10am.

24. The number of corona related deaths will be announced daily, but we don't know how many people are infected as they are only testing those who are almost dead to find out if that's what they will die of… the people who die of corona who aren’t counted won’t be counted.

25. You should stay in lock down until the virus stops infecting people, but it will only stop infecting people if we all get infected, so it’s important we get infected and some don’t get infected.

Anon

**MSSC FACEBOOK GROUP**

While all MSSC activities are on hold and you are stuck indoors, self-isolating or avoiding non-essential contact, a great way of keeping in touch with fellow MSSC members is via the Facebook group.

Even if you are not currently on Facebook, all you need to do is log on to the platform, click on groups, search for MSSC, and then request to join the group once you have found it. It really is very straightforward.

Jules Griffin

MSSC Facebook Group Founder

**KEEPING ACTIVE AT HOME**

You may well have adopted a daily exercise routine which works for you, but you can find a list of home workouts on British Blind Sport’s website at <https://britishblindsport.org.uk/stay-in-work-out/>

Alternatively, tandem stoker and Sound Tennis player, Odette Batterel has devised her own “Baked Bean Workout” which you can easily do in a small space at home. All you need is 2 tin cans to hand. To give it a go, here is the link: <https://youtu.be/1ZNmaS3I_U0>

The Metro Blind Sport website is a great source of useful material for keeping occupied during lockdown. Take a look at https/www.metroblindsport.org for details.

**ARTS AND CULTURE**

The National Theatre is streaming some of its productions for free, including some audio described performances. Check them out at <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/nt-at-home>

Andrew Lloyd Webber has a selection of musicals being shown for 48 hours. To find out more, follow the link below:-

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdmPjhKMaXNNeCr1FjuMvag/featured>

Vocal Eyes has a comprehensive selection of accessible theatre, arts and culture you can access at home. Visit their website at <https://vocaleyes.co.uk/>

The following is a link to Ian Rattray’s AI Stories YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVPw6B0QDnFYNBJKwbSTE7Q?view_as=subscriber>

From here you can access all episodes.  If anyone has problems with accessing the episodes, please get in touch with Ian at: admin@aistories.co.uk

**FREE ACCESSIBLE NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION**

During the coronavirus crisis, RNIB is offering blind and partially sighted individuals a free subscription to a newspaper or broadcast guide delivered in a plain text email. This offer means that anyone who finds it difficult to read a paper or TV guide in their current print or online formats can get easy access to their favourite newspaper or broadcast guide for free for up to three months. For a full list of what publications are available from RNIB Newsagent or to sign up to the service, contact their Helpline on 0303 123 9999 or email helpline@rnib.org.uk.

**AUDIO BOOKS ON FREEVIEW CHANNEL 730**

Anyone who has Freeview channel 730 on their TV can listen to talking books 3 times a day for an hour at a time, 8am, 2pm and 10pm. It is Connect Radio via the TV, but you can also listen via a laptop. For more information, follow the link below:-

<https://www.insightradio.co.uk/programmes.html>

**SURVEY ON SOCIAL DISTANCING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

**IN VISUALLY IMPAIRED UK RESIDNTS**

Anglia Ruskin University are conducting research focussing on the impact COVID19-mandated isolation is having on physical activity in blind and partially sighted people. They are distributing a survey, about which more information can be found below:

“COVID-19 (corona virus) has impacted the UK considerably. People have been instructed by the government to remain at home unless making essential travel (e.g. food shopping) or for a single daily exercise activity. This has likely disrupted regular physical activity habits across the nation and increased the likelihood/ opportunity to engage in sedentary behaviour.  This research seeks to understand how physical activity habits have been affected by self-isolation using a short online questionnaire (20-30mins) aimed at individuals aged 18+ years living in the UK that have been unaffected by any recent health issues before and during the self-isolation period but who are blind or visually impaired.”

<https://angliaruskin.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/covid-19-physical-activity-in-the-uk-in-a-blind-and-visual>

Research led by:

Dr Dan Gordon
Principal Lecturer: Exercise Physiology
Course Leader: BSc Sport & Exercise Science
Anglia Ruskin University

For more information contact Dan Gordon on

Dan.Gordon@anglia.ac.uk

**BOB’S LOCKDOWN QUIZ**

# It seems that virtual quiz nights have become quite the thing during lockdown and a favourite form of entertainment for friends and families across the land.

# For a low tech alternative, why not tune into the Ken Bruce Show on Radio 2, and test your knowledge of popular music on the Pop Master quiz, broadcast at 10.30 each week day morning. See how well you do against the two contestants, or try phoning in yourself to have a go live on air. Also, to test your general knowledge, there is always Brain of Britain on Radio 4 each Monday at 3.00pm.

# MSSC is not about to organise a virtual quiz on Zoom or Teams or House Party or any other online platform available, but our resident Quiz Master, Bob has very kindly provided a couple of rounds for you to try in the comfort of your own home. It is entirely up to you how seriously you take it: if you can resist the urge to google the answers, you are welcome to submit your answers by email and we will let you know how many you got right and just how naturally brainy you are – or not! Sorry, you will have to provide your own prize!

# Round 1: Sport

1. Who won gold in the women’s heptathlon in the 2019 World Athletic Championships in Qatar?
2. Who were the two beaten semi-finalists in the 2019 Rugby World Cup?
3. Which sport is played by the Honshin Tigers, the Hiroshima Toyo Carp, and the Chunichi Dragons?
4. Who are the current Women’s county cricket champions?
5. What is the name of the projectile hit with sticks in ice hockey?
6. Simone Biles is the current world champion gymnast. Which country is she from?
7. Who is the number one ranked British male tennis player?
8. Which team won the 2019 Formula 1 constructors’ championship?
9. 8 minutes, 47.8 seconds is the fastest ever winning time for which race?
10. Which city is home to both Hearts and Hibs?

# Round 2: Spring

1. Which zodiac sign covers most of April?
2. What is the name of the 8th Sunday after Easter?
3. What is the genus of the daffodil?
4. Who, in Victorian mythology, was a fire-breathing devil-man who could jump unnaturally high?
5. Who had their first UK No.1 album with Born in the USA?
6. When does Spring start on the astronomical calendar?
7. What are spring onions called in the USA?
8. What is the English translation for the Chinese food Chun Juan?
9. Which of Antonio Vivaldi’s works includes the movement ‘Spring’?
10. Which team won the Rugby Union World Cup in 1995?

# Email your answers to info@mssc.org.uk and we will mark them, then let you know how well you did. How big a prize you deserve will be solely down to your own discretion!