



Welcome to the second edition of the new monthly newsletter, **still** coming to you from the secluded back room somewhere in't North where the sole occupant of the establishment has now taken up semi-permanent residence!

We hope you and yours are coping with the rules and regulations and staying fit and well and if anyone has any issues, questions or needs any help, then get in touch.

If anyone would like to jot a few notes down about their own experiences at this time, amusing or serious, then I would love to include it in the next edition.

As well as having an 'Electronic chat' I encourage any of you who do have any questions about things, be they may have to do with the Corona Virus or support from the Implant Centre, then send them to me either an email, or post /text (if you can without breaking rules etc.) - Full contact details on the last page.

In this edition we include two items on communications during the outbreak both caused by trying to understand people who are wearing masks (as increasing numbers of people are doing) and an update from a hospital somewhere in the deepest NHS.

The following article supplied by John Newton is from the Guardian newspaper, is from a Doctor who recognised the problems that patients have when someone with a mask is talking to them.

A coronavirus patient's terrifying hospital experience inspired an NHS doctor to create a flashcard system to improve communication with medical staff wearing face masks.

Anaesthetist Rachael Grimaldi founded Cardmedic while on maternity leave after reading about a Covid-19 patient who was unable to understand healthcare workers through their personal protective equipment (PPE).

Her system enables medical staff to ask critically ill or deaf coronavirus patients important questions and share vital information on digital flashcards displayed on a phone, tablet or computer.

The idea went from concept to launch on 1 April in just 72 hours and is now being used by NHS trusts and hospitals in 50 countries across the world.

Grimaldi, 36, from Brighton, said: "Unable to be patient-facing during the Covid-19 pandemic, I was desperate to do something to help while on maternity leave.

"What started out as me wondering if healthcare staff could use a pen and paper to communicate with patients, within 72 hours, turned into an online A-Z index of digital flashcards."

Cardmedic is currently available in 10 different languages, including Polish and French, and features a "read aloud" option to help those who are blind or too unwell to read.

The communication cards are free to download on Cardmedic's website, and have already been accessed by more than 8,000 users.

"The feedback has been fantastic, I have been really blown away," said Dr Grimaldi. "People have said it's such a simple idea, why hasn't it been thought of before?"

Grimaldi, who works at the Brighton and Sussex university hospitals NHS trust, said it would be wonderful if the patient who inspired her idea knew something good came out of his experience with the illness.

She said the intensive care patient had been terrified because he could not understand what was being said to him through the masks and visors of health workers, according to the article she read.

Cardmedic, which is also now available on a mobile phone app, is already being used in hospitals across the UK, Africa, Asia and the United States.

Grimaldi was supported by the Department for International Trade, which provided her with a dedicated trade adviser and helped connect her to local businesses in Brighton.

The international trade secretary, Liz Truss, said: "Cardmedic is one of the many businesses working hard to support our NHS at a crucial time, and I am proud to see them already making a global impact and helping save lives".

Website: <https://www.cardmedic.com>

Feeding the Robots

As I'm sure everyone is aware, the virus outbreak has caused massive changes to be made in how the NHS normally operates in order to be able to concentrate resources on supporting COVID patients.

The main change has been the almost total closure of all outpatients services and the redirection of the outpatients staff to other areas of hospitals, as any of you with a cancelled outpatient appointment will now have been told.

Some of you may know I work as a volunteer at Tameside Hospital in the Audiology department and also do training sessions for new staff in deaf awareness.

All of that has now stopped. In common with the NHS staff in Audiology I have been reassigned, 'volunteered', for other jobs around the hospital.

Some of these jobs such as retraining to be able to help ferry patients with walking difficulties across the hospital on Mobility scooters lasted a matter of days before

that service was cancelled also.

I now find myself with two new jobs, both significantly different.

The first job is as an Oxygen runner, I assure you I don't actually run around, however it involves visiting every ward in the hospital to check that the oxygen supply, which is piped across the site just like any other gas network, is reaching the wards and especially those where oxygen is a priority. Should there be a problem I have to go to a room where we keep a huge number of portable machines which just plug into the wall and can supply an individual patient with up to 5 litres a minute of oxygen which is fine for those with the more common respiratory problems, however, severe cases including those with the virus need many times that amount of oxygen and would not be able to use these devices.

I was relieved to see that we didn't actually have to carry them as they resemble the old VAX cleaners but they are on wheels so



Bill & Ben

with a rousing shout of 'Walkies' me and the device can be on our way in no time!

It was a learning exercise in many ways to realize just how many wards there are and how you find them! One run takes nearly two hours and covers five miles of up and down stairs (OK I learned early on where the lifts were so I could concentrate on walking down to each ward) but we are expected to do two runs on each shift. I have as you can imagine ordered some extra comfortable walking shoes and expect to see a positive improvement when I get on the scales!

The second job is in the Pharmacy, which as you can imagine is working 24/7 at the moment coping with the extra dispensing of drugs to treat the virus, as well as dispensing drugs for other conditions. I am employed (put to work is a better phrase as no money is involved) working in the goods-in part of the department.

As boxes of drugs/pills/bottles arrive through the door, dropped off by delivery

men all from different companies, I have to check the paperwork, as you would expect but then they all have to go on the correct shelf so that those dispensing the prescriptions can find them.

To do this I have two robots to help take each packet so they can put it in the correct place. I call them Bill and Ben, when I'm in a good mood, and something choice towards the end of the shift.

At the same time as I am 'feeding them' stuff to put away, others on the other side of the wall are getting them to find stuff to make up a prescription. This results in red warning messages on my side to wait one minute and then other messages to get on with it!

Were I of a more delicate nature I might feel traumatised but you can be sure I give as good as I get. It can get quite hectic as deliveries arrive all the time and there's only one of me!

I will endeavour to persevere!!

Face masks and communication (or more guessing for deaf people)

Since the lockdown, there's been much discussion about whether we should all be wearing face masks, with no consensus among either doctors or politicians. But one voice has been noticeably absent from the debate is that of the deaf and hard of hearing, for whom mandatory mask-wearing would, many say, be "disastrous".

Opaque face masks prevent deaf people from being able to communicate. Jacqueline Press, 43, from Barnet, who was born profoundly deaf and is an expert witness lipreader, is passionately against them becoming mandatory: "Not being able to see the movement of lips will be extremely detrimental to a deaf person's access to communication and will affect their mental health," she says. "They will have no understanding of what is being 'said' to them, and will feel totally excluded from conversation."

More than five percent of the world's population, or 12 million people in the UK, have a hearing loss of some degree. "Probably half use lipreading as an aid – that's about one-in-six people in the UK," says Jeremy Freeman, 46, from Borehamwood, a business manager at SmartGiving and an expert witness lipreader. "I rely on reading lips 95 percent of the time," he adds. "If everyone wears masks it will be extremely isolating and depressing for me."

Lipreading – the ability to recognise lip shapes and patterns and to use context to fill in gaps in conversation – is an essential part of communication for many of those with hearing loss.



"People who are deaf or have hearing loss rely heavily on visual cues," says Francsca Oliver, an audiology specialist at charity Action on Hearing Loss.

"These include body language, gestures, facial expressions and lipreading. Being able to see lip patterns and facial expressions is also vital for those who communicate through British Sign Language

"If you can't see someone's lips, words which sound similar but have different meanings become very difficult to distinguish, leading

to a breakdown in communication. And during this scary crisis, communication is key. We have already heard from frontline workers in the NHS who are struggling to communicate with their colleagues when they are wearing masks. Day-to-day life may also become significantly more difficult if masks "Those who are dependent upon lipreading are likely to avoid conversation with mask wearers, and might be severely disadvantaged if admitted to hospital."

There is an apparently simple solution to this problem: transparent masks, or those with a see-through area that doesn't conceal the mouth. Unfortunately, to date, in the UK there are no known suppliers of transparent masks.

In the US, Ashley Lawrence, a 21-year-old studying education for the deaf and hard of hearing, has designed a face mask with a clear window, first using a set of spare bed-sheets which she sewed with her mother. She launched a GoFundMe campaign and offered masks free to those who needed them.

We would like to know how you are getting on at home especially in the lockdown period.

* Are you using online delivery services, do you get anything delivered by local volunteers or are relatives/friends helping.

* If you have an issue with shopping for example, sign up with your regular Supermarket to get emails directly from them about shopping arrangements. For example opening times (which have varied over the past weeks), special opening times for elderly and care workers shopping on behalf of others.

* Has anyone had problems getting batteries or support for faulty equipment? If you can't get them from your current supplier then I recommend to email the clinic.

* How many have been queuing and thinking back to past times and rationing!

Voluntary Services

Let us know if you have used local voluntary services and if possible how to contact them so we can spread the word. Here is one National service that has been in the news recently.

The Royal Voluntary service - whose latest request for volunteers now stands at 750,000 people and who had the distinction of crashing one of the governments computers because of the sheer volume of requests for checks!

Website: <https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk>

This is the warning section:

These are challenging times and although some types of crimes, especially burglary are down (maybe because people are in all the time) the increase in fraud continues.

There are many online scams taking place, I've had several emails from people offering \$1m to help the charity - the clue is in the currency there.

Email scams that abound include those saying you've been frozen out of your bank account and you need to click on a link in the email - **Never click an email link.**

Emails saying you've been selected for a hardship payment by the Inland revenue, just give us your bank details.... the list goes on. Always contact your bank the way you normally do from their own website, **never use a link.**

If in doubt (bin it don't open it)

Contact details for articles: I would love to hear from anyone with an example of a service, good or bad, or an amusing incident in a queue (there are lots of queues these days)

Cicada: email: secretary@manchestercicada.org.uk - Text: 07533 217730 or postal address: 107 Manchester Road, Hyde Cheshire, SK14 2BX

CICADA support Links: <http://www.manchestercicada.org.uk/help-support/>

Any contacts you help me with will be added to our website and publicised on our facebook page: **Manchester Cicada club**. If you want to join just put in a request.

Manchester Auditory Implant Centre: Repairs and Battery Supply

Tel: for all repairs. 0161 276 8079

Email: auditory.implant@mft.nhs.uk for cochlear implants and BAHA