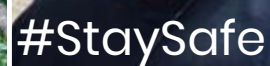


KING EDWARD'S SCHOOL
BIRMINGHAM



Thank
you to
everyone
who is
keeping
us safe
and connected
in these
challenging
times.

Welcome

“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo.

“So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”

The Fellowship of the Ring, JRR Tolkien

You can always trust an Old Edwardian to find the right words.

On Friday 20 March 2020, we held our last day in school for the remainder of the academic year. Here, just as everywhere, there was trepidation for the weeks ahead. Pupils and teachers went home laden with bags. No one knew how long we would be away from our desks, or what we would experience in the meantime. No one could predict how events would unfold, as we began what may be the hardest days many of us will see in our lifetimes.

But this was not the resounding tone of the day. Though there were many things beyond our control, no one here on campus stood to dwell on the uncertainties. A can-do attitude swelled immediately.

The leaving Sixth Form hurriedly completed all of their rites of passage before the doors closed. Staff launched an ‘online common room’ and created a rota for volunteering to look after those pupils who were to remain in school. People left the grounds offering their support to one another, particularly those more adept with IT. Within a few days, Old Edwardians and parents too were doing whatever they could to help.

And so began an over-arching feeling of King Edward’s Spirit that defined us for the coming months.

You’ll see from these pages what our entire community – pupils, staff, parents and alumni from both schools – decided to do with the time that was given to them. Collected over the past six months, these stories show how our school values translate in the real world. Care for the community, inventiveness, resilience, adaptability, kindness, perseverance – all embodied by all those in these pages, who have used this time to make a positive contribution in enormously difficult circumstances.

From the pupils in school making PPE to the doctors wearing it on the frontline, from repurposing pillowcases as scrub bags to repurposing entire business operations, everyone is playing their part in this invisible war.

With life now returning to some semblance of normality, there is much to be grateful for. This collection of stories serves to celebrate the community spirit and selflessness of those within it, and to thank everyone for their contributions to the whole. Long may it all continue.

■ Adelaide Bailey (KEHS 2007)
Development Director



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Thank you to everyone who has sent in articles for the magazine. We have tried to accommodate as many stories as possible from across our communities, however due to the volume of submissions it has not been possible to publish everything we received.

PPE and medical supplies

For The Love of Scrubs

KES Teacher of Physics, Dr Kulkarni, joined the 'For The Love of Scrubs' Facebook group and has been making scrub bags from old pillowcases, which have been distributed to local hospitals. These drawstring bags enable key workers to put their scrubs into a closed environment to reduce the risk of transmission from infectious clothing. The equipment can then be washed while in the bags to ensure any microbes are killed before it is put on again.



Sewing hospital scrubs

I'm sewing hospital scrubs non-stop, while listening to Mrs Mutlow's voice in my head telling me to press the seams open.

I'm part of a Facebook group, 'Sewing for Manchester NHS and Care', making scrubs, laundry bags, hats and ear savers. The scrubs arrive on my doorstep ready cut out, and are collected once I have sewn them. These ones are destined for the Children's Ward – Monsters Inc ones cut from an old duvet cover.

Lynne Gilmore (née Isaacson, KEHS 1988)



Changing production from gaskets to PPE

My gasket manufacturing company R H Nuttall Ltd is working flat out in its Birmingham factory producing over half a million face visors and around 30 million medical grade foam forehead strips for visors. Orders keep ramping up and we are working seven days a week with our machines producing 12 hours a day.

The sheer volume of the raw materials and the logistics of storage, packing and transport have presented us with massive problems which we have overcome. I am now the retired MD but help with organising the logistics from home, leaving the hands on running of all of this to two of my sons, Steve (an Old Veseyan) and Bryan (an Old Silhillian)... I'm sorry about that!

Ian Nuttall (KES 1965)



Supplying polycotton to the NHS



Over the last two months, brothers Faisal Ahmed and Suhail Ahmed have been supplying polycotton fabric to the NHS for making scrubs. The two brothers founded Pound Fabrics in 2018 as the UK's first online fabric Pound Store and the company has rapidly grown to become one of the largest online retailers of fabric. Pound Fabrics has also received thousands of orders from volunteers all over the country, who have been sewing scrubs and other items for hospitals.

"It's been an incredibly busy few weeks" said director Faisal Ahmed. "The whole team have been working flat out and we've even started opening on weekends to fulfil orders." With such a spike in demand and working with skeleton staff, the company are quoting a two-week delay on sending orders. "It has been wonderful to see the

whole sewing community come together and produce scrubs for their local hospital in this time of need. We feel a responsibility not to let them down and to ensure we are able to supply them with minimal delay."

With navy polycotton fabric supplies being depleted across the UK, most hospitals now accept alternative colours for scrubs. Many alternative colours have also sold out and with long delays in receiving imports, the company has been looking for new ways to meet the unprecedented demand.

"We've been delighted to help and make our small contribution, but it's nothing compared to the heroic efforts of doctors and nurses" said Faisal Ahmed. "We honour and are so grateful to those serving on the frontline."

Faisal (KES 2010) and Suhail Ahmed (KES 2014)

Face shield production in the D&T Department



Awareness of Covid-19 came to the Howard household early in the pandemic as Tricia (my wife) is senior partner in a GP surgery and, since I gave up my KES teaching commitment in July 2018, I have been charged with the general maintenance of the practice. The receptionists had expressed their concern about catching the virus so I was asked to make a screen, which I duly designed and installed (with my “little helpers”, sons James and Josh) one Saturday morning. This proved its worth just a few days later when a patient sneezed, leaving a horrid deposit on the screen directly in front of the receptionist at the desk.

At the same time Tricia was starting to feel a little under the weather. She had attended a City Choir rehearsal the previous Tuesday but didn’t feel up to the performance in Symphony Hall

on Saturday afternoon and had backed out – a first for her. In the last week of term she began to feel worse and on Thursday morning her temperature shot up so we self-isolated, kept the boys off school and, for the first time since qualifying as a GP (35 years previously) she took time off work. Tricia believed she picked up the virus at the choir rehearsal and subsequently found out that over 50 other members of the choir had also gone down with it.

A few days later the rest of us believe we contracted the virus and although our experience wasn’t too severe, Tricia had the most awful time but, thankfully, after 10 terrible days of stupidly high temperature and fluid in both lungs, she began to recover.

At this time the issue of lack of PPE for the NHS was coming to

the fore but I certainly wasn’t in any fit state to do much about it as I was still suffering immense fatigue but I was keeping up with the news stories. Staff at Tricia’s practice were also coming down with the virus, so James and Josh were quickly trained as reception and admin staff and spent two weeks over Easter covering for absence. Shortly after this I received a message forwarded by Ann Clark, Principal of KEHS, from Old Edwardian Vaishali Senthil (2015 – now graduated with Masters in Engineering from UCL) who was asking if the school had the means to make any face shields for the NHS. Phil Balkham (Head of DT) and I had been talking about this a couple of weeks previously and now we decided we should have a go. Phil got clearance to order materials on the departmental budget and we put a basic plan in place



to start manufacture using our laser cutters. Kevin Hartland (DT Technician) and I set up the machines to cut out the basic components and although it was a slow process at the end of our first day we had used up the majority of the material and had enough pieces for about 160 face shields, which we assembled with Phil’s assistance the following morning.

Phil was liaising with Stuart Sweetman at King Henry’s in Coventry at the time and he delivered the first batch of face shields to a contact Stuart had at the QE Hospital. Others went



to some care homes that Kevin Hartland had called, I took some for Tricia’s practice in Castle Vale to pass on to the three care homes that she and her partners look after and I gave the remainder of the finished shields to Vaishali and her father. When we met she said she would be very keen to assist if we were going to make any more – an offer I clearly couldn’t refuse!

Phil Balkham’s contact with King Henry’s was the thing that really allowed us to ramp up production as Head of DT Stuart Sweetman had many boxes of face shield components that had been produced by a local company but his team didn’t have the time to assemble and distribute them. They were donated to us and Phil collected them and came back with a car full.

The production team was starting to build and I knew that James Cleasby (2018) had been one of the early volunteers for the NHS but hadn’t been called upon, so I asked if he would like to be involved in the assembly of the face shields and he readily agreed. Vaishali was already on the list, as was Kevin Hartland along with KES Chemistry Technician Mark Downing so they all joined me and my sons James and Josh the following Monday.

Phil, by this time was heavily involved with his teaching, marking, moderating and childcare but was always there to support us and ordered more clear PVC to maximise our output in the coming days. James Cleasby’s sister Amelia (2019) spent a whole day phoning a variety of health settings to find out who would like our face shields and also came in for one of the assembly sessions. The donated components had been made from a much less flexible material than our initial laser cut batch so were very hard on the fingers but we found that with a minor modification (we cut 2mm off each end of one section on the band saw) we were able to ramp up our production to 500 per session, which was very pleasing. By the end of that week we had distributed 1,750 units and still had about 300 in stock but, by now, we were running short of clear sheets of material so, after a final short session we completed a further 160 face shields, 150 of which were sent straight to the Care Home Educator at Dudley NHS Trust, one Rachel Walker, daughter of the late Chris Walker, KES DT Department. She is distributing them to all the homes she oversees as well as local domiciliary care agencies.

For the moment we have stopped our major production runs but we have planned one short session in the near future just to use up our remaining, very limited stock of clear material.

This has been a very rewarding activity and we have received a number of very nice letters of thanks from people that are now using our face shields but I must also say that this has done me a lot of good as well. I arrived at KES in September 1993 and although I moved to the management team in 2003 I never stopped teaching DT so the lockdown effectively excluded me from my favourite place (the workshops!) for the longest period I had ever known. Being back there with my friends and colleagues really does point out the importance and benefits of the relationships we hold so dear and are, I believe, the bedrock of everything that is great about our wonderful schools.

Special thanks to: Phil Balkham, Kevin Hartland, Mark Downing, Vaishali Senthil, James Cleasby, James Howard, Josh Howard and Amelia Cleasby.

Colin Howard, KES Design and Technology Teacher

Sourcing PPE from China

I have recently spent three years in Shenzhen, China so I’m hoping to utilise my personal contacts over there to support as many people as possible during these troubled times.

I am currently running an Engineering Company called Ardencraft Technology (AcT), www.ardencraft.com. We normally specialise in prototyping, producing and quality checking consumer electronic products, however as of recent we have had a care home and charity reach out to us regarding PPE shortage.

Covid-19 has caused us delays on all of our products and services – we were planning on launching a new set of Bluetooth Noise Cancelling Earphones but this has also been postponed due to the pandemic!

AcT instead reallocated its engineering, supply chain and logistics resources to provide PPE to care homes in Scotland. We have supplied over 10,000 face masks with another 5,000 in sight and are now looking to help further care homes across the UK who are looking to purchase PPE directly from Chinese suppliers.

If you are, or know of, a care home, charity or key worker looking for PPE, Ardencraft Technology can help you to establish a new source of supply. We hope to do this for the next four to six weeks then refocus back onto consumer electronics! Feel free to get in touch!

Mohammed Abid Ali (KES 2012)

Hand sanitiser kits



My dad is the co-founder of a pharmaceutical company which develops and manufactures life-saving niche medicinal products for the NHS. Whilst the company had the resources to produce hand sanitisers, the crucial work that he does has meant that by redistributing resources to manufacturing hand sanitisers he would be sacrificing other necessary medication for NHS patients. Whilst talking with my dad, he told me that the main problem was the time it took to fill and label the pocket-sized bottles.

During the conversation I suggested a water dispenser like system in which you could put the sanitiser that could then perhaps be used by hospital staff. Whilst this idea was still not totally practical for the hospital staff who could not gain access to the sanitiser without travelling to the dispenser, it ultimately led to the creation of the Quest Hand Sanitiser kit. The kit has a large dispenser with 25 empty bottles that can be refilled by the hospital staff and carried with them to the wards. Presently five hospitals have already been fitted with the kit and more are in production. The kit has meant that hospital staff have sanitisers to protect themselves. The service provided was of no charge to the NHS.

Raheem Mohammed (KES pupil)

Birmingham Chinese Evangelical Church donates PPE



The Birmingham Chinese Evangelical Church, whose members include parents of George Zhang, donated some PPE which I received on behalf of South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust.

Varadarajan Baskar (KES parent)

Covid Face Cover Art Competition



In these turbulent times, it is inspiring to see the King Edward's Schools of Birmingham support the communities and people to whom they are so central. Recently, William (Year 12) and Rose Bowen (Year 11) from King Edward VI Five Ways set up a fundraiser suitably named "Covid Face Cover Art", which has been encouraging people to follow the government's public recommendation of self-made face masks by asking

participants to send photos of their own face mask designs. Having been inspired by Will's and Rose's idea, we decided to start something similar in our school but with a competitive twist: we called for all pupils, parents, teachers and members of staff to design and make their own face masks. We wanted sleek, original, thought-provoking, exuberant and vibrant designs. The 10 very best designs were sent off to our very own, fantastic Mr Spencer to

judge a worthy winner. And the winner, as he declared in his own words: "...is the one modelled so perfectly, you get the effort that has gone into making the cut and stitch actually match the format and requirements of this mask", came from Surya Prasanna. A huge congratulations to him and a huge thank you to all those who sent in their own face masks.

Enoch Cheung (KES pupil)

Science and academia

Translating academic publications



The lessons from the Covid-19 outbreak are now starting to emerge from China via academic journals. I am a freelance language editor specialising in medical and health work, and have already edited several papers on the subject. Pre-publication English language editing means that the language in the paper is clear and unambiguous, and the conclusions can be understood easily. It also reduces delays in the publication process. In a small way, therefore, I am helping to ensure that the early lessons from Covid-19 are shared rapidly and widely understood around the world.

Melissa Leffler (née Simons, KEHS 1991)

Summarising scientific advice for the Shadow Cabinet

I am a PhD student at the University of Oxford. At the moment, I'm working more or less full-time providing summaries of the latest scientific advice to the Shadow Cabinet, and managing a team of about 70 volunteers in doing this. If you want to see some of what we've been up to, our reports are released publicly here: www.scientistsforlabour.org.uk and are going to about 200 MPs, peers, councillors, etc.

Ben Fernando (KES 2012)



Pivoting education systems globally

I'm now based in Brussels, Belgium and working at Microsoft, in the education team as Director for Skills in Europe, Middle East and Africa. I've been working hard on pivoting education systems globally to use digital tools and ensure continuity of learning. One of the major achievements has been to find a Global Coalition with UNESCO to support low and middle income countries in designing and deploying national education remote learning plans so that children in these countries are still able to engage with their education.

See: www.en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition and time.com/5810017 for more details on what we are doing.

Alexa Joyce (KEHS 1996)

European Chemicals Agency



I work at the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in Helsinki as Scientific Area Leader for Toxicology and Exposure Science.

ECHA is taking measures to support EU action to fight the pandemic caused by the coronavirus disease (Covid-19). The Agency will, together with the European Commission, support Member States and industry to address shortages with the supply of disinfectants, which has become a critical issue in several EU Member States.

Bjorn Hansen, ECHA's Executive Director says: "It is essential to ensure that there are enough disinfectants available for health professionals and European citizens. The main limiting factor seems to be the availability of active substances used in these biocidal products – in particular isopropanol, 1-propanol and ethanol. We are working, together with the Commission, on special arrangements to help Member States and companies get more disinfectants on the market as soon as possible."

Julian Roberts (KES 1993)

Chance conversation leads to video on repurposing of existing drug

I was in conversation with a colleague in New York who told me that her husband had been seriously ill with Covid-19. Breathing had become so difficult for him that the family had obtained an oxygen concentrator to give him the amount of oxygen that he required. One thing that seemed to mark a turning point in his illness was treatment with indomethacin. The morning after he took the first dose, he woke up and said "I can breathe!"

This got me thinking – and I started to investigate further. At the same time I asked my colleague to put me in contact with the doctor who had prescribed the drug. Early in the Covid-19 epidemic there had been some concern about using non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), although the World Health Organisation has now said there is no evidence of ill effects with their use in Covid-19.

Indomethacin is an anti-inflammatory drug that has been in use since the 1960s. In fact, it was investigated for use in the management of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) after the 2003 outbreak. As SARS-CoV (the causative virus for SARS) is related to SARS-CoV-2 (the causative virus for Covid-19), there was a logical basis for its use in Covid-19 patients.

The doctor who had prescribed indomethacin for my friend's husband agreed to be interviewed on camera together with two of his colleagues. We were able to make a video in which they explain about their first-hand experience of using the drug and how it has helped to relieve the pain and coughing that are such prominent features of Covid-19 for many patients.

It turned out that one of the doctors was herself the first patient to try indomethacin for her Covid-19 cough. Dr Aline Benjamin said, "My body was aching, my cough was horrendous – I could not say three words without coughing." She took a dose of indomethacin and by the next morning her cough was "a million times better".

The video and accompanying article can be found here: medicalupdateonline.com/2020/05/indomethacin-covid19

I believe that the information we have put together will contribute to ongoing discussions about the management of Covid-19 and which existing drugs are worth repurposing. It might also help to make some people a lot more comfortable.

About the author

Christine Clark left KEHS in 1975. She studied pharmacy at Aston University and started her career at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, later moving to Salford. After many years as a clinical pharmacist in the NHS she gained a PhD in evidence-based medicine and relaunched her career as a freelance medical writer. For several years she has worked (freelance) for International Medical Information, a digital communications company that specialises in the pharmaceutical and medical industries.

Christine Clark (KEHS 1975)

Investigating airborne epidemics

I am currently an Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the University of Cape Town and Director of the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation. The Foundation staff are involved in Covid-19 testing programmes in the local townships. However, my personal research interest for the last few years has focused on understanding the airborne transmission of tuberculosis (TB) which is the major cause of death in South Africa. We have been able to develop the efficiency of bio-aerosol collection together with tuberculosis detection sensitivity so that we can now visualise live TB organisms in almost all TB patients.

We are now using the developed technology to explore the interaction between tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases including Covid-19. We hope this approach will be able to inform clinical practice as two different but similarly transmissible airborne epidemics rage in South Africa.

Robin Wood (KES 1967)

Covid-19 lessons

Having kicked off a debate on how to cope with Covid-19 isolation using fellow submariners who are very used to long periods of isolation from friends and families, I am now focused on helping establish a UK Plc "Lessons Identified" Covid-19 Regime with fellow Old Edwardian, Richard Parlour (1980) and inputs from Australia, New Zealand, EU, USA, Oman and a number of international authorities for the benefit of the UK in the long term.

Always willing to receive views and feedback from young and Old Edwardians alike: COVID19@Maritimeservices.co.uk

Malcolm Warr (KES 1967)

Reflective or Reflexive?

Reflection is a very important mental activity, in personal and professional life. It is a crucial cognitive practice. Reflexivity is an attitude of attending systematically to knowledge construction.

Being a Public Health Academic, I have collected some thoughts around changes due to Covid-19, some being tumultuous. The changes could be held across personal, professional and social.

Personal – I have two family frontline healthcare providers; my husband who has been a Urologist for 20 years stepping up for Covid-19 response ward duties, made me initially scared but slowly feel proud and accomplished, not sure why though? My daughter who has been rapidly graduated as a doctor and signing up to Covid-19 ward duties still makes me worried, not as a parent but also as a dutiful citizen and being medically trained myself. The daily update of a friend, colleague or family member getting symptoms and testing positive or negative (both surprisingly makes you worried) has been challenging and testing.

My ethical dilemma has made me settle that it is the duty of those who are trained to, to work on the frontline. It does raise a few questions on the NHS not being standardised with one central, Covid-19 response duties. I guess, that's been the beauty and strength of the NHS! To be autonomous and diverse in approach.

Professional – the first few weeks have been hectic in making teaching contents of our Master student programmes designed and delivered online. Oh man! It has been a huge and shameful (at times with technology) learning curve! I certainly would add myself to the list of digitally not so native and not so naïve teachers; yet, the challenges in delivering, marking and giving feedback to global time zones proved interesting, I shall add. For implementing

research programmes, it's been an experience of resulting in fearlessness when facing the pressure elegantly, somehow! Never would I have thought of conducting this many virtual meetings, and constant updates on safe platforms has been overwhelming! Use Zoom; don't use Zoom; use Skype but be careful and alert (a term which has been widely used recently).

Also, in my career of research in low resource countries, Covid-19 has projected and made us feel not responsive in approach from the western world! There have been times, when I felt ironic, hypocritical and yet justifiable if delved, perhaps?

Social – is this social or societal? I am not sure so much. As the societal response is so varied and along with that the heterogenic characteristics are exhibited alarmingly at times. I am grateful for my friends and family as we act, respond and even REACT similar. The main change I have perceived and enjoyed is my son's (KES student) response to the pandemic. The change has been slow, and it promises to be sustained so! He has started to talk about the value of living with means and measures, looking after not just the valuables, but values instead and the merry for me is his contribution to the household cleaning schedule, weekly! If there was no pandemic, and if IB exams were happening, I would not have such cherishing moments of having discussions with my 18-year-old, let alone get to say "Hi" and "Bye"! So, yes, I guess 'Every cloud has a silver lining'.

But alas, heartfelt sorrow to those lives we have lost and are losing to the invisible pathogen and lethal contagion of this century!

Somla Gopalakrishnan (KES parent)

Physics World adapts to the pandemic

I've worked at Physics World magazine for more years than I care to remember, but my excuse for staying so long (it's now been 25 years) is that the digital world has forced us to constantly innovate. And that's been exciting. So while we used to have just a print magazine, there's now a Physics World app, a website, podcast service, video programme, webinar series and more besides. All of which meant that when the lockdown was announced, apart from my team suddenly having to work at home, we were able to continue unimpeded as all our

operations were online anyway. However, the pandemic did mean we suddenly had a big science story on our hands. We've reported how physicists have used X-ray crystallography to tease out the structure of the virus, develop novel types of ventilator and study the science of how droplets flow when you sneeze. We've run a series of blogs by physicists around the world, including one by King Edward's physics teacher Mike Follows explaining how they've been affected by the virus. And we started a series of lockdown

physics trivia quizzes that, weirdly, became one of the most popular things we've ever done. They do say that good journalism doesn't happen if you spend all your time sitting behind your desk, but with international travel looking increasingly unlikely over the coming months, we'll have to be even more creative when it comes to covering the latest developments in science around the world. In early March I flew back from a big physics conference in Denver that was one of the first major events in science to be cancelled (annoyingly it was axed just after



I had arrived in Colorado). I can't picture more trips like that taking place any time soon.

Matin Durrani (KES 1985)

Working on the frontline

Consultant Anaesthetist



I am a Consultant Anaesthetist working in Royal Cornwall Hospital where, right now, things are ok in the current Covid-19 climate. It has been a tumultuous few weeks for the NHS but the situation is improving. We are however bracing ourselves for the inevitable second surge of cases when restrictions are lifted.

A strange, unsettling set of circumstances for us all right now but people do need to get back to work. Despite the risks, the economy needs to get off the canvas and back on its feet. We must see how it all pans out in the next few weeks and live with the uncertainty. There won't be any such thing as 'normal' for some time to come.

James Pittaway (KES 1997)

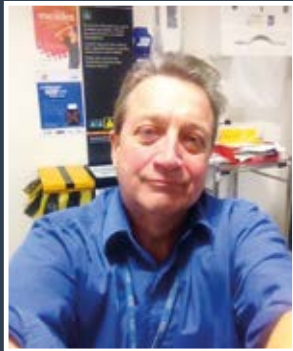
Consultant for a dementia ward



I was at KEHS from 1985-1992 and went on to study medicine at Cambridge. I moved to Cheltenham after graduation and completed specialist training in Psychiatry in 2009. Since 2016, I have been a consultant responsible for the dementia ward at the Charlton Lane Hospital in Gloucestershire. Despite our best efforts, coronavirus has made it onto the unit, but due to my truly incredible colleagues, all but a very few have recovered.

Emma Abbey (née Meikle, KEHS 1992)

Early coronavirus advice



It is over 42 years since I left KES, for 33 of those years I have worked as a GP in East London. Every Monday night I work in the GP out of hours unit at Newham Hospital. At the end of my shift on 16 March, I recorded the impact of the unfolding Covid-19 infection in the email to the right.

Six weeks on, the most notable change is that people are now afraid to come to the hospital.

Jim Lawrie (KES 1977)

New message

To

Subject

I promised to write about giving advice to patients with possible Covid-19 infection.

It has been very interesting to take calls from the 111 Covid-19 queue. I was able to talk to people from Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. I was impressed that all cases passed from 111 were very likely to have the virus. I only spoke to 12 cases but some common themes emerged. All the calls were happy to accept telephone advice. The calls took longer than other out of hours calls, mainly due to most patients' high level of anxiety.

Common symptoms were:

- Fever, cough, breathlessness and fatigue and aches in muscle and joints. No runny noses and only one sore throat.
- The fever was usually high (over 38C and in some cases 40C) and persistent over more than four days.
- The cough was generally dry and developed several days after the fever (three or four days).
- The breathlessness varied from one person to another and in some was intermittent chest tightness like an asthma attack.
- Fatigue and muscle aches seemed worse in the first four days with cough and breathlessness after that.
- The cough and breathlessness persisted in two people beyond two weeks.

The main anxieties were:

- Why is the fever so high?
- Why is the fever not settling after four days?
- Why is the cough not settling after two weeks?
- Why am I breathless and when will I need to go to hospital?
- Can I have a swab to be sure it is coronavirus?
- Can I come to the hospital for treatment?

Being able to answer these questions is the key to giving the reassurance that will allow the patient to stay at home confident that they know what to do to get through the illness.

My answers to the questions are:

- The fever is your body's way to fight the infection, we have no medicine to treat this virus but your immune system will fight it, the fever is part of that process. If the fever makes you too uncomfortable or stops you taking food/drink use paracetamol to reduce the fever for a few hours.
- The fever can go on for seven days with this infection, if you are still feverish after that we should talk again.
- The cough can go on for three weeks, if you are not too breathless and able to eat and drink the dry cough will settle over time.
- Breathlessness is a feature of this illness due to irritation and inflammation of the lungs. If the breathlessness is severe you may need to have oxygen support or ventilation in hospital. This is likely if you are too breathless to climb the stairs or to hold a conversation or to eat and drink.
- You will only be swabbed if you are so sick that you need to be admitted to hospital, the swab takes three or four days to get a result so we treat you on the presenting symptoms of this illness.
- This virus has no specific treatment. You will come into the hospital if the inflammation in the lungs is so severe that you need oxygen support or ventilation. Less than one in 10 people will need this support.

People felt very anxious and wanted to come to the hospital for reassurance.

I tried to reassure them that it was safe to stay at home unless the breathlessness became severe and the other symptoms could be managed well in their own home. I focused on the importance of helping their own immune system with rest, fluids, fruit and nourishing foods, keeping warm and avoiding stress.

I hope these ideas and thoughts are of some use, it is only my own observation from tonight's consultations. I am very happy to be put right on any suggestions that need a greater evidence base.

Jim Lawrie

A🔗😊★🗑️

Send

GUM to Elderly Care Medicine

After many years of hard work, I obtained my MRCP diploma in 2017. I set out to specialise in Genitourinary Medicine (GUM) and am currently working as a Registrar in the Midlands. I continuously develop my acute skills, by supporting the Accident & Emergency department regularly.

I never thought I'd see a time like this in my career, having to deal with the Coronavirus outbreak or Covid-19! Recently in A&E, my team and I were attending to a suspected Covid-19 patient who had a cardiac arrest. For the first time I was in PPE while trying my upmost to help a patient in need. It was an uncomfortable experience! Even after a number of hours, my goggles started to steam up, whilst supporting the patient, until they were safely transferred to ITU. Approaching the ITU area with the patient, it looked like a war zone. It was dark with no windows and noisy due to lots of medical equipment. Not what I was used to seeing.

It's been a scary time to see how people were becoming so unwell, so quickly. From what I can see now, things have started to settle down. A&E shifts can be eerily quiet at times, but I worry about those in the lockdown who fear coming into hospital, who are in need of medical attention!

On the other hand, I had been deployed from my regular training post in GUM to Elderly Care Medicine. I have been working in a community hospital in the North Midlands for over a month. It's been difficult to adapt to a completely new environment, staff and way of working but everyone has been incredibly supportive in this transition. I have been caring for patients in both Covid and non-Covid areas.

In contrast to the situation above, it has been emotionally challenging looking after patients. I have had to quickly adapt to managing situations in other ways; building rapport with relatives with daily telephone calls for example. I may have not been able to put name to face, but soon relatives started

recognising my voice when we would speak. Due to the infection control measures, relatives were unable to visit the wards regularly and most were reluctant to attend due to fear of contracting Covid. I provided the option for a family to attend hospital to meet their loved one who was approaching the end of their life. It was hard to provide all the emotional support I wanted. I was unable to show my whole face, greet them with a handshake or give them a hug knowing what they were going through. All I wanted to do was give them the comfort of my hand but I couldn't. Yet from my eyes, they were able to see the kindness and care I had given to their loved one. Despite all that's going on at present they said, "You are a good doctor and during this difficult time we felt comforted that the care was in your hands!"

We are doing the best we can given the circumstances. Hope you are all keeping safe and big virtual hugs to all the hard working key workers! Keep smiling.



A credit to my Elderly Care Mentor and Supervisor during my junior doctor days that taught me the importance of communication! Dr Susan Powell, an Elderly Care Consultant in the Midlands, who is also an Old Edwardian.

Nisha Talwar (KEHS 2007)

Paediatrics

I am Dr Deepak Parasuraman, dad of Omkaar Deepak in Shell F. I am a Paediatrician and also work as the Clinical Service lead (previously Clinical Director) for Paediatrics and Neonates for University Hospitals Birmingham and am heavily involved in restructuring our children's services (we are one of the biggest non-tertiary children's services in the country). This involved restructuring our Children's Emergency departments, moving staff to man a bigger and well segregated unit and ensuring services are safe and robust.

Omkaar's mother, a GP (Dr Subramanian), is heavily involved in daily telephone and video clinics for patients to support them in the time

of this crisis and to keep them out of the hospital as much as possible.

Being frontline workers we have both suffered from Coronavirus infection ourselves. This has affected our children who saw us suffer through the illness over four weeks but it has also given them a valuable life lesson; seeing mummy and daddy fight through the illness and make sacrifices like living away from the family in temporary accommodation, so as to continue to work or doing phone clinics from home at the first sign of getting better.

Deepak Parasuraman (KES parent)

Final Year Medic

I am now a final year medical student at Cardiff University and have been working on a medical ward in Wales over the past few weeks. As a cohort we have all been graduated early so we can offer our assistance in hospitals across Wales and ease the burden on frontline staff.

It has been daunting starting work a lot earlier than was originally expected, however, in these truly testing times it has been amazing to see the community spirit and generosity amongst medical staff and patients alike and I feel grateful to be part of a team doing so much for patients.

Ketan Singh (KES 2014)

Respiratory Physician

For the last 30 years I have been a consultant respiratory physician at Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. We are weathering the Covid-19 storm better than some of the big metropolitan centres but all elective activity has stopped while we deal with the influx of Covid-19 patients.

In this picture I am wearing full PPE prior to carrying out a bronchoscopy examination (a fiberoptic examination of the bronchial tree used in the diagnosis of lung cancer). The latter is particularly risky in the current climate because it is aerosol generating and therefore potentially infectious to medical and nursing staff performing the procedure. All patients are tested on the day before the test to ensure they are Covid-19 PCR negative.

Mike Greenstone (KES 1969)



General Practitioner in Walsall

In the NHS we are used to working hard. We are used to making challenging decisions. We are used to having difficult discussions with patients and their families.

But not like this.

I spend half of my week running a GP surgery in Walsall. We had to be prepared just ahead of our colleagues in hospital, as the number of people affected by the virus began to increase. And so, we worked hard: we redesigned our services so that we could deliver healthcare to thousands of people. We had to make challenging decisions. And we had to have difficult conversations. And this required a new level of leadership and compassion.

And when exhausted, we were lifted by acts of kindness from the public. A local school made makeshift visors for us using a 3D printer. A local car workshop donated a huge box of personal protective equipment they use when spray-painting cars.

I spend the other half of my week working as a senior clinical lecturer at Aston Medical School. I lead the department of Primary Care Education, and in that role I have encouraged medical students to volunteer to help the community. Everywhere I turn, I see people going the extra mile to help.

And through the difficulty, it is clear that there is so much kindness and goodness in our community. My hope is that through this difficult time, society becomes closer, kinder, more altruistic, and makes more ethical choices.

And my advice to you is: whatever you are doing now, or plan to do in the future, please use your skillset to make a positive impact for the community.

Shahid Merali (KES 2001)

Working on an intensive care unit



Being a doctor on an intensive care unit has changed dramatically over the past couple of months. I work in a 24-bed intensive care unit in Hampshire, which has had the highest numbers of Covid-19 patients outside of London.

The number of patients under our care has increased significantly and we have had to expand beyond the boundaries of our usual footprint. Additional nursing staff, physiotherapists and doctors have been drafted in from lots of different areas around the hospital to help with the increased demand.

The 'core' ICU staff rota has also been changed to meet the workload, transitioning to a (more) arduous rolling rota. As I write, I am about to start my third consecutive weekend of seven.

The start of the pandemic was heralded by the hipster beards disappearing from staff members' faces overnight to achieve an adequate seal with the 'filtering facepiece' (FFP) masks which we now spend the vast majority of our days wearing. This has been particularly hard for the nurses, many of whom have developed pressure sores on the bridges of their noses and tops of their ears from the tight fitting masks. It gets very hot wearing personal

protective equipment (PPE) for prolonged periods, which adds to the exhaustion at the end of a 13-hour shift.

Being admitted to intensive care is a scary experience for patients at any time. It is now even more terrifying for them when we enter their isolation cubicles dressed like something out of a science fiction film, to tell them they are deteriorating and we need to 'put them to sleep' and onto a ventilator. These conversations are an incredibly important part of our jobs and need to be approached with sensitivity and compassion (attributes that may come as a surprise to many of my former teachers). PPE creates a significant barrier to this communication, as the respirator muffles your voice and only your eyes are visible behind the face shield.

The pandemic has been challenging emotionally. Standing in a patient's cubicle while they make a phone call to their loved ones, knowing that there is more than a 50% chance they will not survive, and this may well be the last time they ever speak, is hard. But doing this three sometimes four times in one day is very tough. Dealing with patients and families who do not survive is something we are familiar with, however, what we are seeing currently is a huge increase in terms of numbers and mortality.

Our intensive care unit is full of heavily sedated, mechanically ventilated patients needing high levels of oxygen, many needing medications to support their blood pressure, and haemofiltration (dialysis) because the virus has caused their kidneys to stop working. Unlike our usual mix of patients with different problems, different stories and different treatments,

these patients all have very similar presentations and ongoing issues. It is difficult for them not to merge into one entity. As you walk around the unit, alongside the numerous machines, pumps and monitors, there are photos and messages from children, spouses, and parents. It is an important reminder that although the news is currently full of numbers and statistics, these are real people, with lives, jobs, families and friends.

Most of our patients need to be with us on a ventilator for a protracted period of time (10-14 days), some significantly longer and ongoing communication with relatives is difficult. There are no visitors allowed in the hospital, the only exception being for patients in the last phases of their life. Outside of the pandemic, we usually see and update relatives at the bedside on an almost daily basis, however, updates are now conducted on the telephone with passwords in place for each patient. We have recently acquired several iPads, and now use FaceTime so relatives can see their loved ones, and hopefully see that we are not so scary in intensive care. Nevertheless, not being able to be with their loved one makes things even harder for them.

The support from the local community, and the health service nationally, has been outstanding. We are inundated with messages of support and thanks, often accompanied by boxes full of food. At Easter, we had to use an entire room to accommodate the hundreds of Easter eggs we received!

More recently, we have started to see our patients get better and go home to their families, which is a welcome change from the demoralising first few weeks

where it felt like no-one was getting better. I watched the local news this week and saw one of our patients tearfully reunited with her young children and husband outside the hospital main entrance on her discharge.

Intensive care medicine has been thrust into the spotlight during this pandemic, and in my opinion, finally getting the attention it deserves.

I have personally learnt a lot during the past couple of months. We can all get frightened, irritable, and over-react and this has emphasised to me the importance of always being kind and talking calmly, no matter what is going on around you. Particularly during the surge, support amongst colleagues has been the most important thing to get us through this. I am not getting as much time at home with my one and three-year-old sons but I am appreciating every opportunity I have to be with them.

I consider myself very lucky at the moment. I get to work in an incredible team which has now grown to include registrars in general surgery, urology, oncology and even orthopaedics all "mucking-in" to help on the ICU. The nursing staff and physiotherapists are working tirelessly to deliver the best possible care and there are a whole host of other staff groups working round the clock to help us in our efforts. We have been busy, and may well be very busy again in the coming weeks. There will unfortunately continue to be people that die from Covid-19, but we can still save a lot of lives, and that is a pretty amazing job to have.

Ian Sheldrake (KES 2006)

Acute Medical Registrar

I'm Katrina, an acute medical registrar working in London fighting coronavirus. In the past six weeks I have seen Covid after Covid. In seven years as a doctor I haven't seen medicine like it. It has been mentally and physically draining. Friends and colleagues know me as a positive person but at times I have cried. Young people are very sick. PPE is very claustrophobic. I am extremely grateful for a very supportive team and very proud to be a doctor.

Katrina Sheikh (KEHS 2004)



Volunteering in the NHS during the Covid-19 pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent national lockdown, I have been volunteering at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW), acting as part of the Recruitment and Redeployment Team.

I'm involved in the recruitment of doctors, nurses, Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and Healthcare Assistants (HCAs), whose experience ranges from retired doctors, to students (e.g. medical, nursing, and other healthcare students) whose university courses have been cancelled but have skills they are able to contribute. As a result of Covid-19, a significant proportion of the NHS workforce has been off work, isolating due to symptoms of the virus, either from themselves or their family members; which has generated significant pressures on staffing, hence the drive to increase recruitment and counteract staff shortages. This work has also involved staffing the new Birmingham Nightingale Hospital, a task that required coordination and cooperation across several NHS trusts in order to get the facility staffed and functional. In this role, I have spoken to people from all walks of life, and there is a common theme of a desire to help the NHS, and people are offering their services in a

selfless manner. I've also had the opportunity to speak to medical students and those becoming Junior Doctors (final year medical students who have graduated and are starting work five months earlier than expected) and have gained an insight into their reasons for volunteering to work during the pandemic, as well as any concerns they had.

Whilst I have been here, BBC Panorama came in to film *On the NHS Frontline*. The programme follows staff, both on and off the frontline, in their responses to the pandemic, and the documentary was particularly poignant as it told of one of the nurses at UHCW Trust, Leilani Dayrit, who sadly died of Covid-19. The unity and togetherness of the staff here at UHCW is one of the contributing factors to the relative success of their fight against Covid-19, and it is certainly true that everyone here is helping each other get through what is, and will be, a tough time. Despite playing only a small role in the response to the pandemic, I feel very proud and privileged to be a part of what is a truly remarkable hospital.

It has been a once in a lifetime experience to be working in a hospital environment during this pandemic. It is really interesting to see the 'wartime' running



of the hospital; that which has changed in response to the pandemic, as well as the constant need for services which must still be maintained. One thing this pandemic has highlighted for me personally is that an event such as this brings out the very best and very worst in people. Whilst I read of protests and marches in America to prematurely end the lockdown, where people are irresponsibly putting themselves and others at risk, I see the huge crowds (everyone 2m apart, of course!) who come out at 8pm every Thursday to Clap for Carers, both here at the hospital, and on streets around the country, in a show of appreciation for those who are risking their lives to save others. I have realised the huge dedication of not only doctors and nurses, but all NHS staff and key workers, which enable us to stay safe and live our lives, albeit slightly differently than usual!

Jaya Patel (KEHS pupil)

General Practitioner in Halesowen

I am a GP partner at Feldon Practice in Halesowen, where I have worked as a GP from 2012. I am also a Prescribing Lead and GP Board Member for Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

I have never been more proud to work for the NHS. I could not start this message without taking my hat off to each and every one of my colleagues in the NHS. My fiancée is an Intensive Care Sister who truly is dealing with Covid-19 at the sharp end. We in the NHS have been used to dealing with uncertainty, stress and crisis over the years, in the face of a dwindling, dissatisfied and underappreciated workforce in an underfunded health system. There is no doubt that the Covid-19 pandemic is an unprecedented threat to our health and wellbeing on a global scale. There has without doubt been tragic loss of life and so many families have sadly been torn apart as a result. Behind the shadow of this, the transformation and change I have seen in the space of a few weeks across all sectors of the

NHS is incredible. From fantastic colleagues in primary care who have adapted to a new way of working so effectively, to those on the frontline in Emergency Departments, to hospital specialties that are being redeployed to areas they have never worked before, to Critical Care dealing with the sickest of the sick, to the dedicated teams at the CCG who have worked on system level changes to keep us all safe – everyone has completely restructured their jobs and roles to try and deal with Coronavirus. So many of my colleagues are truly inspirational with the effort they are putting in to continue their daily work to try and protect and care for others and save lives. Add to that thousands of doctors and nurses who are returning to work post-retirement to fight this invisible war and help save lives – it makes me feel so proud to work with such heroic individuals.

During this time, I have noticed an incredibly humbling societal change. It feels like after a long time the NHS and its fantastic staff are being appreciated.



There are countless stories of support from multinational chains offering multiple deals to NHS staff, supermarkets giving flowers to NHS workers, to people all across the country doing their little bit in their own way to let us know we are supported. The very simple measure of clapping on Thursday evenings is so deeply meaningful and emotive to so many care workers. All key workers and frontline staff feel an incredible duty of care and responsibility to help and protect others. Nobody signed up to be at the forefront of this invisible war, and of course frontline staff are scared of how this may affect them and their loved ones. So it

is brilliant to see the country as a whole showing love. It is sad that it has taken something so monumental to achieve this, and allow those that make the NHS what it is to get the respect they deserve.

Not all heroes wear capes, but plenty of them wear NHS badges. I sincerely hope everyone at this truly fantastic school is keeping safe and well. I have such fond memories of being there!

Please all take care, and continue to follow government advice to help protect the NHS and help frontline staff save lives.

Mohit Mandiratta (KES 2003)

Neonatal unit lead

I am the clinical lead for the busiest neonatal unit in the UK. We have been trying our best to deliver a normal service for our babies and their families in these extraordinary times, all the while trying to support our staff and maintain some sense of sanity! My family and a commute which means I can run or cycle outdoors has definitely helped the latter.

Geraint Lee (KES 1994)



Responding to the pandemic

Birmingham City Council



In my role as Leader of the Conservative Group on Birmingham City Council I have been heavily involved with the Council's ongoing work to help support communities across Birmingham. I am also on the Erdington Covid-19 taskforce which is liaising with the public and volunteer sectors to help support the Erdington community. Nationally, I am a deputy chairman of the Local Government Association (LGA), which is working to help pull together the needs of local and national government to help ensure communities across the country have the resources required at this time.

Locally in Erdington I have also been out delivering food parcels to vulnerable and shielding residents. The food parcels are organised by The Active Wellbeing Society and Erdington Rugby Club are coordinating the delivery.

Robert Alden (KES 2001)

UK Department for International Trade



I work for the UK Department for International Trade in the British Embassy in Berne, Switzerland. Along with my colleagues in posts around the world, we've been working hard to support the UK's Foreign Office-led response to Covid-19, procuring medicines, PPE and testing kits.

It's been challenging but exciting work, and it's great to think we're doing our bit for friends and family back home!

Helen Stubbs Pugin (née Stubbs, KEHS 1991)

Retired GP

As a retired GP, I volunteered, with some trepidation, to return to work but so far have not been needed. So instead I shall be helping – in a pastoral role – young doctors from my old medical school.



Otherwise, I am cycling every day, doing some watercolour painting, gardening, refreshing my French and doing some local volunteering in our village if needed. My husband has not yet retired as a GP and our three children are all managing – one a GP, one a lecturer and one a journalist. It is a hard

time for all of them and I feel guilty that I am not doing more to help.

Lesley Starr (KEHS 1973)



Healthy Mind, Body & Family

Healthy Mind, Body & Family is a YouTube channel that was recently set up in response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on people's mental and physical health and family wellbeing. It is a collaboration between Dr Hermine Graham, Clinical Psychologist; Carmen Graham, Social Worker and Dr Fitzroy Graham, Paediatrician. Our daughter, Chloe, played her part too by setting up all of the IT for the channel and filming. It aims to offer everyday, practical tips and coping strategies to help promote mental and physical wellbeing and healthy relationships in families, which may help individuals and families during the current Covid-19 crisis.

Videos on the channel so far include: Why do I feel the way I do? Why do I feel anxious, sad or angry?; How is my thinking affecting my moods?; How do I identify the connection between my thinking style and how I am feeling?; What can I do when I am feeling emotionally overwhelmed? What can I do when my mind is racing?; and building routines in the family. Further videos will be focused on parenting, lifestyle health & wellbeing.

Dr Hermine Graham is a Clinical Psychologist with over 25 years of experience of working with people who experience mental health problems. She has specialist Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) expertise. Carmen Graham is a Child & Family Social Worker with 20 years of experience specialising in Fostering and Adoption supporting families to understand trauma by using therapeutic interventions to create healthy parenting. Dr Fitzroy Graham is a Consultant Paediatrician and Infectious Diseases Specialist with more than 25 years of experience in Medicine. He is also a Board Certified Lifestyle Medicine Physician.

YouTube channel: www.shorturl.at/twxMW

Hermine Graham (KEHS parent)

Defra Covid-19 response team

I am working in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) central Covid-19 response team. We act as a kind of hub for the department: gathering information, writing briefing for ministers, and maintaining good situational awareness.

It's been demanding but fulfilling work. Just to give a flavour, we've been working on maintaining the food supply chain, delivering packages of food for the most vulnerable, and supporting various

Defra industries. I never thought I would be writing so many urgent briefings on garden centres. Much to the disappointment of my family, I am yet to see any good intel on when flour might be back to its normal stock levels...

Much like Mr Phillips, I am sad to be missing the opening of the cricket season. My debut for the Defra team as an opening bat who can't hit it off the square shall have to wait.

Patrick Wernham (KES 2015)

Birmingham St Mary's Hospice

In 'normal' times, I spend a lot of time volunteering at Birmingham St Mary's Hospice as a Fundraising Consultant, mentoring our annual Treecycling campaign and helping organise several large outdoor events. Forward planning continues, and although social distancing and staying at home has temporarily limited my activity, care at the Hospice hasn't stopped. Our focus is to maintain our urgent and essential services like our Inpatient Unit, and to keep on providing care to people in their own homes, although we have had to temporarily suspend some of our services such as our Day Hospice. Just like the rest of the UK – where we can, we are providing care and support via telephone calls and digital consultations to those who need us most – including some who have been diagnosed with Covid-19.

We are also working in partnership with GPs, District Nurses and the NHS to ensure more people get the care they deserve. In this time of huge pressures on our health services, working together is vital in helping to avoid patients missing out on the care they need. As a result, Hospices of Birmingham and Solihull (HoBS) – Birmingham St Mary's, John Taylor and the Marie Curie Hospice, West Midlands – have come together to launch a new service creating a single hub providing the very best care at end of life during the Covid-19 outbreak.

However, at a time when people desperately need us, we're losing out on crucial funds – it costs almost £25,000 a day to run our vital services – nearly £15,000 of which needs to be raised through generous donations. We have had to postpone fundraising events, community activities and corporate partnerships for the foreseeable future, and temporarily close our 17 shops, but we are now running virtual events, from quizzes to virtual chocolate runs and bike rides. They can bring some variety to the days of isolation, lockdown and limited exercise and we urgently need your support.

Details of all our services, as well as links to our fundraising activities and online donation facilities, can be found at: www.birminghamhospice.org.uk

Richard Green (KES 1968)



Self-administered testing

In my gap year I had been building savings for university as a lifeguard at a Serco operated leisure centre. When all leisure centres closed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic I volunteered to be redeployed within Serco to another, more essential branch of the company.

I received an email on 16 April asking if I was willing to be part of the team setting up and running the Covid-19 'self-administered test' site at the new Birmingham Metropolitan Hospital. As of 17 April I have been working 13-hour shifts five days a week as part of the Serco team with my role being to guide the key workers through the process of packaging their completed tests and then collecting the samples to be sent off.

Rory Portman (KES 2019)

Air ambulance

I have been piloting the air ambulance for the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity. Flying to the QE hospital landing site, saw my crew fly past Old Joe clock tower and right over a very quiet KES. I was pleased to see the 1st XI ground at Eastern Road still being mown and in as magnificent a state as always!

Alex Blaikley (KES 1996)



Logistics and distribution



On 17 March I was staying in Cairo with my fiancé's family, choosing the rings for our wedding. We'd seen the news about Covid-19 and knew that travelling was a risk, but neither the UK nor Egypt were in lockdown and this wasn't a holiday – it was just the annual visit to the in-laws.

Late afternoon we got a phone call from a close family friend – the Egyptian army were shutting Cairo airport in the next 24 hours. If we wanted to leave we had to do it quickly. We flew home at 2am the next morning, spending 10 hours in a closed Charles de Gaulle in Paris, followed by a week's self-imposed quarantine due to the risk we'd put ourselves through by travelling.

Everything considered we're glad we went – our family is split across the two countries and we're not sure when we'll all be together again. Though choosing the wedding rings now seems a bit premature – although I'm sure we'll find a way to mark the original date of 30 May, we've had to delay the 'big day' 15 months to August 2021.

As a consultant working in logistics and distribution, I usually work from home and have done for the last year – it gives me the flexibility to travel to client sites across the UK and beyond when required.

I'm therefore aware of the irony that, as the country went into lockdown on 23 March, I received a call asking me to travel 200 miles south to support the set-up of a dedicated PPE hub for the NHS. Since 27 March I've been working away from home, supporting the set-up of more than 200,000 sq. ft. warehousing space – something we achieved in the staggering speed of five days. I'm part of a brand-new team, with members from the NHS, independent logistics providers, the MOD and the government pulled together with one common cause.

I told a couple of close friends from KEHS, including Fran Rees who is a Junior Doctor, and Ruth Maclean-Jones. Fran works in

Sheffield on a geriatric ward which had already been impacted by Covid-19, but Ruth had managed to leave London with her husband and was having a slightly more typical lockdown back in the Midlands with family.

Mid-April, Ruth dropped me a note – she'd been engaged as an independent contractor to work on building a digital service to help with the coronavirus response. Although our work doesn't overlap, we'd become part of the same giant cross-functional team working behind the scenes to support and protect the frontline staff, including Old Edwardians such as Fran, and the wider community.

A couple of weeks later, Ruth sent me another message. She had been on a status call one morning, a typical project update with a limited line-up presenting to numerous attendees, and had seen the name 'Philippa Buckley' appear under one of the black video screens. Seeing the name of one of our old classmates seemed like a strange coincidence, a glitch in the matrix of an already teetering world, until a calendar invite with Philippa's photo confirmed that this was the friend she'd lost touch with years ago.

On secondment away from her normal role, Philippa had moved into the Department of Health and Social Care; there she is supporting with procurement, logistics and operational delivery for the roll out of antibody testing across the UK. She was equally and pleasantly surprised to see Ruth appear on Zoom calls about the digital service.

It's been fantastic to find familiar faces in such an unfamiliar scenario, and there'll be more of us out there. The three of us were from one form, in one year group – a tiny fraction of Old Edwardians using our backgrounds and areas of expertise to support where we can in uncertain times.

Naomi Harryman (KEHS 2012)

Providing food for those in need

Trussell Trust Somerset

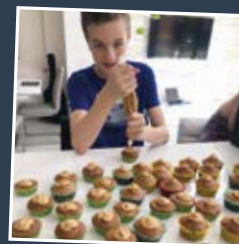
I am continuing to manage a distribution centre for a Trussell Trust food bank. I have been doing this since moving to Somerset six years ago, but the need is greater than ever now. I just scrape under the age limit for this sort of work and am very grateful that I am in good health and physically fit enough to continue. Unfortunately, any other community and voluntary work I have been involved with, from the village library to Talking Newspapers, has ground to a halt.

Ruth Eversley (KEHS 1970)

Removes cupcake challenge

Ms Sigston challenged the Removes to make cupcakes for others during the lockdown. The boys embraced this challenge with gusto!

Tom Hattersley made 66 cupcakes, along with two bigger cakes for the Royal Star and Garter Care home in Solihull. Bilal Chaudry prepared his cupcakes and boxed them up ready for sharing in the community.



Community projects

I have set up several community projects during the pandemic. Year 8 have had the cupcake challenge, making cakes for the elderly for their afternoon tea. I too have been baking and taking cakes to my elderly widowers who are in their late 80s, early 90s. I also drop off Sunday dinners.

I have also set up a food bank collection point and neighbours in the road drop off tins and dry items, which I then take down to the Trussell Trust on a Wednesday for those in need in the Quinton and Harborne area.

Elaine Sigston, KES Head of Removes



Walsall Outreach food parcels

Adam Varachia in Sixths has been volunteering with Walsall Outreach, a voluntary organisation that feeds the homeless twice a week in Walsall, for over a year now. When the Covid-19 lockdown began, the organisation had to stop providing hot meals from the shelter where they are based because of the risks involved. They then decided to extend their service to providing food parcels and weekly hot meals to vulnerable individuals and families in the community.

Since the school closed, Adam has been working with his mum to ensure vulnerable people in Walsall get essential supplies by making the food parcels from his family's garage.

Adam said: "At Walsall Outreach a team of volunteers receive referrals from the Council and various charities like Age Accord and these are processed on a daily basis. We then receive the

list of individuals and families and make up food packs depending on the need of the individual or family. Our team of volunteer drivers then distribute the food parcels to those in need. People in the community, businesses and supermarkets have been very generous and we have been able to distribute nearly 700 parcels since lockdown began.

"Until now I had only been working with the homeless but this has made me realise how many people in our community face very difficult challenges every day. Some of our elderly residents who live alone had not had a freshly cooked meal for a long time before we started our service. I feel we have made a real difference to their lives and as an organisation we hope to continue with our extended service after the lockdown is lifted."

Hasina Varachia (KES parent)

Food School becomes food hub



I am the co-founder of the Harborne Food School: www.harbornefoodschoool.co.uk. In normal times we train apprentice chefs, run cooking classes for the public and third sector, and teambuilding events for corporate clients.

I also chair Home from Hospital Care: www.home-from-hospital-care.org.uk, a Birmingham based charity that has provided a range of services to patients when they leave hospital for over 50 years. This includes the provision of food parcels on discharge and regular shopping.

To cater for the greatly increased demand for services during Covid-19, the Food School has been converted into a food hub for the storing, packing and distribution of food for Home from Hospital Care. The partnership has enabled the Food School to offer socially useful opportunities to Food School workers during lockdown. The charity has benefitted from having a one-stop-shop and the advice of Food School to enhance the variety and nutritional benefit of the food on offer.

Robert Smith (KES 1972)

Selly Oak Community Response



Rainbows. Drawn by children all across the country, these innocently beautiful drawings have become a symbol of hope in dark times. Hope embodied in the kind actions of others, whether it be raising money for Covid-19 charities, helping out elderly neighbours or resolutely

staying inside. I was keen to do my bit as well, albeit in a small way.

Researching local volunteering organisations online, I ventured across the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC). This website helpfully directed me to the Selly Oak Community Response. I applied, expressing an interest in aiding the vulnerable, elderly and self-isolating. Having been accepted, my family and I went to the volunteers' base at Canvas House near the University of Birmingham campus. We collected the boxes and delivered them around Bournville and Northfield. The organisers, students from the University of Birmingham, were friendly and always helpful. And the reactions of the people we delivered the parcels to was a reward in itself – which just goes to show that a

little kindness goes a long way. We plan to continue in aiding the crisis for as long as it persists.

The boxes we delivered were filled to the brim with bread, tinned goods and toilet roll. These were all donations from the public. Yet, Selly Oak desperately needs more if we are to keep the joy and cheer we could bring to many more families. If you would care to donate, please visit: www.facebook.com/groups/sellycommunityresponse, which will direct you to the group's Facebook page. I wholeheartedly encourage further donations to the organisation; more food is needed, more goodwill is needed. Most importantly, more hope is needed.

Joshua Bobin (KES pupil)



DeliverAid

With the football fixture list on hold and an enforced break for commentators, I'm volunteering with DeliverAid – delivering meals from some top London restaurants to the frontline NHS staff at various hospitals across the capital.

Joe Speight (KES 2004)

Slow Food Birmingham

I am the co-founder of Slow Food Hub JQ, an online local food farm shop located in the Jewellery Quarter. We have been selling and delivering 100 local food baskets to people around Birmingham. We recently announced a partnership with Digbeth Dining Club. We will be selling local food through their click and collect service, which is launching at their new location in Hockley.

Slow Food Birmingham purchased 10 tonnes of organic potatoes from a farmer north of Birmingham who lost his contract with a global fast food restaurant. I am working behind the

scenes to get the potatoes to commercial kitchens around Birmingham. Warehouse Cafe in Digbeth, Craft Dining Room in the city centre and York's Cafe have been making meals from the potatoes and delivering them to people in need. We were featured in a *BBC Midlands Today* news segment. You can find out more about Slow Food Birmingham at: www.slowfoodbirmingham.co.uk

I am also the co-founder of a gardening project called Warm Earth located at City Hospital in Birmingham. Our aim is to promote wellbeing by connecting people and plants through gardening. We grow fruit, vegetables and flowers

to organic principles. Every volunteer brings a different expertise to the project. We garden to lunar cycles, save seeds, make our own compost, construct window boxes, brew worm tea for plant feed, create floral arrangements, keep rabbits and bees, maintain an orchard at Edgbaston Reservoir and make our own worm compost.

We have recently received a £600 grant from Green Shoots Recruitment Ltd to make hanging baskets and herb boxes, which will be distributed at no cost to people in isolation due to Covid-19.

Candace Anderson, KEHS Food Studies Teacher



Langar feed

During the Covid-19 crisis, we have been supporting Walsall Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara with feeding vulnerable people.

Some of you may recall the langar the Sikh Society served in Big School as well as the homeless feeds the school supported. The principal of langar (equality among all people) continues throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and is perhaps more important than ever. With religious places of worship closed, Sikh gurdwaras have risen to the challenge by preparing and cooking meals in volunteers' homes instead.

On Sunday 10 May, our family prepared 60 vegetarian meals at home and delivered these to a hotel providing shelter for homeless people and to our local gurdwara, which served the meals to those in need. We will continue to prepare more meals throughout the crisis.

Avni Cheema (KEHS pupil) and Dharam Cheema (KES pupil)



Collecting for NewStart Bromsgrove



Harry Hawkesford in Removes contacted our local food bank NewStart Bromsgrove to see what supplies they were short of. He then leafleted all of the houses in our road (120 of them!), requesting that neighbours donate an item each week (leaving them outside their doors or at the end of their driveways). Harry then collects everything up on Thursday evenings and we deliver the items to the food bank on Fridays. It has been wonderful to see the generosity of our neighbours.

He also got his dad and I (and the dog!) involved in the Big Brum Camp Out for SIFAFireside. We all managed to squash into a very small tent and somehow managed to spend the whole night in there, although the dog had other ideas and found her way back to the comfort of the settee in the early hours!

Sam Hawkesford (KES parent)

Trussell Trust Smethwick

When Charlie Raca (KEHS pupil) assisted with collecting food from his neighbourhood to donate to the food bank at Smethwick, held at Holy Trinity Church under the umbrella of The Trussell Trust, he didn't expect the situation to be so serious. Amy, one of the volunteers, said that they had people queuing around the church and you could see the panic in their eyes at having no food and the relief when they were handed a box of provisions. Find out more about The Trussell Trust and how you could help at: www.trusselltrust.org

Jane Raca (KEHS parent)

Fundraising



Born in the NHS

My dad started a social enterprise eight years ago called Made By Young People. He taught young people entrepreneurship and came up with Born in the NHS t-shirts.

So when everyone was clapping for carers, we decided to restart Born in the NHS and have raised over £600 for charity so far.

Ever since Lost Voice Guy wore our Born in the NHS t-shirt on the BBC, everyone was asking where he got it. Then Covid-19 came and we asked a few more celebrities to tell their fans about what we are doing. The link for our shop is: www.borninthenhstshirts.co.uk

Ezra Blake (KES pupil)

We're all in this together

Little Lodge Nursery in Spetchley, Worcester took on the challenge to raise as much money as possible to support our community key workers who have been tirelessly working and putting themselves at risk for the good of the public.

Having raised over £1,000 from a joint effort between staff and parents, we were able to buy approximately 1,500 individual items consisting of hand/face creams, antibacterial wipes/sprays, hand sanitisers, lip balms and various other pampering items for all the staff and elderly residents.

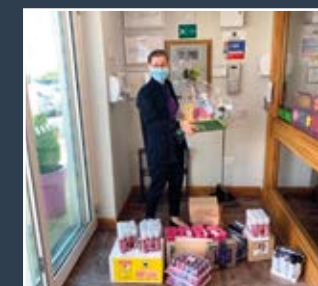
The nursery staff delivered the items to Perry Manor Care Home, South Hayes Care Home, Worcester Fire Station and Worcester Royal Hospital on the morning of Friday



24 April along with a selection of cards and posters lovingly made by our children.

We hope with this small gesture, we can bring some joy to the committed personnel who are helping to keep us safe and the country running during this difficult time. Keep going, we are all here to support you to get through this together!

Vivek Shah (KES 2009)



Tennis team turns to running

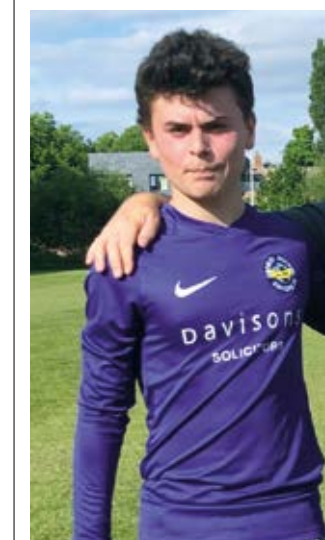
Yash Bahalkar in Upper Middles has been playing tennis for the last seven years and is part of the Warwickshire U14 County Cup Tennis Team. He was due to represent Warwickshire in the U14 national county cup. Preliminary rounds were to be held on 2-3 May and finals were to be played on 16-17 May. Due to the Covid-19 crisis all sporting tournaments were cancelled.

Yash and his team decided that they should do something useful in these depressing and frustrating times. They came up with the idea of raising money for NHS Charities Together by running as many miles as possible between these two weekends. Yash decided to run a full marathon.

Their initial target was £500 and they have so far raised over £2,500.

Pradeep Bahalkar (KES parent)

Football club's relay run



Cadbury Athletic Juniors FC ran a collective 300km 'virtual' relay run from 15-17 May to raise funds for NHS Charities Together. The older boys ran 5km each and the younger boys ran 1-2km.

Elliot White in Removes ran 5km as part of the team effort and KES's First Aider Magdalena Wyrzykowska ran with her son Jason, aged seven.

So far, the relay run has raised over £6,500.

The Removes Senbazuru Challenge

In Japan, there is a beautiful tradition called Senbazuru, which says that if you fold 1,000 origami cranes your wish will come true. As a result, Senbazuru has become a symbol of hope and healing in challenging times.

To recognise the difficult circumstances we all currently face, the Removes are performing their own Senbazuru, and fundraising for Age UK. The cause chosen is especially close to my heart as they have been helping my own grandmother through the challenges of the lockdown by carrying out important roles, such as collecting her weekly food shop.

The Senbazuru involves each Remove pupil creating a series of paper cranes. To reach the 1,000 required each Remove will be aiming to make at least eight cranes. We intend to then join all of these 1,000 cranes together when we return to school in September.



In an effort to support the wonderful Age UK, we are urging pupils and parents to take part in the 'make one and donate one' effort which would encourage participants to contribute £1 to the charity for every crane made. This is merely a suggested donation and I hope that all of my fellow Removes enjoy the creative process of engaging in origami.

Owen Swanborough (KES pupil)

Fifths 2.6 challenge



Aran Bansal and Advait Kuravi in the Fifths organised a 2.6 Challenge for King Edward's School to raise funds for NHS Charities Together. The 2.6 Challenge is a nationwide fundraiser, centred around the distance of a marathon following the cancellation of the London Marathon.

They raised money for NHS Charities Together in two ways. The first was through organising a whole school event, where pupils were

encouraged to complete an exercise linked to the number 26, like running up and down the stairs 26 times. In addition to this, in memory of Aran's grandfather, who passed away as a result of Alzheimer's and Covid-19, Aran decided to take up the 2.6 Challenge with his passion for cycling. Along with a number of other Fifths, he decided that cycling 260km in May would be an ideal challenge.

Collectively, pupils raised over £8,000 for NHS Charities Together.



Cycling around the world

In order to raise money for the NHS and pay tribute to those who have lost their lives on the frontline, a group of us from KES and KEHS are cycling around the world – a total distance of 29,000km.

We set off on our voyage on Wednesday 6 May and as of the middle of July have cycled 16,041km. More details can be found on our JustGiving page: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/kes-aroundtheworld. Hopefully we can raise as much money as possible as we complete our challenge!

Rohan Tandon (KES pupil)

24-hour cycle challenge

Two King Edward's School teachers completed a 24-hour static bike ride, raising over £2,300 for NHS Charities Together. Director of Rugby and Head of Sport Science, Mr Browning, and Teacher of Geography and Head of Heath House, Mr Fair, cycled 756km between them from their respective homes in alternating two-hour shifts. Starting at 4pm on Friday 24 April, the pair pedalled through the night before completing their challenge at 4pm on Saturday 25 April.

The challenge was the brainchild of former Olympic athlete James Fair, who said: "I was thinking of a way that we could raise morale in the community and thought there is nothing that pupils like more than watching their teachers suffer! It's also a great way to raise funds for some great causes at a difficult time.

"The motivation of doing a challenge with someone is key,

as the thought of letting that person down by stopping is pretty tough to explain. As soon as the clock started there was no other choice apart from completing it, although I had to pick up my pace a little for the last spell so we could get 750km done."

George Browning, who is no stranger to a fundraising challenge, with races such as the Marathon des Sables under his belt, said: "When Mr Fair asked me to take part, it was a very straightforward decision as I hope it will raise awareness of one small way in which we can help our frontline services during the challenges they face at this difficult time.

"It was tough physically but even more difficult mentally. Alone in your garage is quite a lonely place. The 'normal' motivation of a journey wasn't there for me so it was more a question of being motivated by the stats and, as



ever, by the thought of telling people you had to give up!"

Extreme lockdown challenge



On 1 May, Matthew Smith (KES 2017) set out on one of the longest journeys of his life. "Running the length of the country was one of the craziest ideas that has ever crossed my mind", said Matthew, who ran

the distance by road from Land's End to John O'Groats during May and June, a total distance of 1,407km. Matthew ran laps of his garden, completing roughly 28km a day, or approximately 500 laps, in order to reach his goal in 50 days, raising over £1,100 for Age UK in the process.

Matthew explained: "I did this run in an effort to raise money for Age UK both nationally and in my local area for Age UK Solihull. During lockdown they have had to cancel all of their fundraising events, at a time when they need more money than they normally would in order to provide the services of their charity. Not only have they

helped my family in the past, but at a time when older people are potentially more isolated than usual their work is even more essential."

Since the lockdown began, Age UK Solihull has been delivering roughly 500 food parcels a week to elderly people in the area. Age UK is a charity that will support many of the people in our local community and Matthew believes it is charities like this that should have equal support during this time: "It is important we raise money for the NHS during this pandemic, but I think it is just as important to help out other charities that can help make a difference to such a large portion of the population."

Solo marathon



As my London Marathon was cancelled and I knew the little charity – The Lullaby Trust – for which I would be running, is now even more desperate for funds, I did the 2.6 Challenge on 26 April... except somehow I got the decimal point wrong and ended up doing the rather mad feat of running the whole Marathon – solo – and raising £685 so far!

Also, our son Jeremy Bryant in Removes has been out litter picking, with tongs, gloves and all the gear to maintain our environment and make a difference.

Simone Schehtman (KES parent)

Our frontline heroes!



THANK YOU

**Lines ingrained from masks,
Tight, suffocating,
Faces red, sore, tired.
Eight-eight:
Another relentless shift.
They see the suffering,
They touch the fear.
For that we owe:
An unrequited debt.**

Natalie Shah (KEHS pupil)



Dr Lawrence Jaffey (KES 1968)
Emergency Medicine Consultant,
Royal Liverpool University Hospital

I've been a consultant at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital since 1985. I partially retired in 2015, but still work two to three days a week.



Dr Emma Abbey (née Meikle, KEHS 1992)
Consultant Psychiatrist, Charlton Lane
Hospital, Gloucestershire



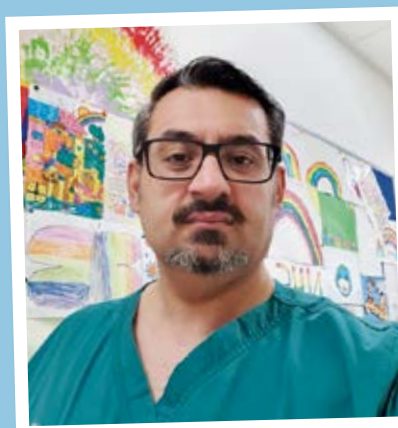
Dr Mike Greenstone (KES 1969)
Consultant Respiratory Physician, Hull
University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust



Dr Steven Taylor (KES 1991)
A&E GP Associate Specialist,
James Paget Hospital,
Great Yarmouth



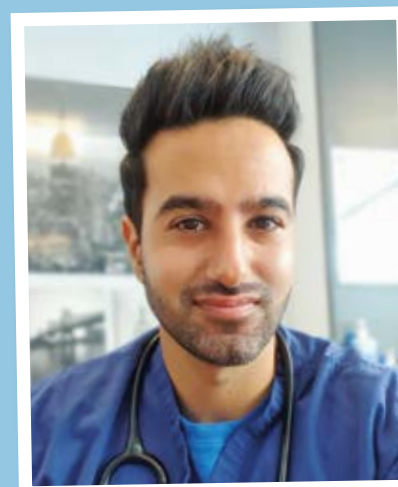
Dr Jim Lawrie (KES 1977)
GP, Royal Docks Medical Practice



Dr Rajan Paw (KES 1992 and KES parent)
A&E Consultant, Warwick Hospital



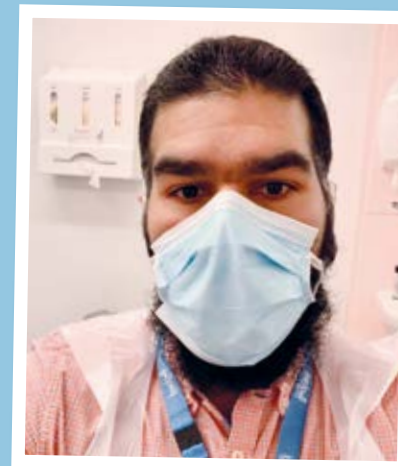
Dr Katie Vinen (KEHS 1983)
Consultant Nephrologist, King's College
Hospital, London



Dr Mohit Mandiratta (KES 2003)
GP Partner, Feldon Practice, Halesowen



Mr Ishtiaq Rahman (KES 1994)
Post-CCT Fellow in Cardiothoracic
Surgery, South Tees Hospitals NHS
Foundation Trust



Dr Sarmad Ahmed (KES 2003)
GP, Tanworth Lane Surgery, Solihull

During a GP Out of Hours shift for
Badger at Solihull.



Dr Antonia Mayell (KEHS 1995)
Consultant Anaesthetist, University
Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire

I was featured (silently!) on Panorama – *On
the NHS Frontline*. I am working in intensive
care, caring for Covid-19 patients.



Dr Ian Sheldrake (KES 2006)
Specialist Registrar in Intensive Care
Medicine and Anaesthesia, Hampshire



Mr James Barraclough (KES 1996)
Consultant Rhinologist, Facial
Plastics and ENT Surgeon,
Midland Nose Surgery

About to do some tracheostomies in
Wolverhampton... I'm in the middle with
my two registrars.



Dr Shahid Merali (KES 2001)
Principal GP, Darlaston Family
Practice, Walsall



Dr Ali Hamaad (KES 1994)
Consultant Cardiologist, Walsall
Manor Hospital



Dr Geraint Lee (KES 1994)
Consultant Neonatologist and Head of Service, Evelina London Children's Hospital, Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Trust



Dr Nisha Talwar (KEHS 2007)
Medical Registrar, Midlands



Dr Mohammed Saqib (KES 2008)
Dental Surgeon, Urgent Dental Care Centre in Bristol

My nurse and I treating Covid-19 positive patients.



Dr Tasso Gazis (KES 1986)
Consultant Endocrinologist, Nottingham University Hospitals



Dr Jatinder Kallu (KES 1997)
GP, Sutton Coldfield



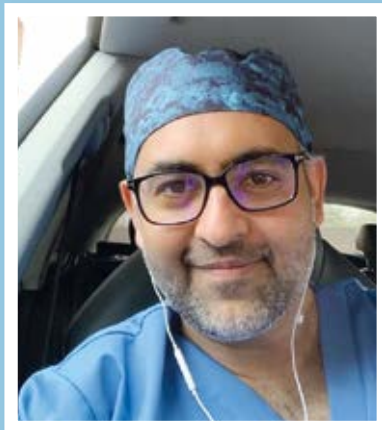
Dr Matthew Kahn (KES 1997)
Consultant Cardiologist, The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust



Dr Katrina Sheikh (KEHS 2004)
Acute Medical Registrar, London



Dr Adil Ahmad (KES 2008)
General Surgery Registrar, Sandwell General Hospital



Dr Atif Ghaffar (KES 1993)
GP, Walsall



Dr Manjula Subramanian and Dr Catherine Brennan (KES parents)
Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist and Consultant Anaesthetist, Russells Hall Hospital



Dr James Pittaway (KES 1997)
Consultant Anaesthetist, Royal Cornwall Hospital



Dr Cathy Field (KEHS 1998)
GP, Kingswinford



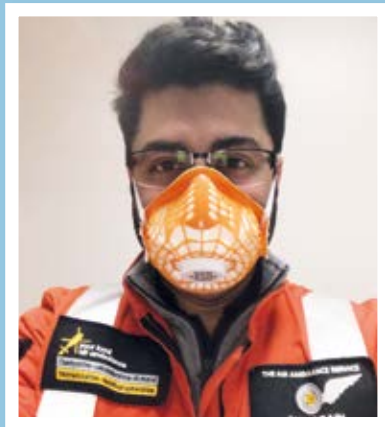
Dr Manigandan Thyagarajan (KES parent)
Consultant Paediatric Radiologist, Birmingham Children's Hospital



Dr James Hunter (KES 2014)
Foundation Year One Doctor, Royal Derby Hospital



Dr Sanchia Goonewardene (KEHS 2000)
Specialist Registrar Urology, East of England Deanery



Dr Ali Husain (KES 2000)
Emergency Medicine Consultant, University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire



Dr Milan Thomas (KES 1997)
Consultant Urological Surgeon, Kent and Canterbury Hospital

This is me doing robotic surgery. We continue to offer major cancer surgery to treat kidney and bladder cancer during the Covid-19 crisis.



Dr Abdul Qader Ismail (KES 2004)
PHD Student, Opti-Prem, Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

My PhD as part of the NIHR funded neonatal study (OptiPrem) has been put on hold to allow me to return to clinical practice, caring for premature babies and their families.

Arts, literature and media

Women's Prize for Fiction shortlist



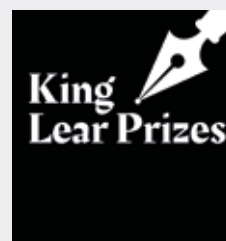
I'm absolutely overjoyed that *A Thousand Ships* has been shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction 2020 – it is such a big deal for me. I've also been spending lockdown working on series six of my radio show, *Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics* (recorded in my hall...), available on BBC Sounds, and a series of short films on Ovid (#OvidnotCovid), which can be viewed online.

Natalie Haynes (KEHS 1993)

King Lear Prizes

During Covid-19 I've launched the King Lear Prizes, a new national creative arts competition for the over 70s. Strong interest so far: over 800 entries in the first three weeks. Visit: www.kinglearprizes.org.uk for more information.

Andrew Browning (KES 2008)



Listening to ORCAS

I am retiring from production on completion of my science documentary, *Listening to Orcas*. I will continue with my training and pitching programs worldwide, though Covid-19 will likely mean online delivery of the CNEX Chinese Doc Forum (CCDF-11) in Taiwan in September.

Listening to Orcas, hosted by Sarika Cullis-Suzuki, was telecast on CBC's *The Nature of Things* on Friday, 21 February 2020. This has been an immensely complex production scientifically, creatively and entrepreneurially,

with many moving parts and an evolving and revolving cast of key characters over a five-year period. Frontier science is challenging as one never knows in advance what the research will show. Orcas are a fascinating species and the populations in our local waters are especially so. Their plight is a source of real and immediate concern.

I am now 75 and ready for retirement from production, though I will continue to deliver the training programs I manage around the world.

Pat Ferns (KES 1963)

Aspiring writer and artist

Like a large portion of the population, quarantine has given me an unprecedented amount of extra time. Likewise, as an aspiring writer and artist, it has become apparent that a lot of the opportunities I seek I will have to create for myself; which means that in spite of social distancing, my aspirations do not have to be put on hold.

Creating my own website has been a nice way of collating the work I have done so far, which



can often be felt to be all over the place, and organising it neatly on one site. Not only has it helped expose my work to a wide audience, but it has acted as a welcome reminder of all I have done so far whilst quelling fears for the future in such times of uncertainty.

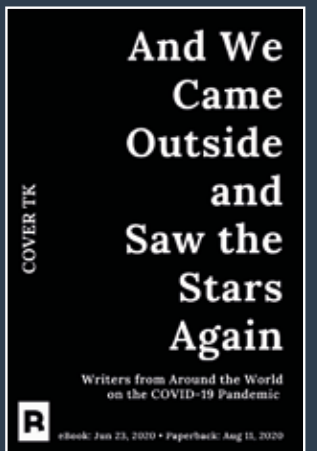
Manvir Dobb (KEHS 2018)

International anthology on Covid-19

I've been invited to translate the essay contributed by György Spiró to an anthology titled *And We Came Outside and Saw the Stars Again*, which will shortly be published by Restless Books, New York.

In this international anthology on Covid-19, esteemed writers, poets, artists, and translators from more than 30 countries send literary dispatches from life during the pandemic. The publication will be available as an eBook, priced at \$5.99, with net proceeds from sales going to the Book Industry Charitable Foundation.

Bernard Adams (KES 1954)



Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

I'm a co-leader of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and in the absence of any live performances we're producing videos and online music content. These can be viewed at: www.oae.co.uk/the-show-must-go-online

Maggie Faultless (KEHS 1979)



Alice in Wonderland

I'm an actor (professional name Tom Allenby) and I'm involved in a lovely fundraiser for the NHS. Trying to raise as much money as we can!! 165 actors (including Michael Palin, Harriet Walter and Juliet Stevenson) read a minute each of *Alice in Wonderland*. Five minutes each day gets uploaded and then listeners can donate if they'd like to. Visit: www.wonderlandchallenge.com for more information.

As the industry is mostly quiet at the moment, I'm also currently volunteering as an NHS transport volunteer, trying to help out a little bit.

Tom Edwards (KES 2011)



Professional pianist to online tutor

Of all the cancelled gigs, I will very much miss my biennial trip to KES for the summer jazz workshop and concert on 21 June, even more so because it would have been Tom Jarvis's last one. Instead, I am hurling myself into online piano teaching especially with lapsed piano players in mind. My aim is to get them playing what they want to play, how they want to play it, and hopefully I can give them a taste of what the piano has given me. Find out more at: www.joethompson.london

Joe Thompson (KES 1982)

Shakespeare moves online

I directed a production of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* at the Antaeus Theatre here in Los Angeles. We opened, terrific reviews, selling out, and suddenly we had to close, as did all other theatrical productions.

Since then, I have taught my Shakespeare class on Zoom, participated in Zoom seminars and watched webinars. I am about to do a Zoom reading with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival with actors from all across the country, so the community spirit prevails. Other than that, I am in home isolation but get out every day to walk and take care of my garden.

Elizabeth Swain (KEHS 1960)

Switched on Network podcast

As a lover of technology (as any still-present members of staff who taught me will remember!) it's been great to see how technology and the internet has been able to help us cope with lockdown in terms of keeping connected with each other and preserving our mental health, as well as how the world of technology is helping to equip healthcare staff with PPE and even help fight the disease and search for cures/vaccine.

With that in mind, in the second week of lockdown we recorded a special extended episode of the Switched on Network (here: youtu.be/L1fdjSe6JVs) discussing those very topics! Recording remotely in that way was certainly new for me but we're really pleased with how it turned out.

The guests joining me in the episode of the show are both Old Edwardians themselves – Ben Anderson (2006) who's my regular guest and co-presenter, and we were joined by his brother Tom (2011). We even had a bit of a reminisce about *Les Misérables* as all three of us were in the two shows that KES/KEHS put on!

Paul Freeman-Powell (KES 2004)

Remote theatre



I was always into music and drama during my time at KES and have many fond memories of performing in the shows – mostly under Mrs Herbert's direction but one or two with Miss Proops and Mr Bartlett, and of course the

excellent Music Department when the shows were musical theatre productions. It's something I've kept up through my time at university and also beyond in the working world.

Living and working in London, I am spoilt for choice when it comes to amateur dramatics societies. Whilst my tech job in finance is highly suited to working from home, unfortunately a large amount of the theatrical opportunities have been put on hold – but not quite all!

Via one of the groups I've worked with, I heard about a guy who is looking to make his original piece of theatre into a radio show of sorts, with the parts all recorded independently by actors around the country (and possibly beyond) who have most likely never met and perhaps never will. I've not really done any purely voice acting before but, given the gear I've accumulated due to my musical interests, I thought I'd give it a go. Here I am in my studio-come-office-come-bedroom having just sent off a set of takes to the writer.

The arts have played a huge role in keeping us all sane during these strange times. Whilst live performance as an industry has been almost completely shut down, I think it's a great testament to our creativity that all these different new opportunities are popping up in ways compatible with distancing, in what is usually a highly personal and interactive environment. Of course, this extends to all sectors – for example, it's great to hear that the school itself is leveraging its skills and talents to help the wider community. I recently got a message from someone back home that their GP surgery received some protective face shields with a note from none other than Mr Balkham – keep up the good work and stay safe!

Oscar Denihan (KES 2012)

Interactive musical adventure for children

My group, The Dionysus Ensemble, took our interactive children's 'Musical Adventure' online and over 80 children watched our show all about animals just after Easter.

I also arranged and recorded this track (youtu.be/mad57e6-M6w) for VE Day and Europe Day to celebrate peace and unity – something I'm sure we all agree that we need more of at the moment.

As I'm sure you know, all concert halls, theatres and live music venues closed on 14 March so this has been (and continues to be) a difficult time for everyone in my industry, but I'm figuring out new technology and am sure that with these new skills we can prevail.

Checking in on neighbours and friends of all ages who are alone and sharing supermarket shopping on my street are all little bits to help, contact is so important for the mental health of those who may not seem immediately vulnerable.

Léonie Adams (KEHS 1999)





Captain Tom's War

I'm a full-time TV producer, still working in Birmingham, usually turning out factual shows for Channel 4.

I spotted that Captain Tom Moore, the record-breaking fundraiser, was wearing a Burma Star as one of his medals during his charity walk. I contacted the family and wondered if he had an interesting war story to tell – cut to two weeks later and the documentary *Captain Tom's War* was broadcast on ITV at 8pm on Friday 8 May, as part of the VE Day celebrations.

Production under lockdown posed several challenges – interviewing the 99-year-old while socially distancing was the easy part. Much harder was the creaking strain my rural broadband was under as footage and archive material was sent back and forth to the edit suite I hastily lashed up in a shed. The icing on the cake was securing the services of Sir Kenneth Branagh to provide the narration, which we recorded in a broom cupboard at his studios.

James Woodroffe (KES 1996)

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

To thank and support our NHS and frontline workers involved in the fight against Covid-19, 19 pupils and two former pupils, from King Edward's School and King Edward VI High School for Girls, performed a wonderful musical tribute of *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*.

The pupils used the initiative and arrangements from the Services for Education Music Service. An Old Edwardian, who performed in the ensemble, edited the video compilation.

The video can be viewed at:
www.kes.org.uk/pupils-perform-a-virtual-nhs-tribute



Supporting the community

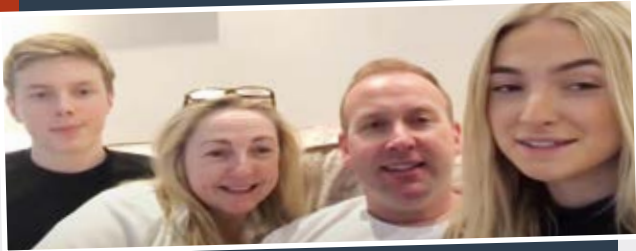


Conservation volunteering

I have been doing some conservation volunteer work with the Sarehole Environmental Action Team along the river Cole, near Sarehole Mill, where I live. Social distancing is always advisable when scything!

Marcia Atkins, KEHS MFL Teacher

NHS thank you video



George Berry (Fifths) and his elder sister Emilia made a video to share with our key workers and thank them for everything they are doing. The video also includes KES pupils and can be viewed on YouTube at:
youtu.be/9Pz5WDL0gz8

Lisa Berry (KES parent)

Cloth nappy library

I am currently on maternity leave with my second child and since I've been off work I've volunteered for (and then started running) my local not-for-profit cloth nappy library. I'm passionate about helping local families reduce their carbon footprint and converting to using cloth nappies, and the demand for our services has massively increased due to the pandemic. Families are struggling to source disposable nappies and key workers are trying to avoid unnecessary shopping where possible, so converting to cloth nappies (and wipes) has never been so popular.

To keep up with demand, I have been putting together and hiring out more nappy bundles, and coordinating getting free hires of nappies to local families in need. I have been running online demonstrations for local families and providing advice and help via our Facebook page. Anyone interested in finding their local cloth nappy library can search via: www.uknappynetwork.org

Andrea Pearson (née Seedhouse, KEHS 2004)



Drumming up applause

This period in our lives has been one of great uncertainty. However, through the 'Creativity, Action, Service' sessions which have been introduced into our distance learning curriculum, I have taken this opportunity to try new things and make a bigger impact on my community with my actions.

Inspired by the suggestions put forward in the Creativity, Action and Service during School Closure document produced by the school, I have made NHS rainbows for my local hospitals. I have also been taking part in the weekly 'Clap for Carers', going from simply clapping in the first week to bringing out my whole drum kit most recently! These were two great ways to

commend the efforts of those working on the frontline. I felt it important to boost the morale of the key workers and others struggling through difficult times.

Additionally, I recognised that I could provide a service to my peers who are confined to their homes. Since I know several of my friends are football fans, I created a Premier League trivia-style quiz for them to have a go at. They enjoyed the competitive element of the quiz and it helped to bring lots of people together whilst keeping boredom at bay!

Furthermore, I have tried to put current events into perspective by looking at the wider global picture. Prompted by the same CAS document, I chose to

research Amnesty International further. I discovered that what the organisation does is of great importance – fighting for human rights globally. As a result, I signed some petitions, such as one for the protection of refugees in the Greek Islands. Additionally, I took the advice to enrol on a sign language course (BSL) and have enjoyed making progress over the last couple of weeks. It is an excellent idea for anyone looking to develop a long-term skill, plus, a challenge! Finally, I have been trying to keep fit and healthy during a time which can lead to a sedentary lifestyle – my focus at the moment is on the 2.6 Challenge.

Ronav Jain (KES pupil)



VE Day interview



Malachy in Shells decided to conduct an interview with a neighbour who was seven-years-old in 1945. His younger sister took part in reading out Malachy's interview in our socially distanced street party on VE Day. It was endearing to see both generations coming together, sharing and learning from one another. The interview is below.

On VE Day in 1945 I was just seven-years-old. At the start of the war my grandfather, who was a miner, had built in our garden the most amazing air raid shelter. It was mostly underground with the outside covered in turf. This made it difficult to see from any enemy aircraft overhead. It was equipped with bunkbeds. The neighbouring families who did not have any shelters were always welcome to share. The small children did not understand the horror of the war and so to us it was just an adventure. At the same time, every house had to have black curtains. This was to stop any light showing through. If this was not adhered to the air raid wardens were soon knocking at your door.

When I was old enough to go to primary school I had to wear a gas mask. Some children were



very lucky as they were given a Mickey Mouse gas mask. I unfortunately had the ordinary type so I felt very deprived. On each school day a siren would sound and we would practice hiding beneath the desks. This was in case of any bombing.

Almost every family grew as much food as they could and also kept chickens. The occasional egg was such a treat. Food rationing went on for many years. Everyone had a ration book which allowed them to have a little food. My best memory was to have my allocated ounce of sweets each week. I was seven-years-old before I had my first banana.

On this day, 75 years ago, we had a fabulous street party. There was a huge table erected in the road. The children sat at the table to be served by their mothers, who had somehow managed to prepare the most tasty food even though there was still rationing. There was still some sadness amongst the celebrations as quite a lot of the children had lost their fathers during the long war. We all battled on, as we will with this awful virus.

Kate Gill (KES parent)



The Wentworth Phil

A group of Harborne neighbours have formed The Wentworth Phil to lift spirits and entertain the street at 8pm on Thursdays, immediately after the NHS clapping. Social distancing is carefully observed by the band and the neighbours who come out to listen.

The band is made up of four families and features KES pupils George Roberts, Tom Roberts and Ben Bown alongside KEHS pupils Katie Bown and Carola Kirchhof. Katie and Tom have made good use of some of their lockdown time arranging *We'll Meet Again* and *Hey Jude* to add to the repertoire of the rather unusual mix of instruments in our midst.

Sarah Padmore (KES parent)

Keeping a pub afloat

I'm a drinks writer, mostly working in wine and spirits marketing and communications. Having been made redundant shortly before lockdown, I'm doing some pro bono work for a community-owned pub in South East London (The Ivy House in Nunhead) helping them with a crowdfund to make sure all their staff are well looked after, and that they can keep the pub afloat to reopen after the lockdown restrictions ease. I'm also entertaining my three-year-old twins, Isaac and Joshua.

Amy Matthews (KEHS 1999)



Hackney Night Shelter

It took me quite some time during a busy working life to carve out time to start volunteering, but I’ve now been helping at Hackney Winter Night Shelter near home in London for some years. So it was that on Wednesday 25 March, in the early days of lockdown, I set off for my last shift of the season as an overnight volunteer. Normally, this would involve picking my way carefully through busy traffic to get to the venue, followed by an alternately hectic and quiet shift, and then a sad final farewell to our guests, knowing that when the shelter shut at the end of March, some at least would be back on the streets, in spite of the efforts of our two advocate workers.

This year was a contrast in every way. The streets were eerily quiet, and I wondered if one of the several police cars around was going to stop me and ask what I was doing – though I would have had no problem explaining. When I got to the venue, things were quieter than usual in some ways: instead of moving from hall to hall, the shelter had been able to hunker down for the final few nights in one place, so there were no beds to shift and food supplies were ready to go.

For the three staff, however, things were anything but quiet, liaising with the London-wide organisation responsible for getting homeless people into hastily commissioned hotels. Not surprisingly, the process wasn’t exactly smooth! For our team, the risks were brought home by the fact that one guest was showing Covid-19 symptoms, though not seriously ill, thank goodness – he was isolated in a different part of the building. How were we to transport him safely to his hotel? In a black cab, really? That needed expert advice the following morning.

Thanks to more good work by our staff, by lunchtime the next day, all the guests were safely transported to their hotels. That won’t be easy for them either, and the team are staying in touch by phone, but at least we know that nobody is on the streets for now.

With a different hat on, as Chair of a research organisation called the Centre for Homelessness Impact, I’m involved in work on how to emerge from the crisis in a way that doesn’t land all the former night shelter guests back onto the streets, but actually takes the opportunity to help as many as possible to move straight into more suitable accommodation. There’s an opportunity here. Our role is in assembling the evidence about what works, but also in helping local people to implement it, and to keep learning as we go along.

With our night shelter closed now, I’ve also volunteered to help somewhere else locally – waiting to hear about training sessions! It’s been heartening to see the interest in volunteering in recent weeks, and I hope it’s a positive legacy. Sustaining the spirit of supporting each other once the crisis is over will be a challenge, but one we can all contribute to.

Andrew Hudson (KES 1976)

Volunteering while remaining at home

Mostly my role is staying home and keeping everything, including me, very clean as I have my 90-year-old mother living next door and I am her main carer.

I am a volunteer in the local community hub. So far I have been put in contact with two people, in the neighbouring village of Groby, who were lonely. We enjoy phone calls on an ad hoc basis. I find I am enjoying them as much as my new friends. One has turned out to be involved in fascinating Tudor living history events. I am learning a great deal about the clothes, food and daily life, long forgotten if I ever listened at school. Strangely both of my new friends know who I am as I help lead many volunteer initiatives in Groby.

I am actively involved with our church outreach to children including the Open the Book scheme. This has been suspended and our Families Worker is now furloughed so I am now one of the people preparing twice weekly activity sheets that are sent out to the families. These revolve around a character in the Old Testament and include links to online songs, videos and crafts.

And my largest group activity revolved around our choir, Groby Sings. We have about 300 singers aged from seven to over 90. We can’t meet to rehearse so we are sending out regular emails with news, challenges, links to online choirs and a weekly song to all sing at 7.30pm each Monday. It’s my role to help coordinate this – it’s another joyful role and I am enjoying reading the huge variety of messages, ideas and fun from our singers. We are managing to keep a feeling of community amongst everyone and making them smile and sing.

When I consider what I am achieving whilst at home, I am surprised and pleased. It’s not much in the grand scheme of things but for the hundreds of homes I am in contact with it is valuable and it’s keeping me sane!

Jane Cox (née Jinks, KEHS 1979)

United against Corona

As soon as we went into lockdown, we began delivering leaflets in our local community to offer assistance to the elderly in terms of shopping, collections or just to check in. Our initiative was entitled ‘United against Corona’ and we are still in touch with about 30 households. I also got in touch with the Sutton Coldfield Together programme to see if I could help out there. We also began to make a few pieces of PPE for NHS workers at Royal Derby Hospital where my father works.

Rohan Tandon (KES pupil)

Painting pointers

I’m a self-employed dog groomer come pet portrait artist (www.alimcquailportraits.co.uk), so I work from home anyway, but with the Covid-19 crisis I have certainly had to make changes to how I work, as well as looking after my parents in isolation and attempting to keep my three girls educating themselves! That said, I am still working and have been able to spend a lot more time on my artwork.

By chance, I have had the exciting opportunity to design some Christmas cards and notelets for the charity Pointers in Need, which rescues and rehomes pointers from around the world. I have also had more time to play my cello and have felt brave enough to take it outside and play *We’ll Meet Again* for the NHS applause. The bus always passes at that time and I got a good beep of solidarity! The dog came out too but no howling at least.

Alison McQuail (née Bradby, KEHS 1992)



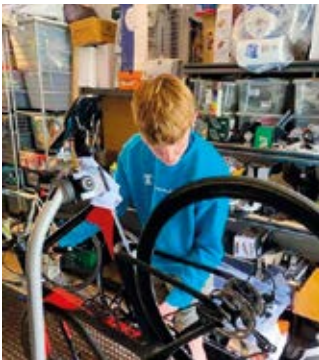
Jeremy’s Bike Triage Service

Jeremy Maclean in Fourths has started up a service to repair and clean bikes during lockdown. The bike triage and cleaning started out with a small favour to a family friend who asked him to look over a bike and clean it, initially for free as it only took a little time. He was then asked to look over three more and realised that there was a growing demand and market for bike servicing as the time we spend socially distancing goes on.



He sent out a flyer to the local WhatsApp group, advertising to members of his road, which then started to be spread among the wider community. He offers a variety of services, from cleaning through to triage, and is donating £2 from each bike he triages to Birmingham Children’s Hospital and Sustrans. He is also providing a free bike service to all key workers throughout lockdown.

As of June, Jeremy has serviced 35 bikes for 25 families,



including three NHS and key worker families, and raised £55 for his chosen charities.

Helping expats in the Cayman Islands

In the Cayman Islands, we’re now in week eight of lockdown. We’ve had an alternative ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ curfew in place with total lockdown (can’t leave your house) overnight, and then movement for essential services during the day but only on alternate days depending on the first letter of your surname. So far this seems to be working pretty well as they have contained the number of cases (around 80 to date, from a population of around 65,000) and just the one death.

We have a long period of no travel with closed borders ahead of us, and obviously there is an impact on the economy and community but the government has taken hard action and has said that they are prioritising lives ahead of anything else. We’ve been trying to help some of the expats on the island who have been trying to return to their homelands, having lost their jobs in the hospitality industry – particularly Indian and Filipino nationals. There are charitable organisations and food parcel delivery services that we have been assisting with donations.

One piece of good news amongst the crisis is that I was promoted to partner at my law firm effective 1 April 2020, and I’m looking forward to being able to celebrate with friends and colleagues once we are through this.

Bhavesh Patel (KES 2002)

Staying connected



Easter service

Reverend Phyllis Eaton didn't let social distancing stop her from delivering the Easter message of hope and new life. Phyllis spoke to her congregation from the lawn of their communal garden, allowing them to take part from the windows of their flats.

Phyllis Eaton (KEHS 1960)

Virtual birthday parties

I am throwing Zoom birthday parties for children at my son's school (St Edward's in Selly Park) so that they don't feel sad they are in lockdown for their birthdays.

Helen Ferguson, KES Biology Teacher



Zoom stag party

Zoom is no place for fop or idler, but the video-conferencing platform enabled a group of OEs from around the globe to convene for a quarantine stag party. Covid-19 forced Prashant Desai (2008) to postpone his stag celebrations and wedding, which were scheduled for late April and early May respectively.

However, the constraints of social distancing could not contain the wedding party: though isolated and forced indoors, Matthew Sedgwick, James Allsopp, Alistair Pardoe, Mark Davies, Jonathan Fox, Matthew Hodgkinson, Joseph Kiff, Sunny Gohel, Benjamin Howell (all 2008), Michael Lawrence and Stuart Blake (both 2009) managed to meet online to conduct a makeshift party, phoning in from places near (Sutton Coldfield, Walsall, and Harborne) and far (London, Yorkshire, Amsterdam and New York).

A true testament to the problem-solving skills taught by the old school! A great time was had by all, who will look back on the experience with immense fondness (although exact details will be somewhat hazy for some of those involved). King Edward's School gave us so many great things, but the bonds of friendship established there are still strong over a decade after leaving, and that is perhaps the greatest gift of all.

Benjamin Howell (KES 2008) and Matthew Hodgkinson (KES 2008)

Transformers group

Since leaving school I have enjoyed working with young children in a variety of different settings. Last June, I started a group for five- to 10-year-olds at a local village hall in Malvern. It is called Transformers and is all about making a difference in the world (www.malverntransformers.org.uk).

When the lockdown came, we were working on our 'Our World' theme, about Taiwan. We decided to continue our sessions on Zoom and with a weekly online magazine called *The Starfish*. Although I would much rather be running the group 'in the real world', it has been an interesting experience facing up to the new challenges. The latest *Starfish* magazine continues our philosophy and religion theme called 'Do Pussycats Have Rights and Other Big Questions'. This week's topic was about gender equality and includes a 'cameo' of KEHS.

Rosemary Webb (née Coleman, KES 1978)



Postponed reunion

The group of elderly, greying gentlemen reveals nine of us from the 1960s era. As a group of friends we have kept in touch from school days and even more so in recent years. This year group have, over the years, been excellent supporters of both the London and Biennial Dinners and indeed four of the nine pictured have actually addressed the Biennial Dinner.

About 10 years ago we started getting together with wives and partners for a couple of nights away every two years. As we have got even older we have now turned it into an annual event. We should have been getting together again in May in Chipping Campden but sadly Covid-19 put paid to that.

The photo is from our reunion in April 2019 in Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

Standing left to right: Richard Greenhall, Tim Austin, Neville Tindale, Tom Shippey and Jim Evans. Sitting left to right: Peter Stinton, Ian Plenderleith, Andy Packham and Alan Loach.

On a personal front my time at King Edward's was probably more productive on the sports fields than in the classrooms and that continues to this day. I am deeply involved in Surrey cricket and my days in this lockdown period are currently spent gardening and helping my local Premier League cricket club, Reigate Priory, where I am President, to weather the current storm and come out fit to continue its 168-year history.

Andy Packham (KES 1962)

The Covid Correspondent

When I retired, we moved near to Aberdeen, in the picturesque valley of the River Dee, on a retirement estate of nearly 200 homes. Shortly afterwards, I became Secretary of the residents' group and my husband Bob became Treasurer. The group soon took on a new lease of life and has been flourishing ever since.

One of my tasks was to produce our quarterly booklet, the *Correspondent*, alongside two volunteers. So all was going well. We went out for a meal off the estate every other month and three times a year we had a meeting with a guest speaker.

But then came the dreaded Covid-19. While we have been incredibly fortunate in having a lovely estate to walk round during lockdown, we obviously couldn't have any meetings or meals out and we had no printer to print the *Correspondent*, which has been an integral part of Inchmarlo Estate for many years now. Something had to be done. We had just elected a new Chairman (the previous Chairman, as it happens, had been a pupil over the road at KES) who suggested that he would be able to print a two-sided sheet, mainly with jokes and cartoons to cheer us all up, but also containing helpful information about takeaway

outlets, for example, suggestions of ways to occupy our time like a jigsaw exchange scheme, small poems and short quizzes, including a spoof agony aunt section entitled "Dear Della".

We have now produced seven weekly issues of the *Covid Correspondent* and they have proved a great success. Not only have they been distributed in the estate but they are available on our new website and copies have found their way all over the world, from Australia and South Africa to the US and Norway. In fact, one of our important contributors has been my classmate Joan Lord from Boulder, Colorado, who has

provided many cartoons showing the attitude of the American people to the rigours of Covid-19.

Of course, the question now is, how long can we keep this up? The predictions of the end of lockdown for our age group are not good but we'd like to be able to continue to provide amusement for our members and the wider community until such time as we can escape and join the real world again. I'm hoping that we'll be able to make people laugh until this happens.

Della Russell (née Harmer, KEHS 1964)

Small acts of kindness

Although I'm in a vulnerable category, which means that we are staying indoors apart from a daily walk, we are still trying to make a difference to our local community.

Because I am vulnerable, we have shopping delivered to us, so we contact the street each week to see if anyone needs essentials adding and then we leave it on their doorsteps. We try and telephone our elderly neighbours every few days, just to check up on them and have a friendly chat. Many of them, we have never met before!

Any small act of kindness and help can make a difference to our community at this time.

Faye Burton (KES parent) and Max Walsh (KES pupil)

Flying high in the community

Zain Aslam in Fifths and his mum have been keeping busy trying to spread positivity in the community and beyond.

Zain has been trying to keep like-minded people engaged with their learning and active during this difficult period. He started his own Instagram page *@flyingwithzain* which quickly grew to over 300 followers. Each day Zain sets a challenge and asks cadets from all over the UK to get involved. The challenges include quizzes, workouts and creative tasks. The response and feedback has been phenomenal and his efforts have been appreciated.

Zain's mum supported the community by reiterating the government's message of Stay Home, Protect the NHS and Save Lives by making a poster with the help of Zain and his fellow cadets in the hope it would encourage other teenagers to stay home. This montage was featured in the *Birmingham Mail* and shared across the community.

On approach to VE Day, the family wanted to support veterans in the local community. Zain's mother began an online campaign to search for families of veterans so they could pass on VE Day cards. The search proved successful, and Zain and his fellow cadets made cards for veterans and delivered them to their families.

Zain continues to teach his fellow Air Cadets via Microsoft Teams during lockdown and is preparing them for exams. Furthermore, Zain and his family assist George Road Baptist Church each week by donating food and essentials which are delivered to the vulnerable.

Rubina Begum (KES parent)



Supporting the local community



I supervise a group of eight overseas students at the University of Manchester on an MSc Management of Projects course. Whilst some returned to their homeland (China) when the University was forced to resort to online teaching, many are 'staying at home' in their Manchester accommodation. I have held Zoom meetings with them all and exchanged many emails.

I work for our local community group, arranging pick-ups of shopping, prescriptions and the like for the more vulnerable neighbours – and coordinating leaflet deliveries to 350 roads. WhatsApp, Messenger, Facebook and texts.

Then helping to keep our (Methodist) church connected – again lots of Zoom, but also phone calls (and in a few

cases letters only) and errands for the more vulnerable.

I had imagined I would do a lot of reading – still working through Canon Lunt's General Studies reading list of 1971 – but life remains too busy. In May, I took part in the European Online Chess Championship with conspicuous lack of success.

Over 800 players in my section from every European country. Chess works better than almost any other sport or game in this format but it's not the same.

Andy Stoker (KES 1972)

Weekly pub evening



We are holding a weekly virtual pub evening, set up by James Cloughton (2012) who's based in the USA. In this photo is me (Tom Edwards 2011), Tom Cloughton (2014), Oli Clarke (2011), James Lloyd (2011), Sophie Gammage (KEHS 2012), Nick Porter (2014) and James C's friend Jack, who's a teacher at KE Aston.

Other regular faces at virtual pub sessions include Alex Wakelam (2011), Seb Ostrowicz (2011), Kit Fowler (2011), Alan Kent (2011), and Martin Monks!

I should also explain that James Lloyd is wearing one layer too many in this picture as a challenge, because at James Cloughton's stag do last year, Lloyd came overdressed in layers of tweed. Many OEs from my generation will be unsurprised to hear that!

Tom Edwards (KES 2011)



Staying in touch around the world

Despite all living in different locations around the world at various points in the last 17 years, myself and other Old Edwardians Rebecca Selwyn (née Gay), Daisy Parker, and Anna Newman have stayed great friends and see each other as often as possible wherever we can. During Covid-19 times we have been catching up and helping each other cope via Zoom. We all left KEHS in 2003 but have stayed very close ever since!

Hannah Clarke (KEHS 2003)

Thoughts on lockdown



Encouraging chess in Norfolk

As befits someone who attended the school which produced C.H.O'D. Alexander, and did so at the same time as Tony Miles, in retirement I have been trying to encourage chess in Norfolk.

Incidentally, Edwardians old and young may enjoy the book *Memorable Games of British Chess*, which came out on Amazon last year, featuring great games by Alexander and Miles among many others – a review by International Master Gary Lane concluded “A really fun, instructive and entertaining book to enjoy when you need a bit of chess inspiration.”

After a week or two of, frankly, trying to pretend it all wasn't happening, we have taken to playing online in a big way. With sites like www.chess.com you can get a decent and enjoyable game of chess without an hour and a half of the A47 at either end of the evening.

The rising death toll is horrible. Only seeing your grandchildren via Zoom or WhatsApp leaves a hole in your life. Many people are suffering terrible financial hardship – I am very aware of just how lucky I am to be financially secure. But there have been good side effects as well – my grandson living in East London usually suffers badly from hay fever, but the improvement in air quality has meant that this year he hasn't suffered from it at all.

We mustn't be complacent or Panglossian, but we do need to try and identify the good things that have come out of lockdown, and try to hang on to them. Remember that as a side-effect of food rationing, the British people as a whole were actually healthier at the end of WW2 than ever before!

Neil Hickman (KES 1968)

End of a global threat

I remember attending KES during the last days of WW2 and on VE day and VJ day, we the survivors wildly celebrated relief from the threats of global war and the return of economic freedom. Now in the last decade of my life I am looking forward with similar feelings to celebrating relief from the global threat of coronavirus and Covid-19.

My days at KES were happy and I learned a lot including courage and perseverance in spite of being somewhat of a wimp. I have various great memories for example, of riding the Corps motorcycle and taking part in night manoeuvres as Corporal i/c 13 platoon, of admiring the blackboard skills and clear physics explanations of my Form Master Mr (Henry) Hall, of Head Master Charlie Morris droning on about academic news in *The Times*, of PE Master Major Moore who held that if it hurts it does you good, of sparkling oratory in the Debating Society, of the kindly help of Dr Deutschkron in catching up in German, of great help from Career Master Mr Balance in getting me into university, of admiring the roof structure of Great Hall with its main beam made from a great pine tree the gift of the Canadian Nation, of many more if you ask.

KES, a great school, great staff, great new premises, great boys (some), and an altogether edifying experience, it started me on course from stupid boy to man of substance, thank you KES.

PJ Peters (KES 1946)

Love in the Time of Coronavirus

There are limits to what someone of my age and generation can do in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and the current disheartening and alarming lockdowns throughout the world. One can try, though, to lift people's spirits, or minimally to resist and challenge grumpiness, anxiety and despondency in oneself and in one's contemporaries. The task was famously stated by WH Auden in 1939: “Our world in stupor lies yet, dotted everywhere, ironic points of light flash out ... may I, ... beleaguered ... by negation and despair, show an affirming flame.”

My flame flickers rather than flashes, and murmurs wistfully more than affirms. But heigh, well, it's just about alright. It has the form of a modest little online scrapbook and contains brief extracts

from speeches, talks, interviews, sermons, essays, laments, thoughts, anger, fear, beauty, hope, lyrics, images and stories. Shaking and shaping themselves through March and April 2020 into a narrative, a single entity, all members one of another, and from all over the world.

Entitled 'Love in the Time of Coronavirus', the scrapbook can be visited and viewed in its current form at:

www.insted.co.uk/pdfs/Covid%20reflections.pdf

Robin Richardson (KES 1955)



Lockdown in Germany

Here in Germany, where we have been living since 1990, we have been in lockdown since 15 March, a week earlier than the UK. The number of deaths due to the virus has at the time of writing passed the 5,000 mark, considerably fewer than in the UK.

As we have been retired for 12 years, staying at home has not affected us as much as other people. We are fortunate to have inherited a large garden with Ingrid's family home in a small village on the River Sieg, a tributary of the Rhine, some 40 miles from Cologne and Koblenz.

Our village owes its existence to an iron mine at which Ingrid's father worked until it closed in 1964. There used to be several in our district. The nearby town of Betzdorf is internationally known as the home of Wolf garden tools.



Our district is very hilly. A joke says here there are only two directions: up or down! Our province of Rhineland-Palatinate, created by the British Occupation administration after the War, is mostly rural and has lots of forest. Two dry summers and a dry spring mean that many

trees have been damaged by beetle larvae. I do the shopping with a face mask once a week. The biggest difference to our normal routine is that church gatherings are not yet permitted, but we are encouraged to receive mails and phone calls from other members

who wish to keep in touch.
Michael Ponsford (KES 1961) and Ingrid Ponsford

International Grandma'ing

I am 81, and on my own in my home in Cornwall. I do about 35 minutes yoga each morning, and then spend two hours on Skype with my eight-year-old Granddaughter in London, on reading, writing and spellings, and some play, as both her parents are working from home. I walk in the afternoons, which includes foraging for sea beet, nettles, dock, wild garlic and seaweed, and work in the garden. Two evenings at 6pm, I read stories to and chat with Grandson Oliver, six, in San Francisco, for an hour or two, while both his parents are working.

Most of my shopping is done for me, so I can avoid getting sick, and I am pursuing my chosen lifestyle to keep as healthy as I can. I also talk to other isolating friends on the phone each day to avoid too much isolation for all of us.

Bridget Taylor (née James, KEHS 1957)



Reflections from Australia

My wife Jan is Executive Principal of one of the largest schools in Australia and won a Churchill Fellowship last year, and so we travelled together to study Positive Psychology, Wellbeing and Mental Health Programmes in schools and universities around the US, Canada, UK, Hungary, Holland and Italy. An amazing three month trip! I now spend much of my free time volunteering in prisons and hospices in Queensland.



I would like to offer you below my reflection on the pandemic.

The pandemic is teaching me that it is difficult to focus on the spiritual, in the midst of the anxiety so many of us feel, right now.

But we can use this moment to live into and be freed by the realization that there is so much that we cannot control.

So much of our anxiety revolves around wanting to control the uncontrollable, and the pandemic can teach us the futility of this.

We can be more attentive instead to the present moment, focussing on that which we can control.

If I can concentrate on being in control of that very small circle of reality that is entrusted to me and in some sense depends on me, as in how I use my time, how I take care of myself, how I care for my family and friends, how I daily and hourly live with GRATITUDE, then my anxiety diminishes.

This is a great opportunity to yield control of our lives, to live in the Precious Present amidst all that is happening.

In this way we can use this time of quarantine to develop, alone or with those with whom we live, a spirit of service which can and will sustain us all, in Love.

Sergio Carlo Maresca (né Tew, KES 1964)



Lockdown in Australia

Greetings from Perth, Western Australia, which at the moment is benefiting from being one of the most isolated capital cities in the world.

The State went into lockdown a few weeks ago, and closed its borders both internationally and with the rest of Australia, so fortunately our cases of Covid-19 have been measured in hundreds, and deaths in single figures.

I am busy writing a book, so isolation at home hasn't caused a great change to my lifestyle. Best wishes to all OEs in the UK and elsewhere, and may we all look forward to better times ahead.

Peter Handford (KES 1965)



Lockdown in Costa Blanca

The Costa Blanca has been my winter retreat for the last few years. This year my stay has been extended indefinitely! I have not been outside the villa for over six weeks, but I have two ladies looking after me!

Of a very strong group of friends I had at KES I know of only two survivors. George Taplin and Geoff Green, both in Dunt’s House. With the support of Bill Whalley in the Geography Department I managed to get to Cambridge after National Service in Nigeria. I was lucky enough to play once at Twickenham, and the precious ‘Blue’ opened every door when I went into teaching. I reached the dizzy height of Warden of Glenalmond College in Perthshire in the year before I retired.

Rugby remained an important part of my life, particularly as my son Robert proved to be rather better than me, captaining Scotland and being selected as a British Lion. The male members of my 14 grandchildren are keen, but not in the same league as Dad/Uncle.

Jim Wainwright (KES 1951)



No time to be bored

I’m self-isolating here in Pembrokeshire – with plenty to do – there are footpaths nearby and options for cycling on and off-road. As well as taking the daily exercise, I’ve been studying French, German and Welsh online.

I’m heavily involved in running a local charity: Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Added to that I have been compiling a portfolio for a photography course and contributing to two creative writing groups locally – now via Skype. I also enjoy cookery, working in the garden, and watching films. No time to be bored...

Steve Drinkwater (KES 1967)

The Fox family

My sister, Kate Fox (1981) moved her language school to online learning and has since been using her exercise breaks to discover and photograph rural parts of Ealing in London.

My brother Jonathan Fox (1969) lives in New Zealand and took the opportunity to set up a model railway layout – the first time in 20 years. His daughter popped over from Sydney for a long weekend which turned into six weeks due to the lockdown.

Meanwhile I spent an extra three weeks on a South American cruise round Cape Horn before being refused entry into a growing list of ports – eventually allowed off in Miami, onto a British government repatriation flight to the UK and home self-quarantine.

Nicholas Fox (KES 1972)



Lockdown in Normandy

I was at KES in the heyday of Canon RG Lunt and after Cambridge and the law conversion course went on to work as an official of the European Parliament until my retirement in 2011. Since then I have divided my time between Brussels and Normandy where (having acquired dual French-British nationality) I came to vote in March and have been ever since with my family following the French authorities’ ban on unnecessary travel.

Daily life here in “la France profonde” revolves around managing wood and grass but I still find time for my passion for photography (especially old-fashioned darkroom work) and music (jazz guitar). This musical interest – I am pleased to note – seems to have been inherited by my daughter Isabelle whose increasingly ambitious music videos can be found on her YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCnYy7FmsGi2tJEWxpCNUVvQ

Roger Brawn (KES 1968)

Staying put in Brighton

I am 91 years of age, and though I am quite well despite a long and complex medical history, I have chosen to respect the lockdown restrictions for almost two months now.

I am wonderfully well cared for by my third wife, who is Polish, and she too takes great care when leaving our seafront flat in Hove to do essential shopping to protect herself as well as possible from the Covid-19 virus.

We were planning to make our usual annual visit to Poland during most of the month of April, and booked at the end of last December tickets to fly from Luton to Poznan. With the risk from the pandemic of being unable to return easily from Poland, we decided to cancel our reservations in good time. We are however able to contact often my wife’s family that live in the neighbourhood of Obornicki by Skype and telephone.

I hope that I shall survive the current crisis and remain motivated to make the trip to Poland again next year.

I hope that King Edward’s survives all the inconvenience and upheaval caused by the coronavirus, and wish staff and pupils safe passage through the pandemic.

Peter ED Coates (KES 1947)

Remembering events from KES

What to do during lockdown? Remembering events from my time at KES...

1948 entering KES: top of the class at previous school to near bottom in new class – healthy competition and inspiration. Pride in second hand blazer from a pre-war OE. The trams from Navigation Street. Selection for U13 rugby team v Stanley House. Friends and team-mates thereafter – Peter Simpson; Ken Rushton; Eric Saxon; Alan Bramley. Picking stones from newly laid South Field. Coming top in UK in RAF Proficiency exam.

Chief Master’s comment on an end of term report: “*Manders seems to regard School as an agreeable sports and social club. The classroom and laboratory are where results are achieved.*”... and the following year: “*One of the most improved boys in the school.*” (Seems I listened!)

Selling an outrageous dummy to Alan Bramley in a house match. First selection for the School XI, which conflicted with O-level German exam that day... (We won. Germany lost!) Winning the Siviter-Smith cup.

I would start school again tomorrow, if I could.

Alf Manders (KES 1954)

Another time and another challenge

I came to King Edward's, aged 11, in September 1943 and stayed until 1950. After the first three of those years, people in Britain were no longer getting killed but British forces were still fighting, for example in Malaya, and, at home, many things had not changed much.

We are sometimes told that the virus is the greatest challenge we have faced since the Second World War. That's probably true and I agree with the view that there are many parallels with what is happening now. I think that there will be parallels for many years to come.

Things looked pretty bleak in 1943. We knew that we were no longer losing the war but it wasn't obvious how and when we were going to win it. There were still some air raids, rationing was strict, and not just for food, and we could not know that the war would end in 1945 nor why.

At school, just like everywhere else, people accepted that there was a war on and got on with what they had to do; school work, sports and games, idling and so on. One of the "so ons" was that early in 1944 some American soldiers appeared in the school grounds with a bulldozer and proceeded to dig a large pit near the north gate. The pit quickly filled with water which later became home to a population of newts. But before that the soldiers used it, rather puzzlingly, to drive through in jeeps and other vehicles which had been adapted to make this possible although the water would have been two or three feet deep. We called it all the "water jump".

Then, in May, they all went away and we enjoyed the newts until someone came along and filled in the hole. Other extra-curricular activities continued. The Junior Training Corps exercised with Boer War Rifles, some boys sneaked off to smoke in the sheds that housed the stones that would be used later in the chapel. There was a school play each year – no girls of course – and so on.

I must have been a bit slow but it didn't occur to me for ages that, down at the water jump, we had been watching some of the preparations for D-Day. Probably because we were out of range of enemy daylight reconnaissance it had been decided that these particular preparations should take place in Birmingham and KES had a convenient bit of empty land next to a main road. Nobody told us it was a secret, of course, nor did we know that there was an even bigger secret known to a few people on the other side of Edgbaston Park Road.

Perhaps something we haven't noticed has already happened that will start us on our way out of the world's present trouble.

Tony Rees (KES 1950)



Turning 70 in lockdown

I live in a Wiltshire village, population about 2,000. Being a KEHS girl I have ended up as secretary to several village organisations, including our WI. My 70th birthday fell on 28 April, and I was resigned to it all being very low key, especially as the weather was horrible – cold and wet. But my lovely WI friends had put the word out around the village so that I got masses of cards, presents and flowers – including the flowers in the photo, which were a joint gift from all the WI members. They were accompanied by a bottle of prosecco! Three friends stood outside in the rain – spaced out two metres apart – with a banner and sang "Happy Birthday" to me. So it was a lovely day, and made all the hours I very happily give to my societies worthwhile.

Rosalie Winter (née Picken, KEHS 1968)

The 'good life'

In the photo I am posing as a gardener, with Pear Tree Cottage in the background. Our black weather-boarded house dates from 1750, although the rear part is more modern.

When my wife Pauline and I moved here over 30 years ago, the property consisted of just a quarter of an acre. We have since expanded to 2.1 acres, with over a third of an area cultivated as a garden and as a series of vegetable plots. I have always had an interest in gardening and have planted over 350 trees to create a wood on the upper part of our rear field, as well as instigating the construction of a 17m x 24m natural clay pond stocked with carp.

For the past month or more we have been almost self-sufficient for food, thanks to our chosen 'good life' style! Apart from muesli bits ordered online, we have totally avoided shops and have lived off the contents of our freezers of garden produce. We grow much soft fruit and many sorts of vegetables and have accumulated a supply of frozen food on which to base our meals. I enjoy cooking, too, and make homemade jams and jellies from our greengages, plums, bullace, gooseberries, raspberries, redcurrants, blackcurrants, quinces and loganberries – my wife does the chutneys. Our meals usually contain at least three or four samples of garden produce. This time of year we have just exhausted last year's potatoes, onions and garlic, but still enjoy an abundance of fresh rhubarb and spinach, plus a range of fresh herbs.

On occasions, we accompany a meal with a glass of wine from the grapes grown on our local vineyard. We are partners in Martin's Lane Estates (Stow Maries) LLP and this weekend finally planted out – over 10 years after starting the project – the last of our vines to complete our 30 acres of vineyard, in what is fast becoming a very successful grape growing part of Essex – the Crouch Valley. We have a website for those interested in more details.

As we have chosen to self-isolate as much as possible, our social deeds have been restricted to sharing our rhubarb and pots of jam and some frozen produce with other people, including a couple we know in the next village, where the husband is on the list of those who are officially 'shielded' at home.

In general terms, after leaving KE I read architecture at Jesus College, Cambridge, practised as an architect in the public and private sectors until the recession of the 1990s, then retrained as a primary school teacher. I finally gave up teaching nearly a year ago, at the age of 67, having ended up specialising in teaching (part-time) one-to-one maths for Key Stage Two pre-SATs children, and leading afternoon lessons and after school clubs for primary French and Italian. In my self-isolation, I can today concentrate on my garden, adding Spanish to my linguistic interests and relearning to play the piano once more after an interval of nearly 30 years – during which time we brought up Laura and Matthew, our two children, now flown the nest.

Neil Gilmore (KES 1970)



When a man is tired of cricket he is tired of life

As permitted by Boris I have taken my daily walk around the cricket and rugby pitches at the Memorial Ground at Streetsbrook Road, conveniently located less than a mile from my home in Hall Green. Rugby finished some time ago and freshly mown the two pitches are in pristine condition. Alas, the cricket ground is just as fine a sight but also in lockdown. A great shame as the square is immaculate and the surrounding oak trees provide a backcloth of imposing splendour.

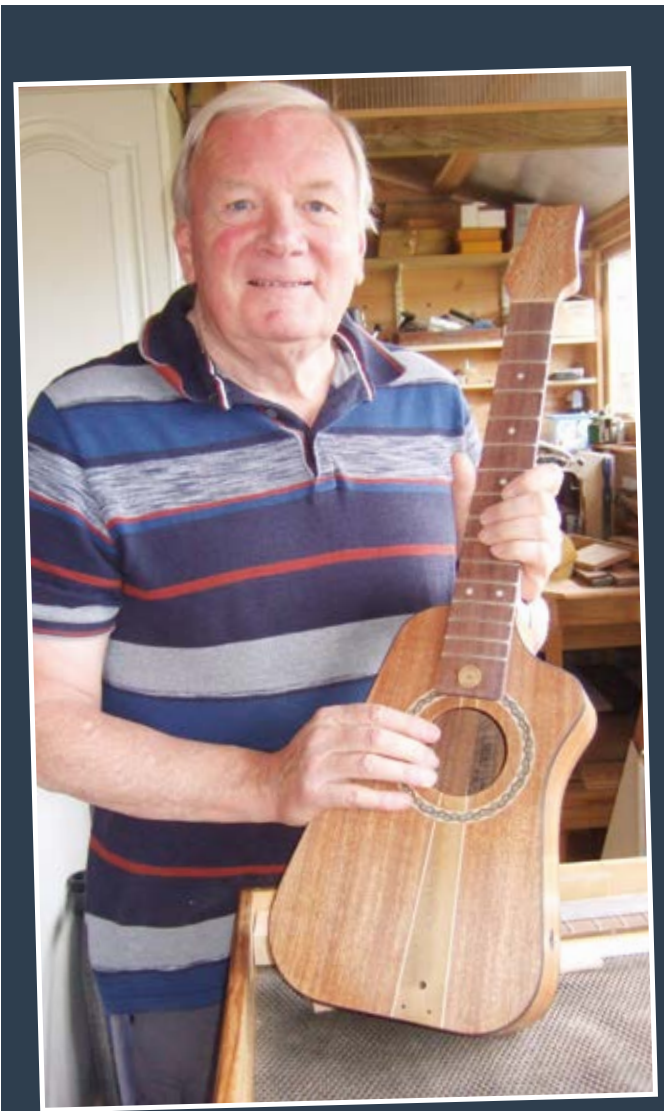
My time walking around the Ground reminded me of the happy days either playing or watching the great game and my memory reminded me that it was 55 years ago that I played my first match for the Cricket Club against Marston Green on a wet Sunday afternoon. Another debutant that day was Stephen (Gladys) Williams who became an off spinner of note. Over the years the Club tour to the West Country became a highlight as did the weekends spent in Bishop's Castle. Never quite sure as to whether the socialising was reflected on the field of play!

Both the Rugby and Cricket Clubs have seen fine players whether home based or in opposition. Without actual cricket, it is the season for quizzes and competitions and following the lead of David Taylor in his Ashes Quiz I have given thought whilst out walking to a Cricket Club XI whose players I have seen at Streetsbrook Road over my time: Peter Vernon, Michael Hughes, Richard Pope, Peter Babb, John Winspear, Ian Thomson, Andrew Packham, John Walker Roberts, David Taylor, John Nicholls, Terry Grant. I believe that six of this team were at one time or another elected as MCCC Cricketers of the Year.

I have not included the fine overseas players who have played for the Club so in the interest of a good match here is my XI: Jacques Kallis, Winston Herbert, Bryan Baguley, Stuart Hockley, Marais Erasmus, Dominic Ridley, Rolph Coetzee, Derek Brand, Kenyon Zhiel, Claude Henderson, Gavin Bryant.

As I write this, the Cricket Club should by now have played three League matches, hopefully later on in the summer we shall see cricket return to the Memorial Ground.

Paul Thomson (KES 1967)



Making instruments

After making several hundred instruments for other people, it is time to make one for myself, as a legacy piece. I have laser-engraved several references to the 'big lockdown of 2020', so that in 100 years' time, others will be able to identify which lockdown is recalled. The guitar is not finished at the time of writing, but at 77 I am not going anywhere soon.

Simultaneously, with an eye to the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022, I am writing my personal account of competing, along with the life and times, background etc., at the 1974 games in New Zealand. Primarily for my family, but with half an eye on more general interest. There are definitely KES influences and references.

Richard Cross (KES 1961)

Surviving in the lockdown

Being well into my seventies, unfortunately my only contribution to the lockdown is keeping away from everyone else. Living in Edgbaston, this I have been able to do successfully during my daily exercise, exploring its deep recesses and sometimes daringly venturing into Balsall Heath and Harborne. One day I even encountered a flock of sheep, though the delight was taken away by the fact that they were on the back of a transporter outside a butcher.

It is interesting spotting the surprising number of blue plaques. Major Harry Gem invented lawn tennis on the lawn behind his imposing house in Ampton Road, while George Cadbury's first house is a surprisingly modest one in St James Road. Joseph Southall, whose paintings are well represented in the Art Gallery, lived further down the road.

My annual joy is seeing the cherry trees in blossom, alternating light and dark pink, in Pritchatts Road, but these have now faded. The adjacent university is completely closed with tape at the many entrances to the grounds and not a student in sight. The clocks on Old Joe are literally stopped in time, all of them showing midday in sympathy, or perhaps the clock-winder is on furlough. And so past the alma mater; it always disappoints me that the arches at the top

of the drive have been demolished. At the annual CCF inspection, the challenge for the drum major was to spin the mace over the arch and then catch it the other side. Meanwhile, we non-combatants would watch the massed ranks of cadets and bet how many would faint; the hotter the weather the better.

I have explored various stretches of the River Rea. In the far western depths of Cannon Hill Park, you are in the countryside as it streams down through overhanging trees while a few hundred metres downstream it is confined between concrete banks as it continues its grim route through the city. Nearby, on a damp March day, I enjoyed watching KES students slide down a muddy bank on a cross country run; "forward where the knocks are hardest."

Opposite the school, the brook from the golf course runs down the side of the two KES rugby pitches, the other side being the grounds of the Dental Hospital with its landscaped garden leading along a board walk to the Pershore Road; a veritable rus in urbe for those who still remember their Latin. And so back to internment, hoping the longer it lasts, the more chance there is of Villa remaining in the Premier League next season.

Maurice Haseler (KES 1961)

Teaching Spanish via Zoom

Sadly, I have to accept that there isn't much I can do to help others at the moment. I am almost 70, and my husband is 73, so we are self-isolating. We are doing our bit by staying at home and staying out of trouble!

My children have helped me by setting up a video call facility, so I can see and speak to various family members. I have been teaching my seven-year-old granddaughter Spanish for two years, a half-hour lesson once a week, and it now takes place via Zoom! It seemed strange at first, but I am getting used to it!

My husband Mike and I belong to a WhatsApp group of people in our street, and we support each other in all sorts of ways. Yesterday we celebrated VE Day with a socially distanced street party; we wore red, white and blue, decorated our houses, and sat in our front gardens with tea / coffee / wine and scones. We chatted with neighbours, at a distance! In the photo, I am with Mike in our front garden, suitably dressed for the occasion!

Zoë Skinner (née Jones, KEHS 1968)



Adapting to lockdown

This strange condition of lockdown has (in some ways) made less difference to my life than that of many others. Unfortunately, my husband Malcolm has been suffering from prostate cancer and was scheduled for eight weeks of radiotherapy treatment, beginning on 11 March. We had therefore not booked a holiday and had made few plans for this year, wishing to have a difficult spell behind us first.

Initially the treatment was very stressful as it involved a daily commute by train into London to attend St. Thomas' Hospital. As we went into lockdown, travel on public transport became a high anxiety enterprise. He might well have abandoned his treatment, as he felt that the virus posed a much more immediate threat to his life than the cancer. Fortunately, (in many ways) on 27 March the unit at St. Thomas' closed, and Malcolm's treatment was recalculated for the different type of machine at Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup. He was able to drive there, and the 39 sessions were completed on 5 May. We are very grateful that the course was completed, as one hears so much about the postponement of cancer treatments.

Early in lockdown I was having a sort out, when I came across an issue of the *Veterinary Times* from 2018. I happened upon an article entitled "Avian flu and live bird markets in Hong Kong – a global concern?" It was chillingly prescient!



Although health issues have been the predominant theme during our lockdown, I have tried to make myself useful online. I normally work a shift on Wednesdays as a volunteer helper at our local foodbank. I have had to step back from this for the moment, but am able to assist a little by passing on email updates about current foodbank requirements to a network of around 150 church contacts across the London Borough of Bromley. I suggested that our own church should have a weekly email newsletter to keep everyone in touch. It seemed important as we are currently in interregnum, awaiting the arrival (now delayed) of our new vicar. Each week I have compiled a fairly light-hearted mixture of news items (two births this week), photographs, brief comic articles and poetry. I have been delighted with the enthusiastic response.

I've also learnt how to host a Zoom meeting. I convene the Orpington Julian Meeting, which usually meets monthly for a time of silent (contemplative) prayer, sandwiched between some short readings and music. There were several requests for an online meeting. Seven people joined the first of these, and we decided to meet fortnightly in future. I'm also a Companion of the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield in West Yorkshire, an Anglican monastic community, and have been delighted that the monks have taken to live streaming their services. Joining these has given a helpful shape to each day.

To end on a trivial note, my hair was driving me mad! I took drastic action, utilising two big plastic clips (normally used on cereal packets), and I cut it myself!

Vanessa Dixon (née Wright, KEHS 1973)



Keeping mentally active

At the age of 82 I have been using my remaining brainpower. My research paper on Alessandro Pianon's designs for the Vistosi Glass Factory in Murano was published in the next edition of the *Northern Ceramic Society Journal* in December.

And during the Covid-19 lockdown I have written up a research project that I started nearly 20 years ago on families named Dean – there were lots of them – who were potters and ceramic artists working in the Staffordshire Potteries at the turn

of the 20th century during the heyday of the English ceramics industry. Today, 30 April, I have been told that this has been accepted for publication in the next edition of the *Northern Ceramic Society Journal*. So some good has come from this wretched lockdown.

Oh, I almost forgot. In the last two weeks I have read Jonathan Coe's *The Rotters' Club* and *The Closed Circle*, which cheered me up no end. Although Jonathan post-dates my time at KES, many of the characters were

instantly recognisable, his portraits of Birmingham in the 1970s and at the millennium were so accurate, and I had been to practically every location that he describes so vividly. Both books brought back many happy memories for a schoolboy who was never a distinguished scholar during my time there, but who nevertheless probably achieved more than Ronnie Lunt ever expected of me.

Ian Turner (KES 1956)

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Inspired by Captain Tom

My Grandchildren were inspired by Captain Tom and are running laps around their field. They are doing five a day and have so far raised £350. I hope the weather carries on being kind to them so they can do their target. They are Megan (11), Chloe (8) and Owen (6).

Angela Frost (née Bailey, KEHS 1966)

Lockdown in Ireland



I was recently in A&E in a local hospital and experienced so many changes in how nurses and doctors work in this era. I've now tested Covid-19 negative, mercifully.

I've been delivering meals on wheels three times a week in Dun Laoghaire, Dublin, where I live. Home schooling my own children aged 10 and 13, or rather offering random printer, ICT and pedagogical support with regular snacks and trying to limit the nagging. Finishing my own teaching masters from Trinity College Dublin, submitting my thesis and four other assignments in April. Continuing some teaching of secondary school French, online of course, and trying to keep up with the announcements made here in Ireland about cancelled exams and so on. Thinking of Mme Waldron and Ms Crossley who taught me (and my sisters) French for seven years a few decades ago!

I had been a civil servant in the UK for 20 years, but then moved to Ireland as my husband is Irish and retrained over two years to be a French teacher. In this pandemic, what that will entail in September when schools go back here remains to be seen...

Olivia Kavanagh (née Dorricott, KEHS 1997)



Lockdown in Spain

Someone once said that a public school education was an ideal preparation for a life in prison. Consequently I am not finding the process too onerous.

My normal exercise is to swim ½ km a day but I do not expect the pool to be warm enough till the end of May. My days of jumping in cold water are long gone. Other than swimming I have three pastimes. Photography, banned while in lockdown. Flying sailplanes, also banned for a while. Cooking, which I can still enjoy while eating the result moderately, I don't want to push up my cockpit weight.

Roger Farmer (KES 1955)



New baby in New Jersey

The update I have from during the pandemic is that my daughter, Simone George Gera Mulira, was born in New Jersey (a last minute change of plans from Brooklyn, NY) on 9 April, which would also have been my maternal grandfather's 100th birthday.

Anthony Mulira (KES 2002)



Ed Talks: interesting talks by interesting alumni

We want to continue this sense of our wider King Edward's community and encourage further collaboration between our schools. With that in mind, we are delighted to launch Ed Talks – a new series of podcasts featuring interviews with interesting Old Eds from both sides of the drive.

The series is produced by Ben Anderson (KES 2006) of Sound Rebel, a podcast production company that creates podcasts for businesses, organisations and charities across the UK.

If you'd like to apply to feature in a podcast, please email us at: development@kes.org.uk

Subscribe now on all major channels: audioboom.com/channels/5033017



Directors Elliot and Zander Weaver (KES 2006 and 2009) describe making their first feature film, *Cosmos*.



Natalie Haynes (KEHS 1993) talks Classics and comedy.



Dame Louise Makin (KEHS 1978) speaks about her career in business leadership.



Dr Seb Heaven (KES 2006) discusses his career in medicine and living internationally.

