“Laughter, The Best Medicine, comes in liquid form”

“Doc’s Spoonful of Medicine”

#5. Being prepared while waiting, is why Fletton folk are a CUT above the rest.

The various UK, Royal Colleges of Surgeons, say that the number of people waiting for operation is at historic levels, due to the restrictions on health care services, to make way for CoVid-19 NHS care.

If you are one of those waiting for an operation or a procedure, such as joint replacement, cardiac or cancer surgery or indeed diagnostic tests, like endoscopy, this article is to let you and yours know, that you have love and support in Mereside.

As a bachelor, I was an NHS surgeon for some years, and changed into family doctor, “GP”, to allow for weekly sparring rounds with my garden or shopping on High Street, while exchanging pleasantries with you, kind folk. Also, to allow for football in the field with my two boys, and for Frisbee with my two girls; these, in those early years, when time with parents was not the irritation that teenage years would bring. In terms of work, life balance, I was the undisputed world champion, if not the G.O.A.T.

I still take great interest in surgical matters. From my days of having my gloved hands inside people’s chests and abdomens, to watching the development of laparoscopic (“keyhole”) surgery, and robotic surgery, in my latter years as a surgeon. What is now possible is a marvel. Did you know that many operations are done by robots, supervised by surgeons, who cannot offer the same precision or control their tempers, as well as a robot can?

Have you ever wondered why surgeons and gynaecological surgeons are called “Mr” or “Miss”, instead of “Dr”? Back in the middle ages, surgery, which was mainly amputation of gangrenous legs from war wounds in soldiers, was done by barbers employed by the army. They were slick with razors. The also cut hair and beards, actually. With no anaesthesia, they had to be quick. They could be forgiven for using a bottle of whiskey to give courage to the surgeon and assistants, sedate and give courage to the patient, with the remainder used for sterilising the wound. Infection rates and mortality were rather high. Doctors (called Physicians) were academics, who considered surgery to be beneath them. Not just “barbaric”, but there was also little money from rich patients, in surgery.

When anaesthesia came along with Nitrous Oxide in 1772, and Chloroform in 1831, doctors started to revise their opinion of surgery. The Royal College of Surgeons of England with its Royal Charter in 1800, started the transition to surgeons, of chaps (mostly, then), with a medical degree, who passed their surgical exam (called MRCS, later FRCS). They called themselves “Mr” as a snub to physicians and to remember their origins. The FRCS had a reputation of being one of the hardest medical exams, and thus led to an inverse snobbery after passing it, that I had no shame in sharing, when I passed it myself. The status of being “Mr” as well as “Dr” is one of my proudest achievements.

If you are on a waiting list, please remember that daily stretching, balancing, toning, and as much aerobic exercise as you are fit to do, prepare your body for recovery and a better outcome. Keep your alcohol intake to one or two units at a time, and have booze free days, to allow tissue recovery and repair. Drink regular fresh, clean, tasty Fletton water, cold or hot. Eat fresh vegetables and fresh fruit. Keep meat and fish down to modest amounts. Remember that eggs are the most complete form of nutrition on Planet Earth and therefore in Fletton too. If you are vegetarian or vegan, I advise multi-vitamin, multi-mineral supplements to keep tissues healthy and avoid anaemia.

This way, you will be ready, when your turn on the waiting list arrives, and in terms of outcome from surgery, I am sure, Dear Fletton folk, you will be a cut above the rest.