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

“Doc’s Spoonful of Medicine”

#6. To get happiness at any cost, Fletton folk simply FOOT the bill.

Foot problems can cause a lot of unhappiness in life, from early childhood, having your verruca filed down before each treatment application, to the protracted pain of Plantar Fascitis and osteoarthritis in adult life. We need to give more love and attention to our feet during our lives, and never more so than during CoVid lockdown. After all, feet just put up with the rest of our bodies bearing down on them all the time. When one is running, skipping, or walking fast, nearly four times the force of standing still, goes through the foot that is planted on the ground. Feet are tough and generally uncomplaining, just a footnote, in the list of things we like about ourselves.

Feet need air. To reduce the occurrence of the itchy fungal infection known as “Athlete’s Foot”, it is a good habit to wash off the sweat, of being in shoes and socks for work or school, and leave the feet exposed, or in flip flops when you get home. We do not wear gloves indoors and it is not really necessary to wear socks, slippers, or shoes indoors, except when the weather is very cold. Even then, it is important that the toes have room to move and that the feet do not sweat in the socks or slippers. Fungus (you could say, “mould”) grows where there is heat and moisture.

So, interestingly, does the virus that causes “verrucae”. Children commonly pick these up at swimming pools. It is a good habit to soak the feet of youngsters in salty water, after swimming, and then to walk barefoot after drying them. The salt kills virus and fungus, and the fresh air deters their colonisation of the skin of the feet.

“Plantar Fascitis” is a painful condition resulting from a crack or tear of the ligament that runs under the bones of the foot from the heel to the ball, forming the string of the bow of the arch of the foot. The condition often starts innocuously, when the front of the foot is on a step or kerb, and the heel yanking down, stretches and tears the Plantar Ligament, which has become stiff with age or inactivity. The condition takes many months to resolve. Prevention by regular stretching of the heel, lifting the toes skywards and standing on tip toe, as well as massage of the sole of the foot, all go to keep the sole of the foot elastic and supple. This reduces the likelihood of tears and months of foot and heel pain. Rolling the sole of the foot on a small ball or rolling pin, is standard physiotherapy.

Talking of massage, it is hard to overstate the joy of foot massage, and the relaxation it induces. One can do it on one’s own foot or get someone else to give your foot some love. Why not agree to do it for each other, in your household? Beats trolling on Twitter, or dreading abuse on Insta!

Lifting your heels into tip toe, for a few repetitions, twice a day, is surprisingly effective at reducing the pain of arthritis in the foot and amazingly, also benefits low back pain, by helping to correct lumbar posture. “Pointing” on tip toe, in ballet and gymnastics, used to be part of the formula for giving a girl, good lady posture, and avoiding flat feet, as she grew up. Fletton folk do not see why boys should not do the same, so growing boys should also do tip toe exercises to look after their foot arches and their posture.

Shoes! Oh, Dear! Feet are triangular, wide at the toes and narrow at the heels, but we do like pointy shoes that crowd our toes and cause bunions and deviated toes. Try to wear wide shoes, Children of Fletton, and Teenagers of Fletton, please only wear “winkle pickers” for parties. Granny and Great-Granny wish triangular or square fronted shoes had caught on as fashion in their day. Bunion operations are very painful and totally avoidable. Good feet of Fletton, you will never walk alone! We are thinking of you!