“Laughter the best medicine comes in liquid form”.

“Doc’s Spoonful of Medicine”

#9. All those who love sunny Fletton, say EYE. EYE!!

I couldn’t help noticing the watering eyes of one smiling, kind, gentle Flettonian, on my walk. Eyes!! Although blind people are marvellous in their own right (“What’d I say?”, Ray Charles), eyes are so valuable that cataract surgery to restore vision to an eye with a fogged over lens, by exchanging it for a flexible artificial lens, is ranked as the topmost valuable health intervention provided by the NHS. Next comes total hip replacement, then total knee replacement, to relieve pain and restore walking. Sighted people take their eyes for granted until they give trouble, and only then do “the scales fall from their eyes” (meaning they are no longer deceived). Eyes tend to be out of sight and out of mind, till the mirror on the wall says, “who has the fairest eye of all?” after a late night, or “how many did you have?”

Many short-sighted people are unaware that the eyes muscles work harder to look at close things and they are more relaxed when looking in the distance. So, rest your eyes and preserve your distance vison longer, by looking out across the Fen fields, as if you are spying on what a Moscovite mama is offering the family for dinner, when those icy winds blow!

Conditions which make the eyes water, kind, gentle, smiling Flettonian, are trying to keep the eyes clean. Tears contain salt, water, antibodies, and ant-bacterial enzymes called “lysozymes”. Together they fight infection (viral as well as bacterial), but they also deal with irritants such as pollen (“hayfever eyes”), animal hair or saliva, dust, sand, and tiny insects. Did you know that when cats “lick-wash” themselves with saliva, toxic to germs on their hair and skin, it is more often the cat saliva as much as the hair that causes your allergic sneezing, runny eyes, itchy skin, and wheezing? With pet rats, it is actually their urine that makes your eyes water, and not just the vet’s bill! The excessive histamine released in the resulting allergic response, is the rationale for ant-histamines, as well as eye drops. Allergic, irritant, chemical and infective inflammation of the lining of the eye are all forms of “conjunctivitis” and the treatments are necessarily different, depending on the cause, but the eyes look similarly red and watery with pain, plus or minus itching.

Some people have a condition of the eyelid margins and eyelids called “blepharitis”. You will be surprised to know that running a thin film of Vaseline along your upper and lower lids, including the lid margins as often as you need to, but especially at bedtime, is very soothing for that itching, burning feeling, also reducing one trigger for the watering of the eyes.

An adult with pain inside the ball of the eye (“the globe”), rather than the surface, could have raised eye pressure and needs to see an optician, to have the pressure in the eyes measured, to spot “glaucoma”, which can cause early blindness. If one lives long enough, the wear and tear of the back of the eye, called “macular degeneration”, is a generally painless cause of gradual blindness. Detachment of the lining (“retina”) can cause sudden blindness, and often follows a blow to the eye. It requires urgent medical attention. We may not always see eye to eye, when the live bands play again, but we must continue to watch out for each other, Fletton-folk, till CoVid-19 is out of sight, as well as out of mind.