



## **May month celebrates Spring and much more . . .**

As a brief break from focusing on the current crisis did you know that the month of May is packed with about 80 National Days and Weeks celebrated in the UK and US? For example, **this week (May 20–27)** is **Noise Action Week**. Coordinated every year by Environmental Protection UK, it raises awareness of the cost of noise to the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals, both from outside but also inside the home from loud appliances such as hairdryers, alarms and vacuum cleaners. The American National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders in 2017 stated, “Long or repeated exposure to sound at or above 85 decibels (dB) can cause hearing loss.” A hairdryer emits about 95 dB, a lawn mower 110 dB, and levels at a rock concert are usually 100–120 dB. Loud noise over time can cause tinnitus, distorted hearing and hearing loss (which could be permanent). A study has shown that concert musicians are routinely exposed to noise levels of 90–95 dB, and that more than 27% of regular concert musicians develop hearing loss. Sounds at or below 70 dB are usually considered safe, even if they last a long time. Noises are more likely to damage your hearing if they are:

- 85 dB and last a few hours
- 100 dB and last at least 14 minutes
- 110 dB and last at least 2 minutes

but if the noise is not prolonged and if the person is not up close to the source, then hearing can recover.

May 25 is also **World National Towel Day**. Does that sound bizarre? Well, it is an annual holiday created to celebrate author Douglas Adams by his fans. Adams wrote the classic sci-fi novel, “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy.” It was organized in memory of him after he suffered a sudden heart attack at the age of 49. His fans wanted to find a way to commemorate his life’s work, and after having one towel day, its success made it a yearly event. Adams’ strongest phrase was “never go anywhere without your towel.” On this day, fans carry towels around everywhere they go. The editor doubts we will see OHSCA members out for their daily walks with towels round their necks, but then, who knows?

May is also traditionally the month for celebrating and advocating **local communities and local history**, Part of that celebration was **International Nurses Day on 12<sup>th</sup> May**.

Since the coronavirus crisis the vital role of nurses in intensive care units has dominated the news. Frontline nurses are trying to fight for safe staffing, equipment and fairer wages. COVID-19 has reminded us of the enormous contribution that nurses make and how much we rely on them for our health and wellbeing. In addition, the current Ecologist journal (<https://theecologist.org/>) insists that local, community-led testing and contact tracing must be built into an enhanced public health protection system, so that nurses and doctors and care workers are able to carry out their jobs effectively and safely, not just for COVID patients but for all of us who may need to go into hospital or who need medical care. It is sobering to read that Kent has the highest level of recorded cases in England. With 4,229 cases, it is the only upper tier local authority with more than 4,000, and is over 1,000 higher than second-placed Lancashire (3,191) as of 12<sup>th</sup> May. The government has started publishing numbers of cases where people tested positive by local tier local authority. Canterbury numbers are rising by about 1-1.5% a day — up from 400 on 7<sup>th</sup> May to 435 on 12<sup>th</sup>. There have been 220 deaths in total in the three hospitals in Canterbury, Ashford and Margate. (Information taken from the ‘Canterbury News CoronaVirus 12’ newsletter sent by the Canterbury Society. A reminder to those interested: to join the Canterbury Society please visit <https://www.canterburysociety.org.uk/>.)

Keep safe, stay well.