

## TT 13 Day 44 (Still worrying about the NHS)

My mate's owner is a well-known hypochondriac and spends a lot of time logging on to the internet to diagnose her latest ailment. Even she, I'm told, has realised that this is not the be-all and end-all after a search that used the key words 'liver disorders'. A website then appeared, and she was horrified to discover she was suffering seven out of eight of the primary symptoms. Then she came to the eighth and immediately felt better when she read, 'Feeling lethargic; no longer enjoys romping in the garden, wagging of tail and dinner with left-overs.' There's a lesson there for us all especially during this period of lockdown when even if we know that vets and doctors' surgeries are open for business as usual (with careful safeguards, naturally), we don't want to bother them with trivia. There are also still people who 'bother' 111 because they think they can't smell something before checking there is something to smell.

Talking of smells, dogs have the same five senses as humans do but I must admit that while some of ours are better, others are far worse. For example, my sense of smell is acute and is immeasurably better than that of humans - like about 100,000 times better than the Guvnor's. I'll leave the many areas in which my relatives are used to improve the human lot for another day but I must mention taste as it is really poor in comparison. If forced to live on their own, we dogs will eat almost anything without much discrimination and I suppose that is why we don't care one jot that our tea meal is the same every day.

Back to today and living with the crisis, we do need to keep a sense of humour and

even I had to chuckle when the Guvnor was extremely mocking about me the other day when we were on our daily walk by the river. I had been proudly marching along greeting people on the path pretending I didn't understand what 'social distancing' was all about, when a squirrel dropped out of a tree almost at my feet. I pounced on it at once and without much ado proceeded to despatch it. I carried it proudly up to the Guvnor and his wife and in order to prove to them that you don't have to be a Labrador or a Working Cocker, both of whom live with me, to retrieve game, I dropped it at his feet. "Well," he said to me: "I have heard of squirrels carrying a nut, but this is the first time I have seen a nut carrying a squirrel." Ha, blooming ha, I thought and gave him a withering look, or a 'hot stare' as Paddington Bear used to have it.

It wasn't over; he was then reminded of the squirrel lying on the psychiatrist's couch and saying, "It was only when I read that 'you are what you eat' that I realised I was nuts."

The country is thinking about ceasing the Thursday evening clap-ins for key workers and especially the NHS. Apparently, the thinking is that the point has been made and there is a danger of clapping for the wrong people. We will see, but for now we look forward to going out onto the pavement and looking up and down the street to see who else is out and about and, most importantly, that they are OK.

After all, 'Stay Alert (I can do that for twenty minutes at a time); Control the Virus (apparently dogs do not spread it); Save Lives (only Lassie can do that but I am willing to give it a go, if I have to). You can actually sum it all up with 'Keep Safe'.