



View from library.

Day one of diary. Friday 29th of June.

Not working today. This is the first day of the trial of the two weeks writing a diary for the OCA project. The idea is to use the notes you've taken as a diary as a basis of a piece of work about yourself and I think this can be quite complicated. Starting plan therefore to take the diary entries for two weeks and also I think try and take an image a day that says something about what I have been doing. This is going to be an interesting project as however many diaries I've tried to write over the years I've never managed to actually keep them going so I will have to see if I can even manage two weeks of this one. So what have done?

- Started by trying to work on assignment 2 on self portraiture, but other than starting my diary and pulling some books on relevant photographers from the shelves didn't get anywhere as couldn't concentrate.
- I went out for a walk with Nicky in the morning and we went to the comic shop where he bought another two new comics and then to the library for a quick lunch. I got a free portion of chicken kebabs to trial actually they were very nice but I ended up having to much to eat so couldn't finish it all.
- We also went for a drive with Nicky in charge of the car that's IQ it actually very well even though it was very busy, and he did struggle a bit with the clutch.
- In the evening I watched a film Conan, in the new version it was interesting lots of fighting and exotic accents however I could follow the story by simply watching looking up every few minutes, whether or not I would and get more from it if I watched again I'm not sure.

Summary of day didn't do really very much at all.

Positive thing about the day it's a rest day on the World Cup football so no football.

Negative thing: was trying to work on OCA stuff and no concentration.



Relaxing in garden with cat.

Day 2: Saturday 30th of June.

- Another very hot day, went shopping for food so not very exciting, planned to go out for a snack at lunchtime but no one seem to have any good gluten-free food that was worth eating so ended up coming home and had snacks here. I truly hate being gluten-free and I cannot understand why anyone does it as a lifestyle choice.
- Spent the afternoon sitting in the garden and not doing very much. Alice came home for tea and we had a barbecue. Weather is fabulous although not as hot as last week and temperature dropped quite suddenly when the sun left the garden. We had a general chat in the evening about work I can't get away from the subject when Alice is here, she does seem to be bitterly resentful of the salary the doctors versus the one that psychologists have, and she clearly feels that they have as much or more responsibility about major decisions and risk assessment.
- I read volume two of Saga, I can't quite make my mind up about comics they're expensive for the content, but I do enjoy them as a relaxation aid.

Reading is a major part of my life, if I can't find anything else I would read the back of the cornflakes packet at breakfast. Every room in our house is full of books and magazines. The shelves are full, there are heaps on the floor. I buy books endlessly and don't always get around to reading them for weeks, months or even years. I re-read books with just as much enjoyment as the first time. Fiction, crime, and science fiction mainly. Photography books, science especially evolution, philosophy and poetry. A reading omnivore and a reading addict.

Summary of day: visit from Alice

Positive thing: the weather was lovely, bright and sunny

Negative thing: coping with the argument about the roles of doctors versus psychologists.



Tea in The Dome

Day three Sunday, the 1st of July.

- Main event of today was going to Edinburgh by train and having afternoon tea with the people I work with. We went to The Dome on George Street. Generally, very pleasant, slight hiccup to begin with as the gluten-free menu said 'may contain wheat' but we eventually got that sorted out. General chitchat about families and the children are doing now. Managed to mainly keep off the work topics except for the occasional gripe about the management and the inevitable comments about staff shortages.
- Edinburgh is chaos with the rebuild around Saint James Centre and John Lewis is definitely downgraded as half of it is missing.
- I also took the opportunity to go and see the new camera I am thinking about but unfortunately John Lewis didn't have one in stock, so I'll need to try again on that. I don't really need but would like one. One or two minor gripes with my present one which would probably be fixable, but I did then be without a camera for ages.
- Train journey back irritating, everybody piled onto the Glenrothes train only to be told one minute before departure, but it was cancelled due to lack of staff! I moved onto the express train to Aberdeen and got off at Inverkeithing. The train was heaving, and we kept getting told that Scotrail tickets were not valid, although I have no idea how you could tell as the ticket is just a ticket, but the guard never made it along the train (probably couldn't have got through). Discovered my car has a flat tyre so probably will need a new one.
- Quiet evening with Indian curry carry-out, fish portion was cold.

Summary of day: busy Sunday with a good meal out

Positive aspects: meal worth work colleagues without (almost) talking about work!

Negative aspects: flat tyre.



Wheelchair swing

Day 4 Monday 2/7/ 18

- Main feature of today it is that it is my 24th wedding anniversary. William came home from work bearing a card, chocolate and flowers, we also went out for a meal at the Courthouse in Kinross. How do I think about this? Long-term partnerships definitely have the ups and downs, most of the time things go well but there are some spats and limitations, but it would certainly be abnormal if that wasn't the case. Overall positive life experience!
- I spent two hours getting the tyre sorted out other than that I really didn't do very much. Still struggling with concentrating in the heat.
- I had my hangout with Derek that will mostly be okay and I write that up separately.
- I also went for a walk with Nicky having a snack at the library and came back to the park where the new play centre is open (PALS) planned for young children and those with disabilities, lots of sensory toys and also a wheelchair swing. Interestingly (or inevitably) the children playing in the area had no obvious disabilities. Hopefully it will become a valuable asset to the kids it was meant for.

A long-term relationship can be difficult, you have to be aware of the other person's needs as well as your own. Sometimes I forget this, sometimes he forgets this as well. No-one is perfect even though when you start out you inevitably think that this will be the case. But – what is the alternative, being alone? A series of short partnerships? Both of those would have their own problems. One could be as tidy (or untidy) as you liked. More space. Less companionship. Less frustrating arguments over meals, more loneliness.

Summary of day: overall positive and some good memories

Positive: wedding anniversary

Negative: tyre (again)



Oma

Day 5 Tuesday 3/7/18

- Crisis start to the morning as I had forgotten that I was supposed to be at work, it's amazing how fast you can get ready if you really really have to. Clinic at the QMH mainly kids with FAS which has always a limited success rate, as very little seems to work.
- Took Nicky to see Oma in the p.m. she wasn't really in a happy mood with us, wanted the gold conifer outside the window cut back and couldn't / wouldn't understand that if that was done it would look hideous.
- In the evening we watched England on the TV football came they won but it didn't make the day any more amusing.
- I had planned to go into Edinburgh but that didn't happen. (Mainly because I was working instead)

Finding I am getting very frustrated with Oma, mostly because whatever we try and do she seems to be negative about it. I guess the problem is she is bored and fed up and we are the easiest people to moan to/at. Being old and not being able to do much must be very frustrating for her, but everything we suggest is a bad idea. She wants people to talk to, but then all she wants to do is moan and complain about everyone – so that is difficult. I dread getting old at times. I am impatient even now – so think I would be a nightmare if I couldn't do things or be active.

Summary of day: rushing around constantly

Positive: nothing very obvious

Negative: argument with Oma and failure to do planned trip.



The start of a shawl

Day 6 Wednesday 4/7/18

- Work all day in Whyteman's Brae, paperwork in the morning and clinic in the afternoon. Today was learning disability day, again little success rate. One of the parents was very aggressive towards the reception staff and another child got very negative about the idea of not seeing me again (I guess that is the type of flattery) and it was funny as he kept pointing at me and saying "stay" and Jo (new doctor) and saying "go". I guess I've been part of his life since he was a baby.
- Actually retiring is part good and part bad, I need the time and I'm very tired, but I will really miss the kids. More time for stuff I am interested in maybe! Possibly I will actually finish that shawl!

Its an odd situation being between the finish and the start of something. Sometimes I am desperate for the work to finish, other times I don't want that to happen. It might be better if there was a definite plan – but the continued extensions of part time work are hard to manage. I have loads of plans for when I have more personal time, spending more time on the photography stuff, catching up on my seemingly endless piles of knitting, reading my backlog and then thinking about doing some volunteering either with an autism charity or possibly with the children's panel. It's hard to plan when you don't have a definite scale.

Summary: odd day, with a lot of depressing thoughts

Positive – may be the child's thoughts about change

Negative – exactly the same thing!



Shan

Day 7 Thursday 5/7/18

- Another exciting day at work this time in QMH. I'm doing FAST, morning case was interesting although it would be to have been helpful if the anxiety issues have been treated before seeing her for assessment instead of which were going to have to see her again, the afternoon case it was very easy obviously not ASD, probably a mild language problem and not very bright and may well have ADHD when old enough to diagnose.
- As usual very tired after FAST and didn't really do very much of the evening.
- Spent some time chatting to Shan who is as usual very frustrated at present. Shan has been a friend / work colleague for more than 20 years and is one of the few people I will miss when I finish work. I actually wonder how much longer she will continue herself.

I find I tend to be a solitary person and am getting more so as I get older. Family is important. But I am finding it increasingly difficult to find people that I enjoy talking to. I spend most of my day at work listening to people's woes and life stories so don't want to do that when I get home. I seem to struggle with meeting people who are at all interested in the things I enjoy. I have tried to join a knitting group (all female, and only talked about wool – Ok I like knitting, but there is only so much knit stuff to say). A local photographic club (all male – and mostly wanted to talk about their cameras and the size of their lenses!). A reading circle – that was fun but found I couldn't get there regularly because of work overrunning. Clearly I am too fussy. Most of my friends from earlier have moved away – so that is part of the issue.

Summary – work, work and more work

Positive: I do enjoy doing the ASD assessments at FAST

Negative: tiredness



A very hot car

Day 8 Friday 6/7/18

- Drove to Edinburgh to look at camera, like and want it so ordered it and won't get it until Monday as much cheaper via John Lewis and will need to be ordered in. The traffic was horrendous, so many roadworks in every possible route taking about twice as long as usual for the drive in and out.
- Went to the Oriental supermarket and bought some basic supplies, no point getting frozen stuff as it would have defrosted in the car.
- Another quiet evening, concentration for doing anything to do with OCA is very poor at present, not sure why I've been blaming the heat. TV continues to be the World Cup. Roll on the end of it. House is a mess, but I haven't got the energy to tidy it up at present.

Typical day really, although I went out I felt that by the end of the day I hadn't really done anything at all. Driving gets more and more stressful because of the traffic, although with my recent luck with trains that is just about as bad. I think its partly the endless circularity of life. Even with the new camera and planning for it. I tried to see it, out of stock. Went back and saw it but now have to order it to keep the cost as low as possible. In and out, round about.

Summary: Day doing practical things

Positive: ordered camera

Negative: spent a lot of money!



My favourite summer flowers

Day 9 Saturday 7/7/18

- Did Saturday type things, some pottering around in the garden, went food shopping to Marks & Spencers and Tesco and again watched England play in the World Cup quarter-finals. Its odd that although William would say that he doesn't like football at all he has been keen to watch as many matches as possible.
- I seem to be spending a lot of time pottering on the iPad present, still no energy for OCA also no energy for knitting or writing. Hot weather is all very well when you're on holiday, but it does seem to leave me very frustrated at home, typical British though, we complain about the hot weather and we complain when it's cold, we complain when it's raining, and we complain when there isn't any rain.

You would think that at a weekend one would be doing things, going out, meeting people, having a party – but no – really just seem to spend the time catching up with the practical things of life, washing, cleaning, shopping. Occasionally doing some gardening. My garden never seems to get enough work done on it at present. It's constantly untidy, another thing that I hope to spend more time on when I do finish work.

Summary – a day weekend day

Positive: the weather is lovely

Negative: football, football and more football



Nicky and Oma out walking

Day 10 Sunday 8/7/81

- Did even less today. Went to visit Oma, who was her normal self, grumpy and not very communicative. Nicky and I took her out for a short stroll in the wheelchair, short because she didn't want to stay out said it was hurting her back and legs not altogether sure how.
- Other than again pottering around in the house that was the sum total of the day. Oh, I forgot we also went to Asda, very exciting. Didn't even really watch TV or read much.
- I've started taking some notes for the next OCA exercise on Sally Mann. Do I like her work? initially that was no but to be honest it has grown on me. I am not altogether sure about the pictures of the children, naive or suggestive it is the old argument about whether it is the person who takes the image or the one who looks at it that makes the choice on which side of the line it falls.

It's been good to try and get back into the flow of working at the OCA stuff. I have been getting very angry with myself for not doing it, and making all sorts of excuses, which is fairly pointless. Eventually I just sat down and started reading and taking notes, that's the only thing that works for me. Even if the initial notes are fairly pointless when I then leave it overnight my brain seems to have done something and it all makes more sense, although writing a piece of work in my head at 0300 can be problematic!

Summary – a nothing much sort of Sunday

Positive: started back on OCA work

Negative: Oma – difficult to know how much of the complaints are real



View from the bridge

Day 11 Monday 9/7/18

- Went across to Edinburgh today by train
- went to Apple who looked at my iPad and said it was okay the crack in the screen cover not the screen
- then went shopping for food at M&S
- had coffee and cake at Valvona and Crolla's in Jenners, bought some new make up
- drunk chocolate and bought chocs for William at Hotel Chocolat, expensive but some of the best ones around short of going to our favourite place in Castle Douglas
- eventually went to John Lewis to collect my camera. This was by far the most exciting part of my day, handed in a very ancient and cheap digital camera for the £200 refund
- went back to the railway station to have problems with the trains again something to do with a problem on the lines is it to do with the heat so eventually came home by bus

Shopping day was very unusual for me and at that a girly shopping day (make up and chocolate) but also tech and geek with the iPod and camera. Best bit definitely collecting the camera although that caused a degree of confusion because the place you collect it from didn't know about the trading in offer.

Summary – shopping

Positive: bought camera

Negative; chaos on trains and bus ride back (although since I have my old age pass it was at least free).



Experimenting

Day 12 Tuesday 10/7/18

- Spent day playing with new toy, reading the guidebook, charging the batteries, putting everything together then got ready to play and take some pictures.
- Went down to the Glen, weather not very exciting, generally cloudy but loads of flowers out in the park and that's always a good thing to play with for both distance and close-up shots, then came back for Abbey and tried some pictures inside.
- Worked out how to get the Bluetooth working and download the sample batch directly to iPad. Very pleased with that. Picture is beautifully sharp and very punchy, definitely a step up from last time. Even William could see the difference and admitted it. Not sure how much is that due to the improved processor that is in the camera or to the new lens, probably actually a mixture of both.
- Ok, it was an expensive and probably not essential toy, but I am having fun, and it was a combination of birthday and wedding presents.

I have always been a bit of a tech geek – but can't keep up with either the modern technology (too expensive) or with all the new systems that are out there. Oddly enough, in spite of that I am not at all involved in social media. I have a Facebook account but really only use it to keep up with some OCA groups. I use Instagram rarely, and don't really use any of the others. I am not at all convinced about the value of 'putting myself out there' or having a social presence. Too much of a private person.

Summary - day on the camera

Positive: really had fun

Negative: nothing



Paperwork

Day 13 Wednesday 11/7/18

- Workday, reasonable clinic in the morning but spent the entire afternoon attempting to sort out the chaos of the lack of anything resembling a regular list. It's positively scary when you look at how many patients are 18 months overdue and I do not want to be blamed for it when something inevitably goes wrong.
- This evening was the England semi-final football which they lost oh. Oh dear I think actually they look totally exhausted.

I've worked in the same part of the world for 25 years, in theory doing much the same job. But it has changed enormously. When I started there were 20 of us doing less work. Now there are less than half the people and we are doing much more complex work. There is less support and more chaos. Computers are supposed to make things easier, but the technology has not caught up with the work and in practice we are always about 3 generations behind the latest technologies and the paperless desk is just a dream. All you hear on the news is that the NHS is a mess, and we need to do more work to make sure people get seen. Problem is – there simply are not enough people out there to do the work. Its not all about money, but about an increasing population with increasing expectations.

Summary – a very frustrating day at work

Positive: I still have a job

Negative: frequently I wish I didn't



A simple garden image.

Day 14 Thursday 21/7/18

- Another workday, yet more sorting out the list of patients. It's not really something I should be doing but absolutely needs to be done.
- Afternoon spent doing on the under 3 assessments at Gordon Cottage, that was more enjoyable and also something I should be spending my time on. Have put two clinics together so now booked until the end of July, will see how these clinics go and see how many of the very delayed parents actually turn up.
- A quiet evening at home. Pottering in the garden, not doing much at all.

Work becomes very repetitive at times. The kids make it worthwhile! The parents sometimes make it worthwhile and the paperwork is endless. Am I doing anything useful? Sometimes I wonder. We spend hours assessing the problems, explaining what is going on, telling people that their lives will never be the same again, that their future will not be as expected. And then they ask us for help – and there isn't any! At least none that I can give, and rarely any resources for anyone else to give it either.

Summary – another fine day in the chaos of modern-day medicine

Positive: the weather is lovely

Negative: 2 more parents lives turned upside down

So – that's the end of 2 weeks of diary entries. How do I feel about it? I don't seem to do anything much that's different to talk about. Round and round in the same circles. Mostly working, coming home and then tired and restless. On reading it over I seem to be a very negative person! I often struggled to find any specific positive thing about the day (I deliberately added that in to force myself into thinking about it). In reality although most of my day to day life is fairly banal I am actually content with it and settled in it. I don't need change. Occasionally its good to make me think but also repetition is comforting.