

TONY BRAND

Wildlife flourishes under lockdown

This lovely picture of a baby squirrel was taken by Tony Brand who came across it whilst walking in Northway Gardens. It was young (or fearless) enough to accept the nut that Tony offered.

Kashmiri goats have been roaming the streets of Llandudno eating hedges and flowers, whilst in central London the sound of birds is now audible and if a nightingale decided to sing in Berkeley Square you would probably hear it. This is almost like the beginning of a Disney film but, in reality, it is the

result of lockdown. Two weeks after the nationwide lockdown was implemented the Nitrogen Dioxide levels in some cities fell by as much as 60% compared to the same period in 2019.

In a sense we are conducting the largest ever global air pollution

experiment. Just walk around the Suburb to see how it is working.

Enjoy the lack of cars, feel the butterflies fluttering around you and admire the spectacular wisterias. You may even encounter a bold little squirrel.

MARIE-CHRISTINE O'CALLAGHAN

Contending with Covid

*Oh what fun it is to be a lady over 70!
Or perhaps some decades on: you wonder where the years have gone.
Living now is not much fun so I'm waiting for the sun
To shine benignly on us. We cannot catch the H2 bus
Which regularly passes by, but few passengers do I spy
How long will all this last? I wonder, as all our plans are cast asunder.*

*Inside the house we eat and sleep and tidy up and try to keep
The rooms in some degree of order, because we cannot now afford a
Cleaning lady coming in, as we don't know where she's been
To other houses, and by bus – we know this is not good for us.*

*A new vocabulary has come to teach us, (as we are so dumb
And maybe deaf too, now we're old). Listen well to what we're told.
Coronavirus is the King, evil and most worrying.
Lockdown is another word that never before has been heard.
Social distance is quite new, which means to keep away from you.
Self-isolate's another phrase – you have to live alone for days.*

*So one way to survive, I think, is to forget this nasty link
And look upon the bright side.
It makes you miserable to fear you might pick up this illness here
Let wisdom be your guide.*

*This virus has been very kind to leave the winter far behind
And settle down in spring.
'tis so well-timed the plants have climbed
As fast as anything.*

*Look at the trees – the blossoms here add scent into the atmosphere.
My greengage tree is clothed in white, to watch it is a pure delight.
But if there is a night-time frost, it will all die – the crop is lost.*

*Nature is a wondrous cure for any fear you might endure.
But best of all are singing birds – I wish I understood their words -
Who sing all day, at dusk and dawn from highest boughs or on the lawn.
And if you walk along our streets you'll now hear the birds' trills and tweets.*

*So now that we have so much time, make sure you spend it well -
Take up new skills, phone up your friends. Improve your sense of smell
For now the air is petrol free, much healthier in future will we be!*

Judith Samson



Nightingale

Arif's Pakora parcels

A pakora is a fried snack originating from the Indian subcontinent where it is served in restaurants and sold by street vendors.

But recently it made a very welcome appearance in the Suburb when one of our residents, Arif Hussein, made a batch and kindly offered to deliver them (twice!) to Suburb residents.

The pakoras were greatly appreciated and here is just a sample of the reactions from several grateful recipients:

- Thank you SOOOO much, Arif. I couldn't wait to eat them and they were utterly delicious.
- We can thoroughly recommend your absolutely delicious pakoras. The whole venture is a magnificent

show of solidarity and wonderful community spirit.

• I am sure your pakoras have brightened the day for so many of us in HGS. Thanks again for your time and generosity.

Another wonderful example of HGS community spirit.



David Cronshaw on the lockdown

In all this gloom, I am trying to focus on the positive.

My partially disabled wife, on her little buggy, and I went out on Hampstead Heath yesterday in the sunshine by the Highgate Ponds and around and onto the top of Parliament Hill. Considerable avian activity on the ponds – signs of spring!

In our garden, daffodils predominate but other flowers are appearing. Bird feeders diminishing rapidly – all types of Tits, Chaffinch, Robins, Blackbirds (one distinctive one with a single pure white tail-feather resident for several

months now), Woodpeckers and two Pigeons hovering up the bits falling/knocked from the feeders. These pigeons are quite protective of their 'territory' as they raise themselves to full stretch to drive away the Magpies – but not the occasional Crows!

We do watch TV a lot but do not subscribe to Sky, Netflix, Amazon, Disney or BT – we just haven't got the time. Yes, I use the Internet and have a smartphone but I also have some 'real' books still unread after, in a couple of cases, several months ownership. Time to catch up!

DAVID CRONSHAW

History repeats itself

The Spanish flu started in January 1918. It was the British Medical Journal that first referred to it as the 'Spanish flu' because it was originally reported in Spain. During the Great War, Spain was neutral and did not censor its press. The UK, France and the US – all of which had the Spanish flu before Spain – kept it out of the newspapers to avoid damaging morale. Spain was offended by the slander and named it the 'Naples soldier'. The German army called it 'Blitzkatarrh' (lightening catarrh)

while the British troops referred to it as 'Flanders gripe'.

Scientists are still debating the origins of the Spanish flu. One recent study suggested it originated in China. Others concluded that its epicentre was a military camp either in Kansas or Northern France. It has been claimed by some that mustard gas and battlefield fumes were responsible, while others maintained that it was a German biological weapon.

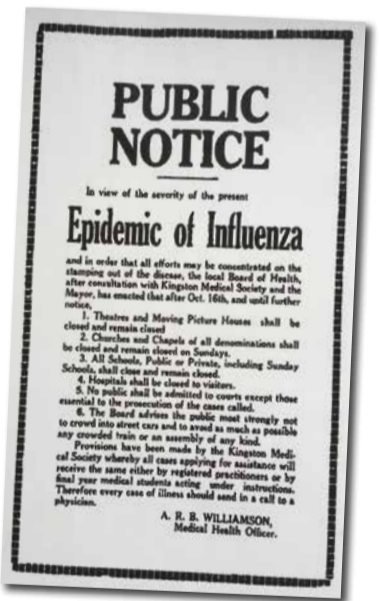
Whatever its origins, there is little doubt that a large factor in its worldwide occurrence was increased travel, with soldiers returning home after the war. Another was the authorities' reluctance to acknowledge the

true extent of the problem. The press declared it 'was not a matter for alarm'. The Times even suggesting the illness was probably a result of 'the general weakness of nerve-power known as war-weariness'. This attitude left the door wide open for quack remedies such as eating raw onions to keep 'the dreaded scourge at bay' or Dr Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People and even led doctors in Manchester to prescribe an age-old tonic: whisky.

In San Francisco, however, the city mayor made masks mandatory in public. Songs were written about mask wearing featuring lyrics such as *Obey the laws, and wear the gauze. Protect your jaws from septic paws.*

It is estimated that about 500 million people became infected with Spanish flu – one third of the world's then population. One hundred years on there are many similarities with how various governments and the public are dealing with COVID-19, the biggest pandemic since the Spanish flu. The Spanish flu eventually did end and it is, of course, a great comfort to know we are in a much better place than we were then. For a start, here in the UK, we have a much better health care system – which is why we choose to applaud our NHS.

MARIE-CHRISTINE O'CALLAGHAN



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Welcome to St Jude's

St Jude's is closed for public worship at present. We are recording and streaming a limited number of services online. Please sign up for our newsletter at info@stjudeonthehill.com and follow us on Twitter @stjudeonthehill.com.

Alan Walker
Vicar

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