

Extract from "A Life Altered" A blog by Bobby Cadwallader

Saturday 4th April 2020

Day 13 of the lockdown. I woke feeling as if I'd drunk a bottle of wine whereas in reality I haven't had any alcohol since New Year. My shoulder was still aching from yesterday's Body Combat but, after an inner personal struggle, I forced myself to get up. An improvement on one or two of the previous days. I remembered, with some satisfaction, that I did not have to brave the "one in one out" system at Tesco today. Thankfully I completed that task yesterday. I certainly couldn't cope with that ritual more than once a week!

I managed both ballet barre and body balance this morning. Thank goodness for Les Mills. A sunshine walk over the fields restored my spirits further. We only encountered two selfish people today. Dog walkers who just hung around the stile, oblivious of our need to pass. Let's hope Matt Hancock doesn't ban outdoor exercise because of folk like these. Our routes are really isolated so we don't see too many people, although we no longer walk the canal paths because they are too narrow to support social distancing. I am increasingly grateful to live in Bierton. I so appreciate the countryside we can just step into: beautiful open fields and a network of public rights of way.

My day improved further when I was able to view my 99 year old mum, courtesy of my brother's phone, on Whatsapp. Seeing her face to face was a comfort. I am still very worried about her, as she only sees her carer once a day at 8.30am for 30 minutes. She sees no one else unless my brother pops in, which, fortunately, he does at least 3 times a week. I am two hours away and would be rule breaking if I travelled that distance. Besides, my husband is in a vulnerable group so I wouldn't take that risk. Nevertheless, I feel so torn and guilty. With severe macular degeneration she relies on the radio and listening books for entertainment. On a positive note she did tell me how much her poetry is sustaining her. I am inclined to agree. "Loveliest of trees" seems to have a greater resonance for me this Spring. Although I should be even more wistful than the twenty year old Housman since I am rapidly approaching my threescore years and ten!

Later in the afternoon we played the board game Carcassonne on Skype with my grandchildren in California. Such fun. Why have we never done something like this before? It beats the ordinary Skype call hands down for engagement and social intercourse, despite the fact we were beaten hollow by our 11 year old grandson! Let's hope we have started a new custom.

In the evening we decided to create our own "night out" at home. We dressed up for a three course meal, with wine, the first glass of the year, and then "went to the National Theatre" to watch "One man two guvnors." Such a riot. How we laughed. James Corden is a true comic and the rest of the cast weren't too shabby either. We even enjoyed an ice cream in the interval.

Getting ready for bed, we agreed that the 13th day had proved to be much better than it augured.