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FRESH IDEAS FOR MAKING EVERY DAY EASIER



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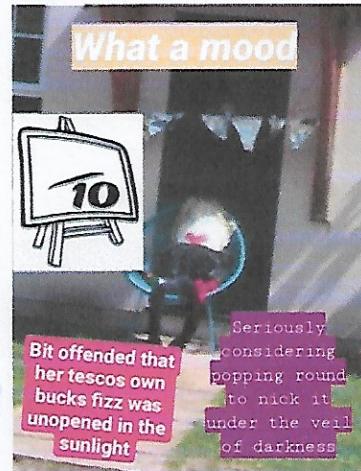
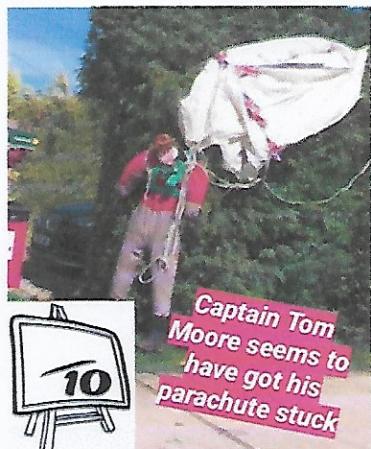
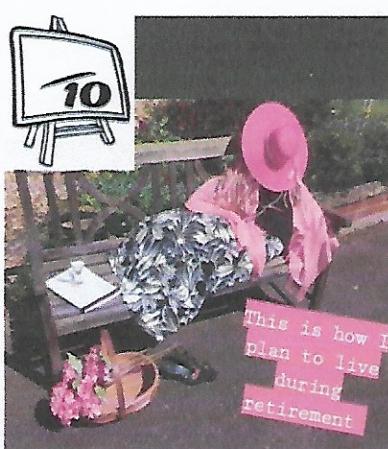
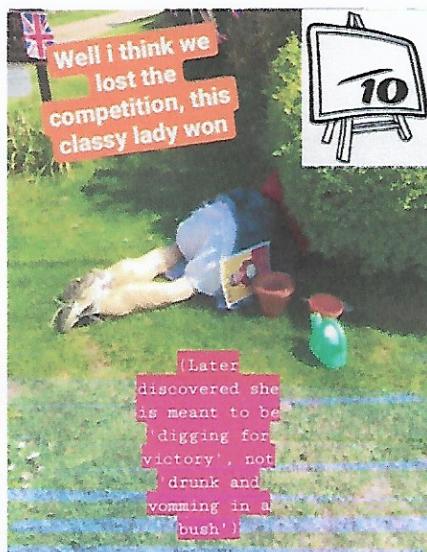
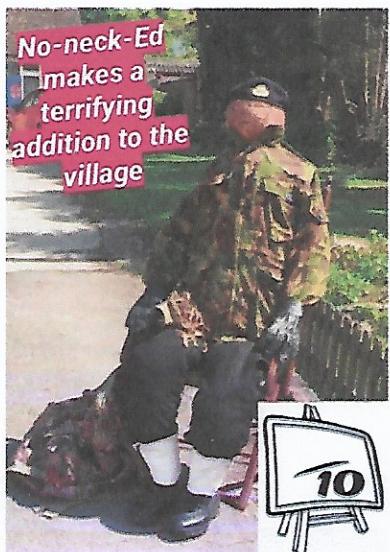
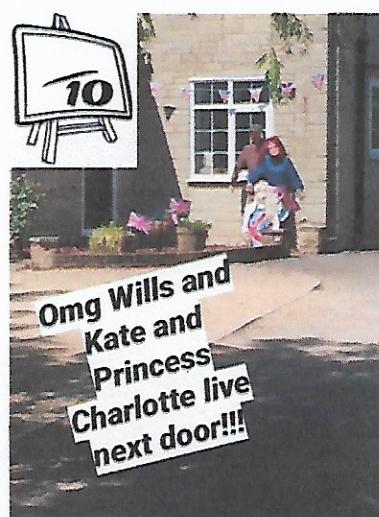


HOW TO MARK A NATIONAL HOLIDAY, ft. SCARECROWS

By Genevieve Tomes

VE DAY
75TH
ANNIVERSARY
1945-2020

With the 75th Anniversary of VE Day taking place on Friday 8th May, many were stumped as to how we could mark the significant occasion without flouting the government lockdown regulations. The village of Wendlebury, Oxfordshire, managed to celebrate the day with great success – including scarecrow making and front garden tea parties (in own houses, of course – no fraternising with the neighbours). On my daily allotted hour-long walk, I managed to photograph some of Wendlebury's winning scarecrows. Why not score them yourselves?



* ALL COMMENTS ARE, OF COURSE,
MEANT IN JEST.

Judy Darby fleshes out Bernard Manning Browning, a First World War soldier who, until recently, remained a mysterious name on a church plaque.

Having just celebrated the 75th anniversary of VE Day – and perhaps, in the light of the pandemic, with a little more empathy towards those who lived through the First and Second world war – the story of Bernard Manning Browning seems that much more pertinent.

Who was ... Bernard Manning Browning?

By Judy Darby

Bernard Manning Browning died on 3rd October 1918 at the Battle of Beaurevoir. Why is he commemorated on an ornate plaque in St Andrew's Church, Harlestone? I have asked myself this question many times during the 25 years I have attended the church. He was a soldier in the Australian 28th Infantry Battalion.

A genealogist friend, Viv Benjamin, helped me to answer that question. The first fact that she uncovered was that he had lived in my house in Upper Harlestone 100 years before me. This made me feel that I had a special duty to uncover his story and give him 5 minutes of fame.

Bernard and his cousin Charlie, both farmers' sons, aged 20, went to New Zealand in 1908 to work on a relative's farm. Finding it too cold and wet, they decided to move on to Western Australia where land was being opened up for farming. They took 1000 acres each in a place now called Kondanin, near Fremantle.

In 1912 Bernard returned to England to ask his 2nd cousin, Phyllis, to marry him. Her father said *no way* was his daughter going so far away, so they eloped. He had just enough money to pay for Phil's ticket, but had to work his own passage as a steward. When they arrived in Fremantle, Phil was 4 months pregnant, so they went straight to a church to get married. Sadly, the baby was stillborn in 1913.

When war broke out in Europe, cousin Charlie enlisted in the 10th Light Horse Brigade. He lost an eye at Gallipoli and was sent to the UK



for treatment, not arriving back in Australia until the end of 1916. Very belatedly, Bernard decided to do his bit and enlisted too. He arrived in France in March 1918 but didn't see any battle until the end of September of that year.

Bernard was killed on his first day on the battlefield at Beaurevoir. This was also the last battle than an Australian Regiment was involved in. His body is buried at Mt. St Martin Cemetery.

He left behind his widow Phyllis and two children, Frank aged four and Joan aged one.

In 1919, Phyllis married no other than cousin Charlie, and had four more boys with him; one of whom is still alive in his nineties. The family descendants, still in Kondanin, were delighted to receive photographs of Harlestone from us, though a little disappointed to find that they were not descended from wealthy landowners, but tenant farmers of Earl Spencer.

I hope you like this little local story.

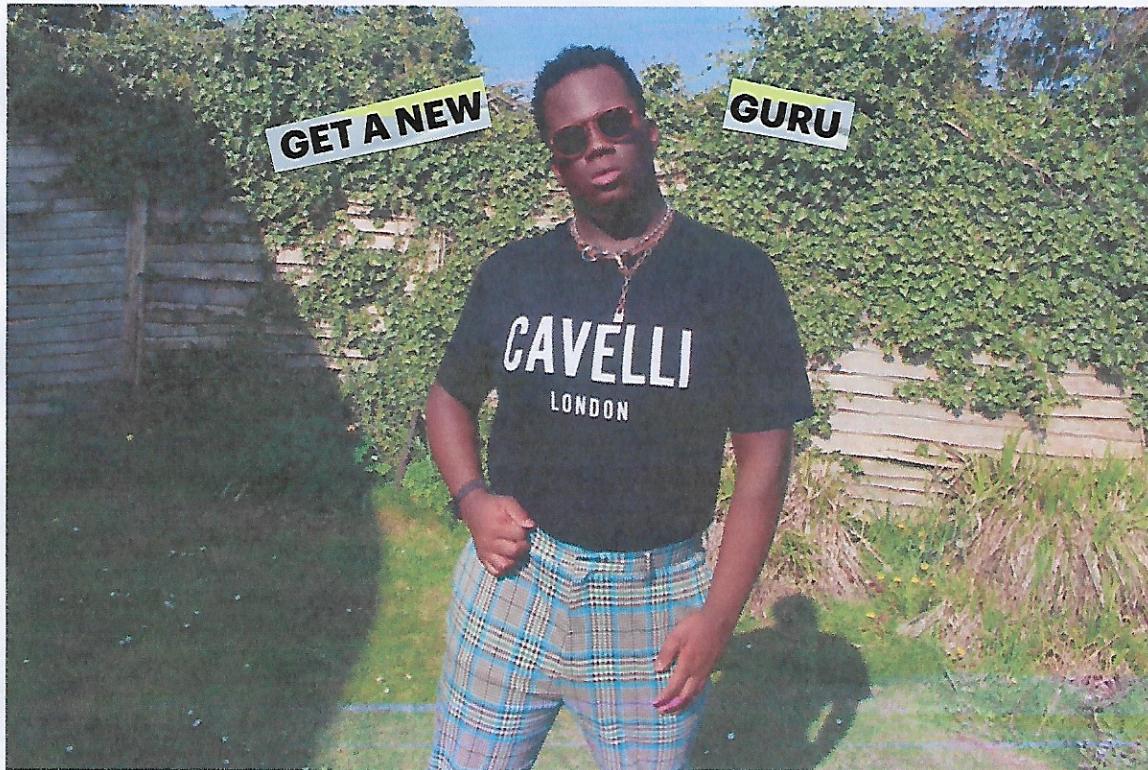


HOME STYLE

THE ULTIMATE WORKING-FROM-HOME FASHION GUIDE



Darius 'VictoryForU' Smith provides tips on how to get through lockdown in true style...



It is safe to say that working from home fashion can be a little bit boring and drab. The same jogger set for six+ weeks will not do. Here are some comfortable yet fashionable options that will keep you looking cute around the house and on your weekly shopping trips during this strange time.

1. Change your thoughts on dressing up

Finding the drive to get up and do things can actually be helped by wearing a nice outfit. If you "dress for success" every day, that is what will come to you, right? Harvard Business School research has shown that dressing with a non-conformist attitude in a way that you feel comfortable in will help others to see you in a more positive light in business. The same applies for yourself at home with your productivity: if you dress to impress yourself, you will then be more productive because you look and feel great. Don't be afraid to play around with accessories that are intriguing. Despite having to social distance, they can be a great conversation starter.





2. Make your excursions an event

If you want to stay in your pyjamas or joggers at home, when you are leaving the house, try to make some effort with your clothes.

Whether you are going on a walk, heading to the shops, or picking up medication, an outfit change can really change your mood. As you start beginning to view trips out like events, your relationship with clothing will morph into a healthy want to look good. From the simplicity of double denim to a t-shirt and trousers combination, the possibilities are easy and endless.

Denim will feel so weird after being in joggers for so long, but I promise that this little change will give you a little confidence boost. Try and find a pair of stretch jeans so that it came remain looking great despite any weight you may have lost or gained. Stick to whichever fit you prefer – skinny, slim or boot cut - but avoid really baggy jeans. Unless you are going for the whole Billie Eilish vibe, I would always suggest staying away from the baggy jeans to keep your figure looking like its actual size.

You can even try a double denim look. This requires minimum effort for maximum rewards. Even some dungarees can switch up your look, simple pair with a nice t-shirt and you are good to go.



3. Don't be too hard on yourself

As Jess Glynne says, "Don't be so hard on yourself!" If you have a day where you only wear sweats and do not get out of your pyjamas, it is okay. As long as you are safe, happy and healthy, that is all that matters at the end of the day. Dressing up does not need to be anything difficult or strenuous - just find your happy medium and, most importantly, love yourself whilst doing it.



Whether you choose to stay comfy or branch out with your clothes, always do it with style.

For any other style tips, please check out my website, <https://victoryforu.co.uk/>, or find me on Instagram: @victoriusdarius

Hey, OK... it's



Lesson Complete! 10 XP

You're on a 24 day streak!

Excellent! Remember, at
30 days you get to see
your family again!



Lesson One: France

'Faut pas pousser mémé
dans les orties'

LITERALLY: 'Do not toss Granny
in the nettles'

FIGURATIVELY: 'Don't overreact'

Contributed by: Quentin Birot

Lesson three: Hungary

'Lila gózöm sincs'

LITERALLY: 'I have no
purple steam'

FIGURATIVELY: 'I have no
ideal'

Contributed by: Vera Bolton

To NOT Learn French

How many of us planned to spend our lockdown learning a new language? Maybe the terrifying Duolingo owl has collectively brainwashed the nation into believing that the only valid use of a national 'time-out' is to better ourselves by becoming bilingual (easiest achieved via YouTube, self-motivation and old reruns of 'Allo Allo', naturally.) However, we don't all need to feel guilty for not using a time of national trauma to better ourselves.

We've compiled a list instead of our favourite phrases in different languages. If nothing else, they're sure to make you chuckle (and give you something to tell Granny if she asks you what you've been doing with yourself...)

LESSON TWO: Japan

'Hana Yori Dango' (花より団子)

LITERALLY: 'Dumplings over flowers'

FIGURATIVELY: 'Prize practical things over aesthetic things!'

Contributed by:

Nikki Watson

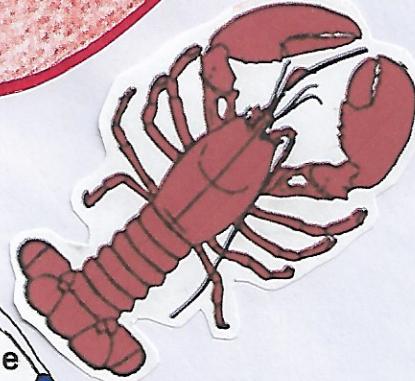


Contributed by:
Joanna Volchek

lesson four: RUSSIA

когда
рак на горе
свистнет

LITERALLY: 'when a
lobster whistles on top of
a mountain'



FIGURATIVELY: 'It's never going to happen'

LESSON FIVE:

Turkey

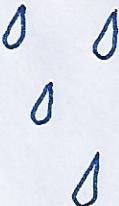


'Allah akıl dağıtırkken
sen şemsiye mi tuttun?'

LITERALLY: 'Did you open an
umbrella while God was giving
out brains?'

Contributed by:
Bryony Warwick

FIGURATIVELY:
'You're stupid...'



lesson eight: CHINA



'Chén yú luò yàn'

LITERALLY: 'Fish sink and
geese fall'

FIGURATIVELY: 'Your
beauty is
legendary'

Contributed by: Veronica McEnery



Lesson ten: Ireland

'Tá mé ar mhuin na
mhuiice'

LITERALLY: 'I'm on the pig's
back'

FIGURATIVELY: 'I'm really
happy'

The response to this section was overwhelming! If your contribution hasn't been
featured this time, we will be printing it in our next issue. Thank you all!

lesson six: GERMANY

'Kummerspeck'

LITERALLY: 'Grief Bacon'

FIGURATIVELY: It's a word to
describe the weight gained
from comfort eating!

pg. 6

Contributed by:
Saskia Leach



LESSON SEVEN: SPAIN*

'Tu eres mi media naranja'

LITERALLY: 'You are my half orange'

FIGURATIVELY: 'You are my other half'

* Spanish speaking countries such as Ecuador and Colombia also use this phrase.

Contributed Anonymously

LESSON NINE: Norway

'ikke gå rundt grøten'

LITERALLY: 'Don't walk around
the porridge.'

FIGURATIVELY: 'Say what you
need to / Don't hesitate'

Contributed by:
Kamille Kaufman Soltau

Contributed by: Alessandre Guccione

lesson Eleven: Italy*

'Chistu passa 'u conventu'

LITERALLY: 'This is what the convent
has to offer'

FIGURATIVELY: 'There's nothing else/
no other choice!'

* Sicilian region

there and back again...

by Ellen Pitman

When I left for a six-month travelling stint with my boyfriend in early February, I never imagined we would be forced home after only two months. However, it has come to light how incredibly lucky we have been to experience these countries in such strange, abnormal times. When we left England, there were only a small number of COVID-19 cases in some countries other than China. We were on our way to Thailand, which had around 50 cases and at the time seemed a worrying figure. Looking back, it really wasn't all that perilous.



We wandered around Bangkok with our face masks donned and entered the grand palace with a queue much smaller than what we had prepared for. It was like getting a free fast-track pass to all the main attractions. Singapore especially was our favourite destination, the country's cleanliness soothing our nerves after the grubbiness of Thailand and Malaysia.

Next came Australia. We entered the country only five days before the border was closed to all foreign nationals. We were still managing to outrun the virus, which by this point COVID was becoming increasingly prevalent back home. We spent a week in Cairns at a party hostel, which,

whilst not really being our thing, was the cheapest option. We shared outdoor cold showers and toilets with other travellers, alongside a communal kitchen beside a burger bar. We sat on benches on our first night, ironically sipping two bottles of Corona and eating burgers amongst about 40 other backpackers. We were becoming more aware that this communal living was a risk, but there was nowhere else for us to go that didn't cost a fortune. We took tours to see the Great Barrier Reef and Fraser Island, and at both locations the guides joked that we were clearly all here for the long haul. Our animated Aussie tour driver on Fraser shook our hands as we left, a couple of days before social distancing came into effect. We then began our three-week road trip in our hired campervan. Bars, restaurants and shops shut, tours closed, and inevitably even campsites began to turn us away.



Whilst life in Australia was still rather tranquil, the news alerted us each day that the UK was not in such a fortunate position. We contacted the British Consulate afraid that the borders would close, but to no avail. They could not issue any advice or help, and we were told to check the website for updates, by which point it would most likely be too late. Although we had 12 month

working visas, jobs were scarce, and our money would run out eventually. We tried to continue our travels without worrying too much and wound up spending my birthday in our van on the second day of lockdown. We went out for a long walk to the beach for daily exercise and managed to snag some fish and chips from a takeaway en route. My Australian godparents sang me happy birthday over the phone, and we made plans to stay with them after we dropped our campervan off. The best birthday present had to be seeing a koala grappling a low-hanging branch, a rare sight apparently - perhaps due to the quiet roads.



The next morning, we were woken up by a call from my parents. The Australian PM had ordered all foreign travellers without jobs to return home, due to large amounts of backpackers partying in hostels and on beaches. We were devastated; we had been so careful to keep to ourselves and avoid others on what was supposed to be a trip where we would make friends and have fun without the crushing responsibility that came with the start of our adult lives. We were suddenly thrown into a panic. We had to find flights which we had been told were impossible to come by and extortionately expensive. We had to consider whether we would now be separated after expecting to live together for the next four months.

Despite all of this, we found flights almost immediately. We booked them without hesitation. I expect we got some of the last ones. The flight was 23 hours long, with an hour stopover in Singapore where we weren't allowed to leave the plane. They disinfected the cabin whilst we were on board and we were told to shut our eyes if the disinfectant mist

irritated them. I tried to reduce my contact with people as much as possible, but this was almost impossible on a full 400-seater flight. Some people were calm, happily watching their in-flight movies, some were anxious, and some coughed which was rather unsettling.

However, we are now back in the UK and extremely grateful to be. Despite the stress and anxiety brought on by COVID, it was an amazing experience, unique in itself and exciting. We weren't reckless or stupid like some; we made good decisions and kept others safe and got to see a part of the world that we have never seen before. We intend on returning when we can.

For now, we'll spend quality time with our families, rest and reflect on how lucky we are to be safe, well, and full of good stories.





LIFE IMAGINED
AFTER COVID-19

A BALINESE ESCAPE

Written & Photographed
by Megha Misra

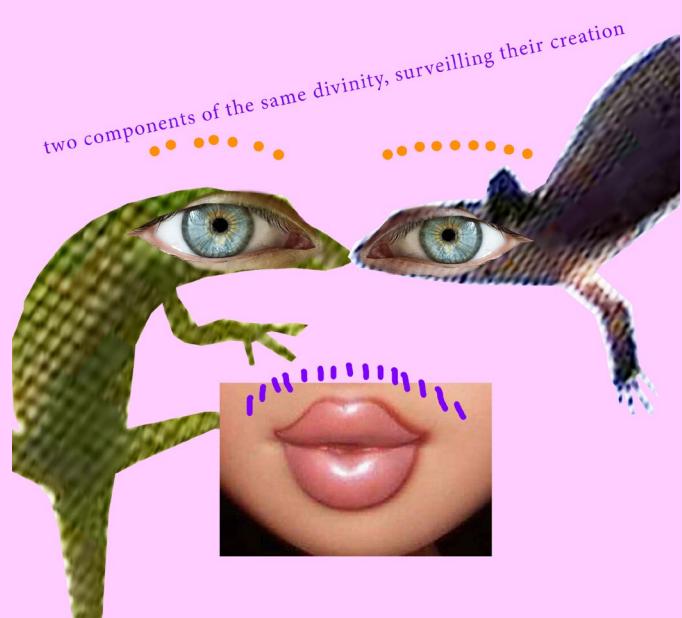
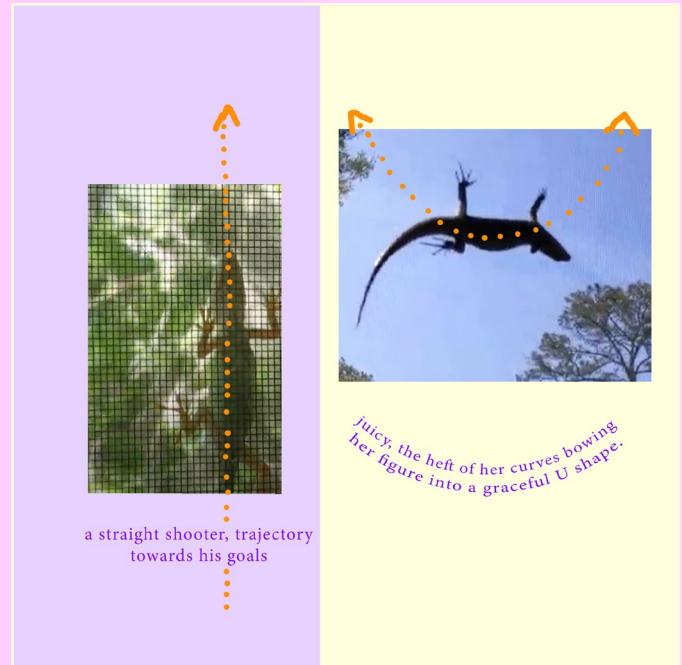
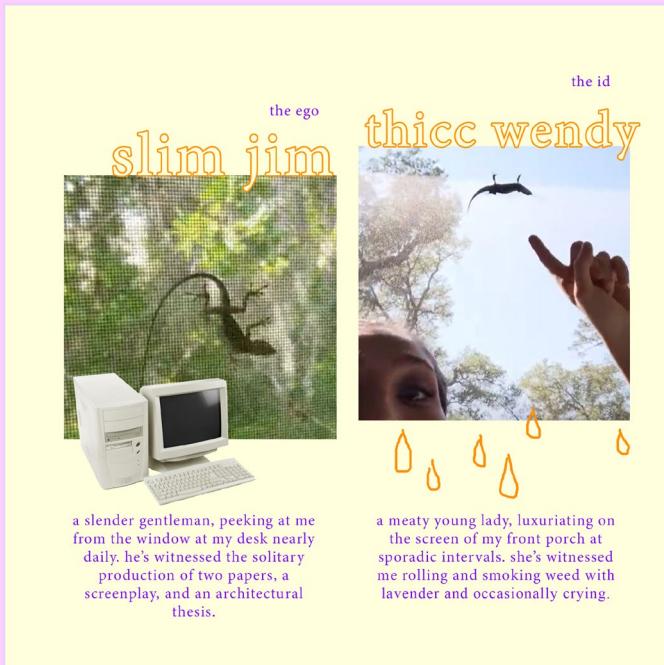


@MEGHASMARVELS

Clear blue skies, interrupted gently by an influx of creamy white clouds. The presence of these clouds, mimicking the burst of milk droplets that paint patterns in your morning latte. Complementing the surrounding view bringing you comfort as you look further, measuring the vastness of the rice field by the decline of the palm trees; which reduce in size as the distance between you both increases. Your best friends join you - there's no need to be distanced from them now. The ghost of the pandemic is well behind you now. It can no longer haunt you. You are free to travel as you please, shake your neighbours hands, embrace your loved ones. Amidst friends, you're seated collectively, cross legged on the smooth polished cemented ground. Passing you a fresh coconut which holds an easeful straw, resting deeper into the coconut crisp water that it's containing.

You inhale sharply. A cool breeze cleanses your face, it's fresh. Pollution free, caressing the loose strands of your hair as it washes over you. Settling your coconut down, you join your friends to admire the greenery rising ahead of you. How about a race through it? Who will make it to the other side first?

lizard musings



created by claire victoria guffey

get your fix on instagram: @claire.guffey
or claire's website: <https://claireguffey.myportfolio.com>

How covid-19 has affected this year's Ramadan

By Fatima Bukhari

Ramadan, a holy month in Islam, is looked forward to by everyone for the gatherings, the food, the bonds, the relationships, the knowledge, and the prayers.

This month is highly anticipated by Muslims around the world, marked in our calendars as we excitedly wait for the aromas of Ramadan to appear. The sweet perfume of fresh Medjool dates transported from the land of Palestine, the decorations scattered around the house, and the blissful words of prayer echoing throughout every hallway.

Ramadan is a month of thankfulness, to remember everything that we have - the roof over our head, the food on the table, the clothes on our body. Many people around the world, have no roof, no food and no clothes. So, in this Month, God teaches us the value of what we have that others don't. Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, worship, self-control and self-improvement, and most importantly generosity to those less fortunate.

During this time, Muslims around the world will invite family and friends for Iftar (breaking of the fast), and on any other year, we'd share, we'd laugh, and most importantly we'd pray. But due to the global pandemic, Iftar has become lonely, especially for those far away from family, or those who have recently converted to Islam. Family and friends are what give our lives meaning, the bonds we make and the moments we share. However, during this time, we are praying alone, and breaking our fasts alone, with no-one but ourselves for company.

In the nights of Ramadan, the men would enter the mosques, praying together, being in the warmth of company, and

sipping chai with friends and family when worship is completed. The women stay at home, praying together with family and friends, accompanied by cups of steaming chai, Baklawa, and the tiny patter of children running around. Beautiful moments are created in the month of Ramadan, some days are speant with family, and some with friends.

Covid-19 has unfortunately stopped these moments from being created, so at home we are praying, and at home we are eating. Facetiming relatives during Iftar is sometimes the only thing keeping us going. Sending a family member to get the Ramadan groceries, praying they come home safe and sound. There is no Eid shopping, no Iftar's celebrated at restaurants, and no visiting grandparents.

This pandemic may have stopped these things from happening, but the thing about traditions are that you can always make new ones. So maybe some days, we should stay in, eat less, pray more and give more, because the true message of Ramadan is to be generous to those less fortunate. Covid-19 has taught me that our way of life during a lockdown Ramadan – isolating and lonely – is a way of life for many others. Converts who have no Muslim friends and family are spending days and nights alone. Those who are poor don't have the privilege of sweet expensive dates, of large feasts, of Eid shopping and a closet full of clothes. They are content with the shirt on their body, the piece of bread in their hand and the simplicity of life.

And this Ramadan, I am grateful for the lesson I have learnt, the pandemic may have stopped traditions, but it paved the way for new simpler ones.

Queens of Quarantine

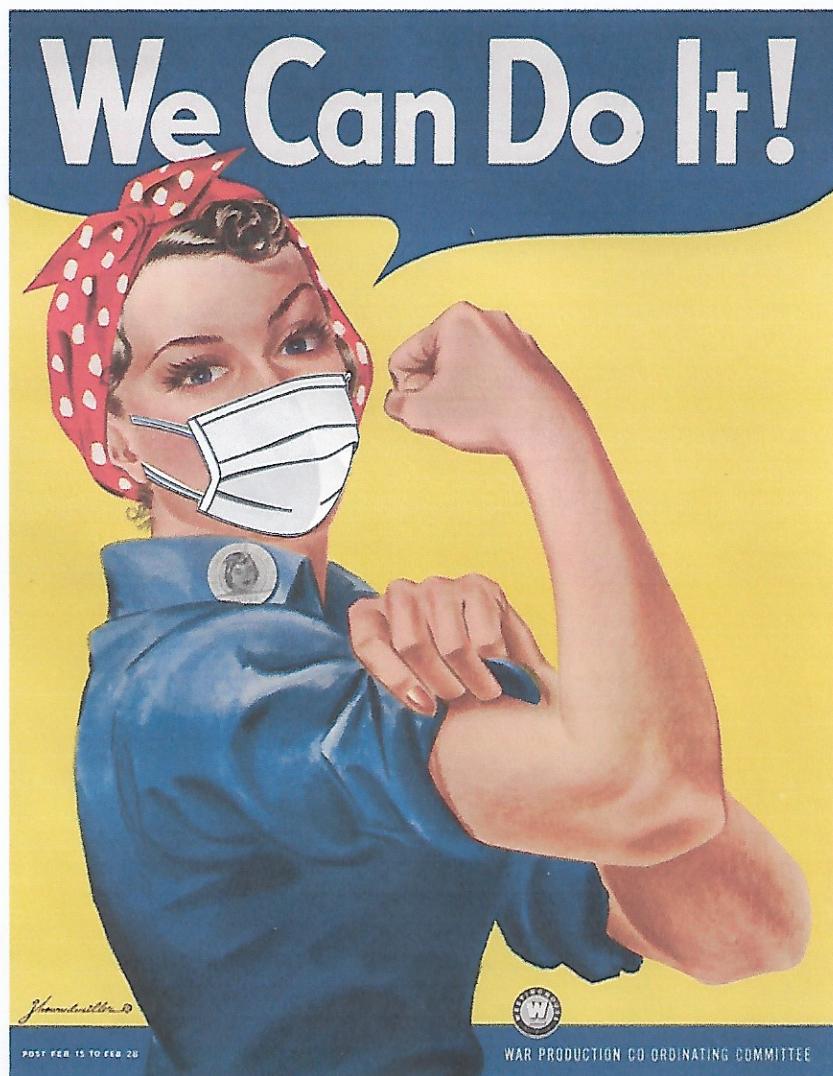
pg. 12

By Genevieve Tomes

There are always individuals in a community who will go above and beyond to help those in need. As we see many people in desperate need of late, in a pandemic that leaves no area of society unaffected, we are reminded of those individuals who are a force for good. In response to recent events, the UK has seen an army of volunteers and do-gooders arise in their masses, who are stoking the fires of community from their own living rooms.

It is strange to realise we are living through a moment of great historical significance – especially since the last events to make an impact on such a global scale were the World Wars. I remember the halcyon days of my Year 7 classroom, when we would make posters about the war effort and the like. (I chose to write about the Land Army – sorry, Rosie the Riveter – farming is in my blood, after all.) Our teachers and those of our grandparents' generation all seemed keen to remind us that the war was won from the home front as well as from the front line. There was no underestimating the importance of kind words and care packages, of warm socks and chocolate during those dark days – let alone the further incredible efforts of home-based groups such as the Home Guard, the Timber Corps and the Munitionettes.

But we're a long way from the rosy, textbook nostalgia of World War Britain, and the lockdown seems to have lasted a lifetime. With 2020 already being compared to 1939, this year has seen our key workers being mobilised on the front lines of our hospitals, supermarkets, mail rooms and laboratories to wage war against coronavirus. But we are only human, and with the sorrow the news often brings, we must also seek our morale boosts from somewhere. The Clap for the NHS, started by Annemarie Plas, lifts public spirits every week as the nation makes a din every Thursday at 8pm, in a display of thanks and solidarity. But whilst it is important for us to show our gratitude, the country cannot tackle coronavirus with



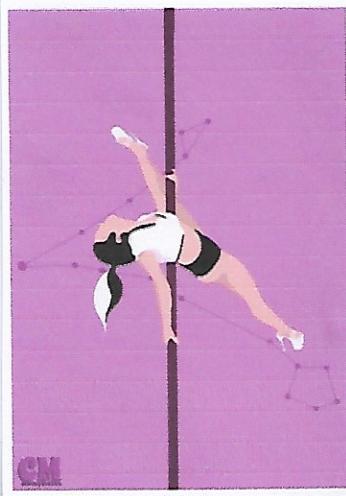
clapping alone. To poorly shoehorn in the words of the Roman poet Juvenal – perhaps it is not 'who will watch the watchmen?', but 'who will care for our carers?' (or rather, all keyworkers – though that didn't work so well with the quote.)

It is not just the incredible labour of key workers that have been invaluable in this moment of crisis, but the widespread volunteering efforts taking place across the UK. I have been lucky enough to talk to six wonderful ladies who have each been making a difference to their local and virtual communities in a variety of ways. Whilst it was not by design that this became about the 'Queens of Quarantine', I was rather struck by how their work has mirrored many of the female-led wartime volunteer efforts.

I hope that as you read their stories, you will admire their creativity and confidence, as they are great women who have stepped up to fill the shoes in which we will need to move towards a better future.



The one that started it all...
Courtney's self portrait



Courtney McMahon

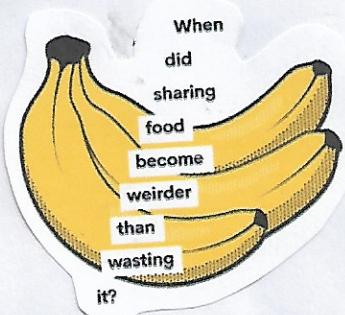
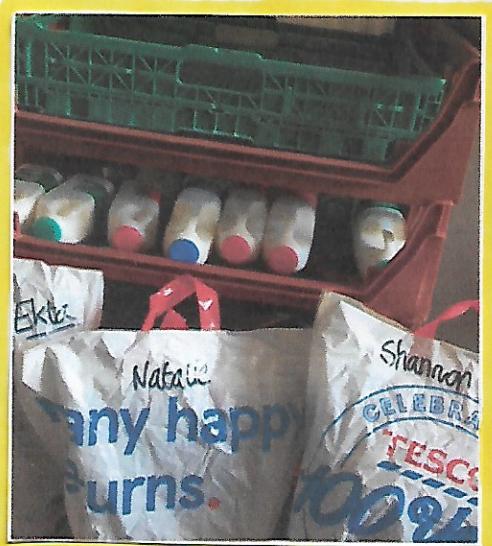
They make the perfect gift...
question is - do you remember your partner's star sign...?



Plenty to go around!



Alexia
Tanas



Alexia's 'mini-market (with some of her orders)



COURTNEY MCMAHON SOUTH LONDON

Courtney McMahon, a Theatre graduate living in South London, has managed to raise a remarkable £700

pounds for the NHS in just under a month – and all through using her artistic talent and a little imagination.

Courtney found herself in the same predicament that many others have since lockdown began – her job (at an independent cinema) was put on hold due to coronavirus, and she now had a lot of time on her hands. But what started as a small project 3 weeks ago on Courtney's Instagram has ballooned into a large online fundraiser.

'I'm a huge makeup fan and I take loads of pictures of myself when I'm bored! So, I was restyling an orange wig and decided to do a drawing of myself in it. I'm really interested in astrology, I decided to draw myself holding my star sign, Sagittarius. When two of my friends asked me to draw them, I realised there was a demand and a potential to fundraise for the NHS.' She says.

Courtney's Astro-portraits guarantee you a uniquely stylish portrait complete with your star sign (sent in the form of 3 high quality digital copies) and only asks for a minimum of £10 as a donation. 60% of the money raised goes towards her chosen charity, the NHS Hero Support on GoFundMe, which helps fund PPE for the NHS keyworkers.

Each portrait takes anywhere between 1 and 3 hours each, so Courtney's weeks have been filled rather quickly. 'Last week I completed 30 portraits, which was crazy. I've learnt to manage my commissions better since I've had so many requests – colour-coordinating my orders and limiting myself to a maximum number of portraits a day helps me manage my schedule much better. I try to make sure I take a rest day every week as well.'

Courtney's portraits lend themselves well to the current minimalistic-but-colourful aesthetic, with her pieces emphasising key features of her subjects. This unique and personalised portrait is not only a great pick-me-up for those who commission portraits of themselves, but also those who receive them as a gift, with many people requesting portraits of their friends, family members, and even one of a couple whose wedding day has been postponed due to the virus.

'It's been amazing to watch this growing sense of community through doing my portraits – seeing how people have been expressing love to each other, making sure they're okay. People are thinking of each other a lot right now, and it's nice to be the middle-man, so to speak.'

Courtney is well on her way to her new target of £1000 for the NHS, and she plans to participate in Portraits for NHS Heroes next.

You can find and support Courtney's work @courtywho on Instagram, and visit her website at: <https://courtyym95.wixsite.com/courtneymcmahon>

To find out more about Portraits for Heroes, please visit: <https://www.gowithyamo.com/blog/thomas-croft-portraits-for-nhs-heroes>

ALEXIA TANAS

EGHAM, SURREY

Alexia Tanas is a student and an anti-waste advocate who saw the masses of food destined for the bin on a trip to the Student Union shop as an opportunity.



With the help of her partner, Jean-Luc Hornsby, and the agreement of the shop staff, she carried home a swag that day which included sandwiches, 20 litres of milk and even fairy cakes. Now, nearly 2 months in, she makes this trip 2-3 times every week, armed with plenty of reusable bags. Why? Because she has been redistributing the shop's wasted food amongst furloughed and vulnerable families who need it.

As a student who has often struggled with funding a food shop, Alexia has been using the food waste app Olio since she began studying. Olio works on a basis of collecting and swapping food from others – generally for free – to encourage less household waste and to save energy. After seeing how much food was going to waste due to the pandemic, she collects the food from Royal Holloway's SU shop, before going through the gruelling process of creating listings on Olio. 'I really want to say that the SU staff have been super helpful. They've been simply just happy that someone was collecting the wastage.'

Categorising and photographing the food can take Alexia up to 3 hours – not to mention storing the items in crates that make her living room look like a mini supermarket rather than an average student house. After creating listings, Alexia responds to customers chronologically to ensure fairness – although she will try to divvy up the supplies as equally as she can. She then bags up the personalised orders, ready for collection.

The doorstep collection system of Olio is one that seems built for social distancing. For many, picking up a few essentials on Alexia's doorstep is another way in which the anxiety and stress of food shopping during the pandemic can be averted, as going to the supermarket is executed with military precision (no time for window shopping or comparing the best deals!).

Alexia has 27 customers, 6 of whom support large families and have become regulars. With many larger families struggling with the challenge of having hungry children to feed after having lost their jobs (or being furloughed), food distributors like Alexia provide much-needed relief. As a Liberal Arts student in her final year, the pandemic has been very difficult on her, as she tries to complete her exams and dissertation despite no tutorship. Yet in this time of great difficulty, she has been able to balance her studies with volunteering – a great act of kindness. 'I treat it as a duty of being human,' she said 'I have a duty of solidarity – it's the only way we can keep going out to collect the food every few days, even if we're tired and want to stay at home. You can't not do it.'

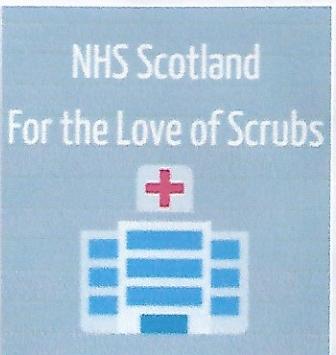
Alexia has saved 41,000 litres of water with Olio! Remember to download the Olio app to help reduce wastage, or simply if you need a helping hand.



Fabric donations from Remake Scotland



No-one's going back to standard issue scrubs after these jazzy numbers!



C₃ christine Forsyth



K₅ ate Darby



"we are eternnnally grateful!"

First kit bag!



With love and appreciation to our NHS and care staff.

If these are how cool the wash bags look, I'll happily be a Bag Lady!



MC All stitched up



CHRISTINE FORSYTH

CRIEFF, SCOTLAND

Christine Forsyth, who is highly skilled at sewing and has over 60 years of experience, discovered that she could assist in the battle against coronavirus with one of the most unlikely weapons – a sewing machine.

Christine Forsyth found her calling when she discovered the NHS Scotland: For the Love of Scrubs (FTLOS) campaign at the start of lockdown. FTLOS was set up by Mirka and Maja Jankowska of Mirka Bridal Couture after hearing about a lack of scrubs in the NHS.

Although she only recently heard back from them (due to the overwhelming response of volunteer applications), the idea had inspired Christine to get a head start and put her skills to good use. Whilst waiting to hear back from FTLOS, she brought together her own group of Sewers through her contacts. The group has now amassed 20 active Sewers, along with others in supporting roles.

Calling in a favour from Remake Scotland, a creative reuse charity where Christine has worked as a volunteer sewing teacher for the last 5 years, the group were able to acquire some fabric. Based in Crieff, Remake Scotland has been able to divert 106,837 kilograms of waste from landfills since 2011 through upcycling it. Some of what would have been wasted fabric was donated to Christine's group, and have now been turned into an incredible 75 sets of scrubs and 45 wash bags!

With the high demand for scrubs, it has been an incredibly busy time for the members of Christine's sewing group. 'It's been a very busy time for everyone, but it's satisfying knowing we're doing something to help.' she says. In this strange time, Christine has acknowledged the positive impact the pandemic has had upon community life. 'We will all have made new friends at the end of all this. People have been just great, working away in their own wee spaces, and our work has been very much appreciated.'

Christine's group was able to send their scrubs to NHS Tayside (which serves east and central Scotland) through a contact they had at the hospital; where the homemade kits were highly appreciated by the staff. However, once Christine's application had been processed by FTLOS, the group became a subgroup of the charity, and has since sent their scrubs via them.

Christine's story is just one of the many incredible and heart-warming stories of proactive men and women who are dedicating their time, energy, and resources to assist our keyworkers amid this pandemic.

To find out more about Remake Scotland, you can go to: https://remakescotland.co.uk/?cbg_tz=0

To learn more about For the Love of Scrubs Scotland, you can visit:
<https://www.fortheloveofscrubs.scot/>

KATE DARBY

MIXBURY, OXFORDSHIRE

Kate Darby, a solicitor from Oxfordshire, has also found herself volunteering in a role that greatly differs from her day job – stitching wash bags for the NHS.

Despite having signed up to the NHS Voluntary Service (managed via the Good Samaritan app), Kate hasn't yet received a callout – an inevitability that many NHS volunteers are familiar with due to an abundance of pre-existing community volunteer networks. But whilst scrolling on Facebook a month ago, Kate found a way to help her community; a mutual friend of hers had shared a post about sewing bags for NHS workers, encouraging those interested to sign up. Kate, though stressing she was no great seamstress, had learnt to sew from her mother as a young girl; and not only had an old sewing machine at home, but reams of old fabric that could be useful.

'I had loads of old sheets lying about – old curtains, duvet covers – stuff like that. I tried to donate them to some homeless shelter years ago, but they weren't allowed to take them. I don't know why I kept them, but I'm glad I did – I thought they'd come in handy at some point!'

Kate got involved with a local Facebook group, MC All Stitched-Up. The group has close to 300 members who have been stitching everything from masks to mask extenders. Kate believes the group has sewn in the region of 2000 wash bags and 300 scrubs – to which she has personally contributed over 30 wash bags.

Wash bags may seem like a strange donation to some, but they play an invaluable role in helping NHS staff. After working a long shift with covid-19 patients, staff members are able to take off their potentially contaminated scrubs before leaving the work place, ensuring that the risk of staff to their family members becoming ill via infectious fabric (often due to close contact with patients and 'droplets') is minimised. With staff able to wash their clothing inside the bag, there is no need for them to transfer any potential virus from their workplace.

Understandably, although Kate has never met any of the members of MC All Stitched-Up, she says a positive online community has emerged. The group supplies local hospitals such as The Horton Hospital (Banbury) and The John Radcliffe (Oxford), and every precaution is taken to ensure the donations are responsibly sent to the hospitals. All the scrubs and bags and such are washed at 60°, and are sealed in plastic bags and quarantined for a few days before being dropped off to a distribution point, so there's no physical contact and no risk of contamination.

Kate has now moved on from wash bags and has started sewing face masks too! It's incredible to see that people like Kate, who haven't sat at the sewing machine for quite some time, are willing to give it a go in the name of helping the NHS.



Get stuck in with MC All Stitched-Up here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/235635034301001/>

Egg Hunt!



Start Game

R, Rebecca
Norman



Our Online Easter Egg Hunt Game!

Let's Go!

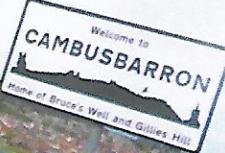
Easter Colouring Competition

Let's Go!

Print Off Activities

Let's Go!

Printerless Activities

Let's Go!

48S

1/10



Cambusbaron may not be the place to take a jaunt to these days - but what's to stop you exploring it virtually...?

There's plenty of time in lockdown - why not give some of Rebecca's games a whirl?

what your pupils see...



vs.

L, aura
Veronica
Graneese

BECOME FLUENT IN ANY LANGUAGE

Choose from over 10,000 teachers for 1-on-1 lessons based on your goals and interests.

Your actual set-up...

(don't worry - they can't see the secret comfy blanket!)



italki



REBECCA NORMAN

CAMBUSBARRON,
SCOTLAND

Rebecca Norman has been creating online games and activities for the local children in her village. She and her dad came up with the idea, as the increasingly lovely weather and the Easter weekend posed a challenge to frustrated parents who might be tempted to let their kids out to play with others.

After deciding that creating an activity pack – filled with crafting materials like clay and felt – would be too risky due to the necessary delivery, Rebecca decided on an online alternative that could be accessed via the village website. ‘It was about minimising the risk whilst increasing the availability – the biggest challenge for me was trying to add a range of activities that anyone could do, even if they didn’t have access to a wide range of materials.’

Having had a craft-oriented upbringing, Rebecca has gotten many of her ideas – such as an online origami guide – from looking through her old art supplies. Print-off activities alike were an excellent choice for both children and parents, due to the minimal effort required by parents who could just print them off, keeping kids busy for hours. ‘In terms of development, the print off activities were fairly painless. The dot-to-dots, for example, I photocopied from old books I had lying around, and I used a generator to make wordsearches using that were relevant to our local area.’

Not all the activities were so simple, however. The local Cambusbarron Community Development Trust (CCDT) hosts an annual Easter Egg Hunt for local children, which was cancelled this year. But, with the help of her friend James, who is a professional game developer, Rebecca was able to put together an alternative: the virtual Egg Hunt. ‘I whipped up the map of the village and the egg for the game, and he brought the rest of it together in just two days! It was a lot of fun coming up with the ideas for the game, and I’m really proud of our finished result.’

Rebecca’s efforts have not gone unnoticed by the local community, as local friends and relieved parents have reached out to her to praise the activities - with ‘Indoor Easter’ proving to be one of the most visited links on the site. She now regularly updates the website for the CCDT, encouraging the idea that the indoors can be a varied and fun place for creativity as well as the outdoors.

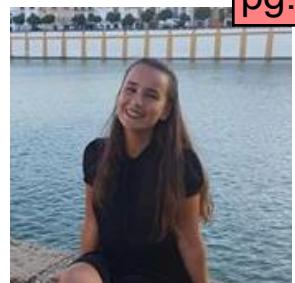
‘I had a lot of fun putting together these packs. I love doing these kinds of crafts and it has been a fantastic motivation to call something so fun “work”. I enjoy trying to come up with creative options that will appeal to all kinds of people with different interests and resources. It’s like lateral problem solving, but with crafts!’

To access Rebecca’s online crafting activities, visit the Cambusbarron Development Trust’s page at:
<https://www.ccdt.org.uk/>

LAURA VERONICA

GRANESE

LEWES, EAST SUSSEX



When Laura Granese began her year abroad in Italy, there was no way she could have imagined how

abruptly it would soon end - let alone due to a global pandemic in which Italy has become one of its worst hit countries. But despite this, Laura has found a purpose in helping herself and others through becoming an online tutor.

With many people trying to learn to live with an abundance of time and no sense of purpose, many have set their sights on self-improvement, hoping to come out of lockdown a little smarter, more talented, or healthier. As a result, many have taken to learning languages online – and its people like Laura who are making this increase in demand possible.

Laura’s time in Italy came to an abrupt halt in March, as she made the choice to return home due to the pandemic. As the months seemed to sprawl ahead, knowing she had no work or study commitments until September, Laura decided to try her hand at language tutoring.

Having taken a TEFL teaching course last summer, Laura realised she could put this to use via the online teaching platform italki, a language tutoring website. ‘It’s kinda like Facebook but for language learning!’ she said. After making a profile for herself and defining her teaching availability, Laura’s profile was up, ready to be chosen by potential students. Since setting up mid-March, she has had several pupils, including 5 regulars.

‘My TEFL course was more geared towards teaching in person, so of course I’ve had to make some moderations to how I teach,’ Laura said, ‘so it’s been a mixture of improvising as I go along and trying to tailor my lessons to suit the individual.’ Sites such as italki are important ways of learning a language, as the system relies on conversing with a native speaker. ‘It’s been great as the tutoring has benefitted both parties – my students are improving their English and learning a new skill, whilst I am constantly improving as a teacher.’

Laura has set up her ‘office’ at her mum’s house, where she is spending lockdown. Every lesson entails the following essentials: her laptop, a strong internet connection, a headset and microphone, a backdrop of various travel and tourist hotspots (as seen in the above picture), and – of course – a blanket to ensure maximum comfort during lessons.

‘It’s been very rewarding, becoming an online language tutor. It’s really helped put some structure in my days and given me a productive escape from coronavirus. In turn, though, it’s been amazing to provide a good distraction for my students who are also in lockdown all over the world, as we provide each other comfort through my lessons!’

To talk an online language class from Laura, visit
<https://www.italki.com/>



QUARANTINE COCKTAILS

It's 5pm somewhere. Specifically, Omsk, Russia. Drink up.

- Cocktail shaker -
- Ice -



QUARANTINI

This year's birthday doesn't count

- 1 shot of vodka
- 1 shot of martini
- 1-part apple juice
- 1-part Lipton peach iced tea

*Serve in a reused jar & cheers to the holiday that could have been
Garnish with the quarantine letter sent by the government*



*The night you go out after
quarantine christens your
new birthday*

*Serve on your
last food bills*



WHAT DAY IS IT

Not a day to put on jeans, that's for sure

- 2 shots of martini
- A can of any soft drink at your disposal

*Serve in the first cup/glass you make eye contact with
Garnish with a sigh of emotional exhaustion*



AND NO MONEY SPENT

Ask alexa for "coffeeshop sounds"

- Portion of strawberries
- A dash of milk
- 2 shots of vodka
- Ice – then blend



*Honestly, the
amount of money
I've saved*

Garnish with a metal straw, a strawberry & a false sense of motivation for the day

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Make 3 of these & you'll be convinced you're financially stable

- 2 shots of whiskey
- 2 tsp caramel syrup
- 1-part flat pepsi

*Shake (if it's still fizzy – don't shake...learnt that the hard way)
Smear the inside of a glass with syrup & rim with sugar
Serve over ice & drink like you had a long day at work*



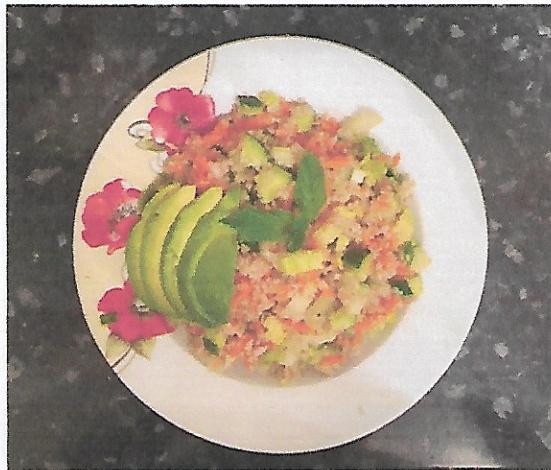
*"Society? Don't
even know her"*



All drink measurements can be adjusted to facilitate personal alcoholic dependency

Easy Quinoa Salad

By Gulsum Altinbas



Ready in **20 minutes**

Serves **2 people**



Preparation

1. Place a cup of quinoa in a pot and fill with two cups of water (the ratio should be 1:2).
2. Add salt to taste and let boil until the quinoa is cooked and allow it to rest.
3. Dice vegetables of your choice and place in a large mixing bowl.
4. Mix the appropriate ingredients for making the balsamic garlic dressing in a small bowl until well combined.
5. Add cooked quinoa to the bowl and dress with balsamic garlic dressing.
6. (Optional) place thinly sliced avocado, sunflower seeds, and mint leaves to garnish.

Ingredients

Salad:

- Carrots
- Cucumber
- Celery
- Green Onions
- Lettuce
- Quinoa

Balsamic Garlic Dressing:

- 2 cloves of diced garlic
- Dijon Mustard
- Honey
- Dried basil
- Balsamic Vinegar
- Lemon Juice
- Salt & Pepper
- Olive Oil

Sasha Smith discusses how the coronavirus pandemic has been impacting – and has been impacted by - our attitude towards the elderly population.

AGEISM AND CORONAVIRUS

By Sasha Smith

The Prime Minister announced the current crisis with a phrase that has lingered in the country's consciousness since: 'many more families are going to lose loved ones before their time' - which largely translated to me as 'some of you will die, probably your grandparents'.

The wildly insensitive words of Boris Johnson were paraphrased by my housemates and I with varying tones of distaste. It was easy to mock these words when the death toll was under a thousand and we were confident in how our government would tackle the situation. After all, we had seen how a large portion of the world had already reacted to the pandemic, and how best to go about reducing cases. But as the numbers grew, it was clear that the British government was failing to implement the restrictions needed to control the virus quickly enough - a herd immunity system was not going to work, it would kill many before it started working, and that 'some of us', a larger-than-we-thought 'some of us', were going to die.

However, these things soon drifted to the back of my mind as the pandemic escalated; after all, I'm young, I'm healthy, my grandparents on my dad's side of the family have sadly both passed, and my grandparents on my mum's side are estranged, so I didn't have much to worry about as long as I stayed inside. And I guess that's the problem. Because I knew these words weren't really affecting me and my family, it felt okay to say "well, *some people* are going to die, but, it's not going to affect me, right?" I've seen many adopt this self-assured attitude, despite seeing numbers of healthy and young people die - still believing they can go out and break quarantine, and ultimately putting others at risk.

The elderly make up a large proportion of those affected deeply by this pandemic, and they are also a group that coronavirus has proved fatal for. It occurs far too often in society that we dismiss the elderly as "those soon to die"; and again, I feel that in the midst of this pandemic, the elderly being consigned to the high-risk category will make some of us less sympathetic to the struggles they are facing during this difficult time.

Many seem to forget that the elderly are as worthy of respect and equality as the rest of us; with lives just as valuable as our own. This is a scary time for us all, but imagine how much more lonely and frightening it must be to be sat in a care home, watching the prime minister say on public television that some of you will die - and you know he's talking directly to you. He is telling you that whilst it is a shame, your life is not as worth saving as someone



else's - you are selfish to use up resources, your time is up. How is that meant to make you feel?

A friend of mine told me that her aunt was the only nurse currently left working at her nursing home, and that she feared that she might be sick and need to take time off. All their PPE had been redirected to hospitals. I sat and wondered - who would look after the rest of the residents? What would happen if they got ill? A virus could easily spread through a residential community.

There is no doubt that the NHS are in desperate need of PPE, but carers and those who work with the elderly are in equal need. Carers are keyworkers, and the elderly population is just as much worth saving and protecting as those who are fighting for their lives in hospitals.

We have seen centenarian Captain Tom Moore walking laps around his garden to raise money for the NHS. The nation fell in love with him, but I couldn't help thinking if we only appreciate the elderly when they prove their worth. Capitalism has taught us the filthy lie that we are only worth something if we have hold economic value.

Yesterday, a funeral procession travelled through my town for the death of a 33-year old woman covid-19 victim. It was terribly sad, but again I wondered - why is it sadder when someone young dies? I have not seen any similar sort of procession or communal grief shown towards elderly covid victims. Is it because they are in the 'high-risk category' so it is unsurprising? Are we commemorating her life, or are we mourning the loss of her economic value?

The next time we think of the elderly being a pressure on society, we should remember there is much more to a person than their economic value. Maybe they can teach our government how to count PPE. Because if there isn't more to us than our economic value, they'll be coming for us next.

LOCKDOWN AND THE UPSWING: ONE THING I'M HOPEFUL FOR

By Marley Ellis

Positing the lockdown as some kind of watershed moment is not a new idea.

People have been talking about society reaching critical crapness and springing into a paradise for nearly a decade now as each year has gotten progressively crapper. I guess that tends to happen sooner or later, but I'm not holding my breath. Whereas a lot of the discussion has tended toward politics (will the pandemic finally break the Tories? will socialism gain more legitimacy? etc.), what I'm more optimistic about is the change that might happen on a social level.

Grilling people in Brighton at the start of the lockdown for a way I might help out, I was pointed to a Whatsapp network with a group for every street in the city, set up so people could help their neighbours if need be. Amazingly here need seems nearly non-existent. By the time I roll out of bed, have a little quiet scream to myself and threaten my landlady's child into bringing me coffee at 2 PM, most requests are already being sorted. In the modern absence of old-school pubs, town halls or religious observance, social media has been so suited to the role of community hub that I'm surprised it's taken the apocalypse to get it started. Facebook, which is generally a living noticeboard, is seeing lengthier, considered interaction between friends, relatives and strangers who might actually give a toss about each other. Pretending everything's fine is also falling out of favour; and rather than trying to impress whatever all-seeing influencer deity demands we be happy, well-slept and shaggable at all times, people are starting to treat the technology as something



that serves us, not the other way around.

While this is hardly a surprise, considering we now have plenty of time and no excuses not to discuss That Nice Ed Sheeran with Nan on Skype, what I WAS surprised to see were the sudden changes in people's personalities. In the wake of surges in populism, racism and misogyny appealing to a sad, vulnerable breed of *otaku*, idiosyncrasy seems to have been thrown under the bus, leading to an alarming lack of nutcases in popular culture. Since the lockdown, however, I've been pleased to see some of my favourite weirdos become more unusual than ever, and

I've personally found I'm closer to eyelinered, waistcoat-wearing, homeless poethood than at any time since I gave up being a complete tw*t. Friends of mine have taken up meditation, started pursuing old hobbies and generally taken some time to find their own source of happiness and strength. Some have gone to pot, and that's an important step too.

Wherever that leaves us, I deeply hope a post-lockdown surge of people sick of pretending to be normal might finally put a bit more colour on screens and playlists, and – please, God, please – at least one show on Netflix with characters who have genuine flaws. (When even the *Stranger Things* kids are a bunch of toxic little cretins by series three, something's not right.)

It's not a socialist utopia, but fingers crossed, when the smoke clears, the world will be that little bit closer, stranger and more honest. Hang in there.



Review: NSDF online Festival 2020 for Theatre makers

By Isabelle Tyner

Are you feeling uninspired, as another day goes by in isolation? Me too! In fact, *everyone* too. These were exactly my thoughts until I scrolled onto Twitter, the home of my Theatre updates, to find that NSDF (National Student Drama Festival) were holding an online festival full of talks on everything theatrical during a week in April. Perfect! For this one week, I would dedicate my spare time to tuning into various successful directors, actors, and writers online. It was probably the best decision I could have made, as I noted down valuable advice from each talk. I felt the things I had taken away were important, to encourage other theatre makers and artists during isolation to remain resilient. We will get through this, and soon enough we will be back to our studios, offices and theatres making new work. **But for now, enjoy these top tips...**



- 1) One talk that stood out was named, *Playing The Game With Your Own Rules: Staying true to yourself in the industry*, delivered over the Zoom app by Angus Imrie and Nima Taleghani. While listening intently to the many topics they addressed about staying true to yourself, one specifically stood out. This was about rejection, a common word heard in the Theatre industry, but I think the reason it resonated with me was because it was applicable to any path in life. And this

advice was: ***don't change who you are.*** Imrie gave the example of an actor going into the audition room, being declined from the role, and being told it was because the auditionee was 'too' of one thing, or 'not enough' of the other. Imrie passionately followed this example by saying that this is something you have to accept, because one day you will not be 'too much' or 'not enough', you will be perfect for that opportunity that comes your way. More importantly, know yourself enough that you know why you chose that adaptation or interpretation of a role, presumably because that was how you believed was the best. Similarly, to any life scenario it is important to stand by yourself in confidence even if it is rejected by those around you. Yes, reflect on why it didn't work, or how to improve, but don't knock yourself down. Taleghani reminds us that it is not actually your business if someone doesn't want to work with you. Instead, your closure is knowing that what you have done was your best, and that is all you can do. So, in this time of disappointment and struggle, let us find peace in ourselves as artists.

everything, in time

- 2) Another great segment from the NSDF fest was the *Directing Q&A* by, Emma Rice. This was particularly interesting for myself due to my passion for directing, the following bullet points summarise advice from Rice herself:
- ***Choose stories that are personally relevant to you.*** Do something that can answer ‘why now?’ instead of with intentions of ‘to be clever’ or ‘because they haven’t done this play in the last 10 years on a stage’.
 - Once you have chosen your actors ***don’t second guess yourself or them:*** it is now your job to bring out the best of them.
 - ***Make the room ‘yes focused’.***
 - She finds it justified to not analyse the text too much in early rehearsals because she sees putting on a performance as simply story-telling. She feels ***there is no need to complicate or create obstacles*** in the text, that can’t be solved during just a read-through anyway.
- 3) Another very important message that was brought to my attention through the range of talks was networking! This was addressed in almost all of the talks, the importance of ***not only approaching new people with your ideas but utilizing the people around you.*** The taboo of approaching big theatres, such as Bristol Old Vic, was broken, with many advising to shoot your shot with applications or submissions- there is nothing to lose! Along with this came another key message: ***don’t think that the only place for theatre to flourish is London.*** In fact, London is saturated with artists, and there are so many other places around the UK that are suitable for any artist to blossom, such as Cornwall (home to successful

Theatre Company, Kneehigh). Do not feel that if you live outside of London, then your chance is tainted. This is simply, NOT TRUE!

I hope this small insight into the NSDF festival has brought some light during this dark time to all the artists and students out there. NSDF Festival was a great thing to come out of this strange time, and I hope that as many of you were able to take advantage of it too! But if not, I hope this has given you some inspiration and motivation. And remember, we will be back to creating and sharing very soon! Keep safe.



You can find more of Isabelle's work on her socials:

Instagram -@izzietyner

Twitter- @TheatreTyner

More information about projects happening with NSDF can be found at:

<https://www.nsdf.org.uk/>

Safe (1995) – dir. Todd Haynes

By Ned Matyjaszek

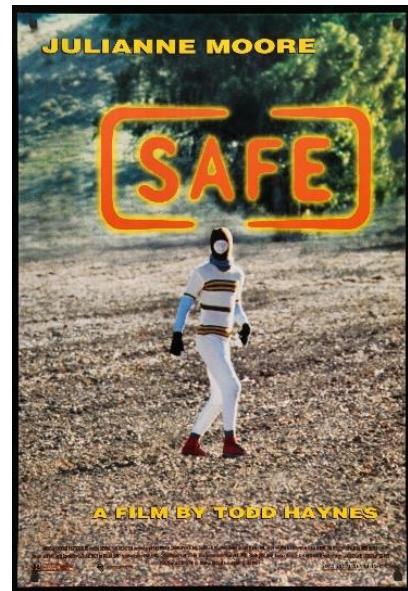
Do you hate the feeling of being trapped in your own home? Paranoid about the common and ever-present symptoms of a deadly virus? Wish you could just shut off the outside and escape into a world of comfort and joy?

If the answer to any of the above is yes, then boy have I got the worst possible movie for you!

Set in the frigid, stifling suburbs of Los Angeles in 1987, Todd Hayne's *Safe* follows the remarkably vapid existence of Carol (Julianne Moore), a self-described 'home-maker' whose contributions to said house involve complaining about the colour of a sofa, ordering about their maid, and providing sexual satisfaction for her distant husband. One day, as tepid and monotonous as any other, she develops an array of inexplicable and debilitating symptoms – with the only apparent explanation being an allergy to all things 'chemical'. As attempts to treat her prove fruitless and her condition worsens, she attempts to flee her gilded cage and seek refuge in a new-age healing commune, far away from all things industrial. Yet there seems to be no cure for Carol here, as the charmingly insidious commune only results in further isolation, her agency and willpower crumbling to pieces.



At a surface level, *Safe* is a suburban gothic film, much like *Halloween* or *Elm Street* before it, featuring a malignant force which invades the otherwise tranquil



WAS-infested suburbs to wreak havoc on our pure, traditionalist (and often female) protagonist. In reality, the film bears more resemblance to *Stepford Wives* or the more recent *Get Out*, placing the origin of the horror within suburbia itself: it's relentless adherence to sexist and classist social norms, the idealised image of a white America, and its response to any disruption – a theoretical paradise turned prison.

Carol is patronised, denied treatment, and victim blamed as her illness prevents her from fulfilling her usual role. Yet she also treats the BAME workers of her household like tools, and fails to challenge her stepson's disturbingly ignorant essay on gang violence – a quick but blunt example of how bigotry can be institutionalised via schools and government curriculums. She is defined by her radical inaction to the injustice around her, preferring to bury her head and run; first to the suburbs, then to the commune, and finally to her private chamber.

This suburban cage is beautifully represented by Haynes and Nepomniaschy's camerawork, which unflinchingly creeps towards Carol in many shots, cutting off her escape. The static medium shots that make up the rest

of *Safe* further emphasise her passionless and isolated life, never displaying any energy and keeping all other characters at a distance, mere shapes of people that move around Carol as she dutifully exists. The unnerving visuals transform a place of tranquillity into one of emotional detachment and inescapable dread – the primary facets of Carol's existence as oppressor and oppressed – enhanced by a subtle but noticeable electronic drone on the soundtrack that ever so slowly builds with intensity as Carol's symptoms worsen and the once-apathetic figures in her life turn against her.

Carol and her fellow victims of this chemical sensitivity (a real phenomenon by the way) are not just suffocated by their ailment, but by the ignorant and systemically bigoted society they live in. If the text alone does not make it apparent, then Haynes' previous work (*Poison*) and the film's 80s setting cement the picture as allegorical to the early days of the AIDS crisis in America, where denialism and the blame of individual actions are preferred over criticism of institutional – law-making, educational, and medical – failure to combat a strange new disease that gripped the world with paranoia, costing lives in the process. As the death toll rises, parallels with the current pandemic are impossible to blot out – especially as the latter casts a wider net that cannot be brushed away by the moralising of a social and economic elite.

Safe not only demonstrates Haynes' progressive, radical, and empathetic filmmaking in a markedly controlled and effective fashion, but also his incredible diversity and skill behind the camera whilst working with smaller budgets. Though only his second film *Safe* is a marked departure from his debut feature, *Poison* (1991) – a transgressive, genre-blending triptych examining male-

on-male love, HIV paranoia, and hidden domestic violence – it maintains a strict, suffocating focus on its central protagonist and the systemic horrors of her environment. It is a masterpiece of social horror, period filmmaking, and a cold expression of rage against social injustice that deserves more recognition for its chilling relevance.





The Generic Bookworm reviews: *Wranglestone* by Darren Charlton

Contributed by Megan Dalton

I didn't know what to expect when I first picked up *Wranglestone* by Darren Charlton. What I didn't expect is to be thoroughly scared out of my wits within the first few pages. I absolutely could not read this book in the evening when it was dark, so it took me a little longer to read than usual, but it was definitely worth it. This outstanding debut from Darren Charlton has all the chill, suspense and fright of *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, but also boasts a sweet love story that you'd find in the best romantic fiction.

Wranglestone follows the character of Peter, a teenage boy who lives in a timber tree house on one of the little islands in Lake Wranglestone (hence the title). There are others who live on islands in the lake also, including the handsome Cooper, who Peter enjoys watching from afar. All the islanders live in fear of one thing: winter, because when the lake freezes over, there is nothing stopping the Restless Dead (real creepy zombies) from crossing the lake. However, when Peter finally crosses the lake himself to prove himself worthy of a place on the islands of Lake Wranglestone, he and Cooper unearth dark secrets about Lake Wranglestone's past, secrets that force them to question the small community they have grown up in.

I met Darren Charlton when he attended a Q&A event held by the Wirral Paperback Award. When asked about his motivation behind the book, he said that he wanted to write a book that had all the excitement and adventure of the books he used to read as a teenager, but also with a main character who was homosexual. This is definitely what you get with

Wranglestone. The book is packed with adventure and I was captured within the first few pages (the whole interaction with the Restless Dead woman, Martha, on the boat, seemingly trying to drown Peter's father scared the crap out of me), but the love story throughout the book was equally as captivating. What was particularly intriguing was that Peter's sexuality (and Cooper's) wasn't a struggle. They don't 'come out' in any sort of way as there isn't a need to. It highlights in the book that all social issues, such as racism, homophobia etc, just don't seem to exist anymore, and that everyone is more understanding and respectful of one another because they all are fighting a common enemy; the Restless Dead.

Through writing his characters in this way, Charlton points out the flaws in today's society, but also the underlying message is (or I thought it was anyway) that it shouldn't take a global pandemic and half of the population turning into zombies to have everyone be respectful and understanding of others. Furthermore, by having his character's so comfortable with their sexuality, it paves the way for a romance where the main obstacles are the Restless Dead trying to kill them. I'm not trying to say that books outlining the struggle of coming out as LGBTQ aren't important, because they are, but I did really enjoy reading a book where the normal kind of prejudices towards an LGBTQ+ couple didn't apply.

Darren Charlton is also extremely good at describing the small corner of the world where Peter lives; I found the descriptive language in the book allowed me to become even more lost between the pages. The only other book



that made me feel quite as cold as *Wranglestone* did was *The Road*. As I went deeper into *Wranglestone*, I found myself needing to wrap myself in blankets to keep the chill away, despite the fact I was usually sitting on a deck chair in my garden getting baked by the blazing sun when I was reading this book. Every encounter with the Restless Dead had me gasping aloud, like when Peter is being used as bait, especially as they are described so vividly: “Its jaws gnashed. Its fingers twitched at the prospect of flesh. [...] The deer that had bolted past him just moments ago was lying on the ground. Its legs were twitching in spasms like a dog dreaming. The whites of its eyes peeled back wide in terror. But it was powerless to move. The ashen figure bending over it withdrew its blackened hand from inside the animal’s guts and moved directly over the deer’s head to feed. Strings of black hair flanked the animal’s face like rotting vines. There was a baying scream followed by a wet crunching sound. When the Restless One came up for air, blood erupted freely and the deer’s face was gone.” Needless to say, I was petrified during these passages and my husband had to peel me off the ceiling many times.

SPOILER ALERT!

Lastly, the twist to the story was that everyone on Lake Wranglestone were (unknowingly for the most part) actually sending their loved ones who are bitten to be sold in exchange for medicines and necessities, despite the fact that some people who come back from the dead after being bitten still have their souls intact. I was gobsmacked when it was revealed that only some of the people who are bitten turn into the ‘Restless Dead’, while others become undead, but still have their humanity. I had a little sob

(catastrophically large sob, my husband thought someone actually alive and not fictional was dying) when Cooper was bitten and died, but the story really picked up when he came back to life, but not as a Restless Dead. From this point, we meet Rider, the lonely man who hangs around with the Restless Dead, trying to get a message to his family. Rider’s second death was particularly hard to get over, especially when it was Becky who killed him out of fear and misunderstanding. The ending was left a bit ambiguously; we still don’t know what the world is going to be like outside of Lake Wranglestone, and we don’t know what Peter and Cooper are going to do, but it was left with the overriding feeling of hope. And who knows? Maybe we’ll get a sequel... (Please, please can we get a sequel?)



To read more of Megan’s book reviews, visit her blog:
<https://bit.ly/thegenericbookwormreviews>

The Moon

at night i am one among the stars
 i toss and i turn in bed and i swim up into the sky

blankets of soft clouds clean air-conditioned air the evening sea-breeze
 fluffy quilts fluffy cotton white and blue and twinkling

at night i look up at the moon reflected in endless grids
 something stirs within me and i curl up into a ball
 my limbs a constellation splayed across my bed

i am never more aware of myself than now
 in the same square feet as always
 the past few weeks have me reaching up into the stars

constellations of worry, swirling in the shape of my crossed arms
 stardust in my furrowed eyebrows

i am never more aware of the way my hands ache at the end of the night
 or the amount of tea i consume
 or the way i seek seek seek and reach out into the world
 dangle my fingers off the balcony and peer down into an empty garden

at night i cannot hide unless i seek refuge in the stars
 they've never been clearer than now, when everything else is murky
 they lurk beyond my reach and so do i, somehow

will you understand if i tell you? will you scoff?

my feet ache for grass beneath them
 dewdrops go wasted every dawn
 i look at the sunrise through pigeon netting
 cradle a cup of too-weak too-frothy coffee

will you listen? if i tell you?

(the moon judges in silence)

will you take my hand?

the stars are always so clear this time of year
 i see nothing beneath my closed eyes
 i close my eyes and i see the sky swimming before me
 i waste the sunset every evening and i miss the horizon

it's the small things, you know
 (wasted moments)

at night i am drawn into sharp focus
 sharp corners sudden edges i crash into doorknobs
 numbers blink out at me and i forget what they mean
 i look at the moon and i wish and i forget what for

- Shloka Ramachandran

For more of Shloka's poetry, visit her [Instagram](#): @akolhs

OPEN YOUR EarHOLES

" Tried pg. 30
liked it " ~ QZine



Getting bored of your usual podcasts? Listened to all the back catalogue and need something new? Fancy tuning in to something that hasn't already been listened to by all your mates? (You're such a hipster – we love it)

Check out **DMC** on Apple Podcasts, written and hosted by **Jeannie Brown**.

Below is the opening of Jeannie's short story, **Rat Brain**.

In here it is too tenebrous to see what colour the walls are, but the texture is coarse. I can't step normally along the floor; instead, I pull my legs across one at a time, as if I am wading through water.

It's too thick to be water though. It feels more like mud but smells of something rotten – not quite of expired meat, but the same level of unpleasantness as that. If I scoop a small amount up and bring it to my face, I can see that it's dark pink.

Like what you read? Visit the link below to listen to the whole story on DMC podcast. Go on – it's the best 5 minutes you'll spend today... <https://tinyurl.com/DMCratbrain>

Life may be oddly dramatic right now, but there is always space for a touch of theatre. This script, written by 2nd year Theatre student Rhiannon Tomes will make you smile – and make you think.



Society – by Rhiannon Tomes

It's a party. There's karaoke, people dancing, drinking. There's a sliding door leading to outside. It's slightly open, enough for one person to slide through. Two characters arrive at the door at the exact same moment. One is dressed as a clown. The other, a devil. Neither reach for the door. They both stand and wait.

Clown: After you.

Devil: No, after you.

Both gesture to the door, their feet rooted to the ground. A cheerleader and a Hotdog open the door, walk in and close the door again. Neither the clown nor the devil move.

Devil: Well looks like no one is going to help us.

Clown: Someone's coming now, let's see.

They both wait and watch as Batman approaches, opens the door, steps through and leaves it ajar, enough for one person to step through.

Clown: Nope.

Devil: Well.

Clown: Yep.

They each take a sip of drink, feet rooted to the same spot. They wait.

THE END

wordsearch

S	L	G	E	N	E	G	D	H	G	U	O	L	R	U	F
E	O	T	H	A	N	K	E	S	S	E	N	T	I	A	L
M	C	C	N	W	A	N	T	U	H	K	E	S	C	T	E
O	K	O	I	R	U	F	A	Y	Y	U	K	E	O	O	N
H	D	M	G	A	T	H	L	G	T	O	M	U	A	I	G
M	O	M	H	I	L	D	O	E	H	A	P	C	T	L	P
O	W	U	T	G	N	D	S	N	S	A	L	L	O	E	A
R	N	N	I	T	H	E	I	K	B	G	W	G	M	T	N
F	C	I	N	S	S	T	B	S	A	R	U	E	E	R	I
K	I	T	G	X	U	K	E	Y	T	M	H	N	S	O	C
R	N	Y	A	I	M	R	J	A	L	A	A	P	A	L	B
O	A	T	L	P	H	C	I	M	E	D	N	A	P	L	U
W	E	G	E	N	Q	T	U	V	D	C	O	C	W	S	Y
R	H	N	Y	W	O	R	K	E	R	S	B	Q	I	R	I
U	H	A	N	D	W	A	S	H	T	O	M	E	S	N	N
S	G	N	H	O	M	E	S	C	H	O	O	L	I	N	G

P₃ U₁ Z₁₀

In the grid below are 18 topical words. They can be read forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally. Once you've found them all, why not look for the hidden 6-word secret sentence?

Bat	NHS
Community	Nightingale
Essential	Pandemic
Face mask	Panic buying
Furlough	Social distancing
Hand wash	Toilet rolls
Home schooling	Virus
Isolated	Work from home
Lockdown	Wuhan

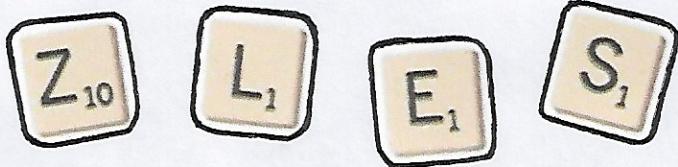
Guess the MOVIE

Can you guess the titles of these

films depicted by these Emojis?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.



SUDOKU

Have a go at these Sudoku puzzles! Fill each blank with a number between 1 and 9. But be careful! You can only have one of each number in each grid, column and row.

Don't sue-doku us if you get it wrong...

Gentle:

	7	4		5	1	6		
3		1				8		
	6	8				5		
2			9	4	8			
	3	7		8				
5	4	6	1			7		
	2	3			5			
4		2			7	8		
6	8	5	7		9			

Tricky:

		3		9				
6	2				5			
		9		1		3		7
5	7		4			9		
		6			3		5	4
4		1	6		2			
			2			3	9	
				3	8			

WordWheel



How many words can you make from four or more letters in this wheel?

All words MUST contain the letter G, and each letter can only be used ONCE.

Plurals ARE allowed.

All words are recorded in the OED.

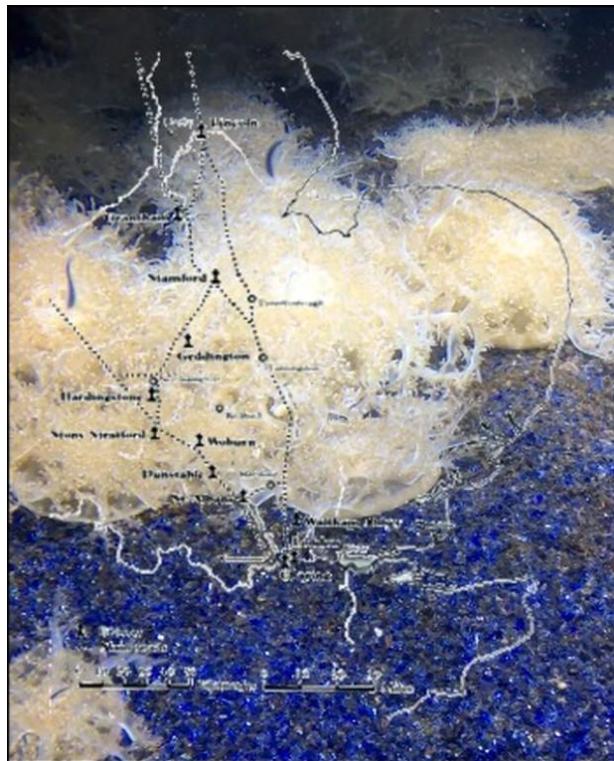
Plus, there is a bonus 'tribute' phrase in the wheel that uses all 9 letters! As you are doing this puzzle, it is the name of someone you may know...

Compete against others, beat a timer or simply try and get as many words as you can!

Average: 24 words

Good: 32 words

Excellent: 38 words



Artwork contributed by Molly Saxby

For more of Molly's work, find her on Instagram: **@molllyes**

@dustpancake

*Wish you
were here!*

In light of so many
cancelled holidays
why not go on a
random one during
lockdown?

*Visit the holiday
planners:*



YEA

combat

NAY

*sit down and rest***SHOOT FIRST, THINK LATER**

your doctor

TECHNOLOGY**MEN WHO PLAY GOD** **CONTACT**

learning

subjects like death, abuse etc to add cheap emotion

Alcohol? Kindness?

BLOWING UP

SLOW THE SPREAD

REAL WAR**NEW****VOICES****FOR SANITARY****COMBAT TECHNIQUES**

Medic Sam

Rosie the Rester

Common Rat

*The Wonderful World Of**The family***in quarantine****Your Mom**"You may have just one
Easter egg before lunch."**LADY SATAN****"MAY SPICE SALT
YOUR WOUNDS!"****BROTHER****"I'm #711, and
my place is back
behind these walls!"****PEACEMAKER**"Give me the horse,
let me fix him"**Straight Jané****"Fools! To think bullets
could harm The Eye!"****The Horse****"I've always talked.
I'm a talking horse
the only one there is."****THE EYE****"Hee-hee."
"You have won the sweets."****BEE-MAN****"Man; bees
blow my mind!"**

@TAXIDUMMY

A₁ N₁ S₁ W₄ E₁ R₁ S₁

S	L	G	E	N	E	G	D	H	G	U	O	L	R	U	F
E	O	T	H	A	N	K	E	S	S	E	N	T	I	A	L
M	C	C	N	W	A	N	T	U	H	K	E	S	C	T	E
O	K	O	I	R	U	F	A	Y	Y	O	U	K	E	O	O
H	D	M	G	A	T	H	L	G	T	O	M	U	A	I	G
M	O	M	H	I	L	D	O	E	H	A	P	C	T	L	P
O	W	U	T	G	N	D	S	N	S	A	L	L	O	E	A
R	N	N	I	T	H	E	I	K	B	G	W	G	M	T	N
F	C	I	N	S	S	T	B	S	A	R	U	E	E	R	I
K	I	T	G	X	U	K	E	Y	T	M	H	N	S	O	C
R	N	Y	A	I	M	R	J	A	L	A	A	P	A	L	B
O	A	T	L	P	H	C	I	M	E	D	N	A	P	L	U
W	E	G	E	N	Q	T	U	V	D	C	O	C	W	S	Y
R	H	N	Y	W	O	R	K	E	R	S	B	Q	I	R	I
U	H	A	N	D	W	A	S	H	T	O	M	E	S	N	N
S	G	N	H	O	M	E	S	C	H	O	O	L	I	N	G

1. Four Weddings and a Funeral
2. Taxi Driver
3. Silence of the Lambs
4. Rocky IV
5. Finding Nemo
6. Blade Runner
7. Mrs Doubtfire
8. Fight Club
9. Groundhog Day
10. Ghost
11. Anchorman
12. Team America World Police
13. Snakes on a Plane
14. Blood Diamond
15. Casino Royale
16. Goodfellas
17. Kung Fu Panda
18. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
19. A Fish Called Wanda
20. School of Rock

8	7	2	4	3	5	1	6	9
3	5	1	2	6	9	7	8	4
4	9	6	8	7	1	2	5	3
2	6	7	3	9	4	8	1	5
1	3	9	7	5	8	4	2	6
5	8	4	6	1	2	9	3	7
7	2	3	9	8	6	5	4	1
9	4	5	1	2	3	6	7	8
6	1	8	5	4	7	3	9	2

1	4	3	8	9	7	5	2	6
6	2	7	3	4	5	1	9	8
8	5	9	6	1	2	3	4	7
5	7	2	4	8	6	9	1	3
3	17	4	5	7	9	6	8	2
9	8	6	1	2	3	7	5	4
4	3	1	9	6	8	2	6	5
7	6	8	2	5	1	4	3	9
2	9	5	7	3	4	8	6	1

7-letter words: Emongst : Gemstone : Gemotes : Genomes : Mongeese : Segment

6-letter words: Genome : Gnomes : Gemote : Gemots : Genets : Gentes : Mongst : Tegmen : Tenges

5-letter words: Egest : Emong : Geese : Gemot : Genes : Genet : Genom : Gents : Geste : Gnome : Mongs : Ogees : Segno : Stong : Tenge : Toges : Tongs

4-letter words: Egos : Engs : Gems : Gene : Gens : Gent : Gest : Gets : Goes : Gone : Mong : Negs : Nogs : Ogee : Sego : Smog : Snog : Song : Tegs : Toge : Tong

