

Pandemic polemic poems

(OK, it's not polemic but I liked the alliteration!)

By Rob Needham

There was a dear lady of Reading
Who said, "It's the lockdown I'm dreading,
Between you and me
I might die of ennui
And not from the virus that's spreading".

You can smile and wave to your neighbour,
And, "How are you doing" you say,
You can kiss them on both cheeks like Frenchmen,
As long as you're six feet away!

You can queue at the checkout for ages,
You can key in your PIN code to pay,
You can pile all the stuff in your trolley,
So long as you're six feet away!

You can walk and meet dogs and their masters
The dogs will get matey – or may,
Their leads will need untwisting quickly
But make sure you're six feet away!

Your prescription you take to the chemist,
The queue is out of the door,
You reach out with cash for the item
And your arms must be six feet or more!

You can catch the bad virus so quickly
If the government rules you don't keep,
You can die and be buried most quietly,
As long as you lie six feet deep!

As countries were locking down, a Sonning bell ringer and her son on holiday in Peru were stuck there for a while for lack of flights home.

A lady on hol in Peru
With her son, on holiday too,
Said, "This is tough,
It's going to get rough,
But we're stuck here, so what can we do?"

Hazel and son, they both knew
That the virus was worse than the flu.
They said, "Just one cough
Could carry us off –
We're both in a bit of a stew."

The virus had reached England too,
Both of them knew that was true,
But they said, "We both reckon
The UK really beckons,"
So home to old Blighty they flew.

Start of lockdown

We're allowed to take exercise just once a day,
But how many hours is one session I say?
To the start of the walk, can we drive in our car?
Or is that just spreading the virus afar?
But on quiet country lanes the chances must be
We'll meet fewer folk than a walk locally.
We need to know more on these points we discuss,
And make sure we beat this ghastly virus.

Shops, pubs and restaurants have closed their doors
The British economy is hitting the floor
But some firms are changing the things they produce
And giving them over to NHS use.
On Thursdays at eight we Clap for the Carers –
Hospital staff work long hours to save us.
We'll keep the Rules of Boris, we'll keep to isolation,
And when this virus mess is done we'll be a stronger nation.



A visit to the hairdresser – so that is now a ban,
We'll have to use the scissors and trim as best we can.
Shaggy hair and messy styles – we don't care for that,
When talking on app Skype or Zoom we'll have to wear a hat!

Using Facebook Messenger with hair a total mess,
Just have sound (no video!) you know it's for the best!
We'll keep the Rules of Boris, we'll keep to isolation,
And when this virus mess is done we'll be a stronger nation.

Later ...

Different countries take the lead in the statistics races,
Which nation, as of today, will have most virus cases?
Will it be Italy, China or France,
Or are very poor countries quick to advance?
It's a global problem so it really shouldn't matter,
Nations should not compete but try to help each other.
We'll keep the Rules of Boris, we'll keep to isolation,
And when this virus mess is done we'll be a stronger nation.

"Oh dear I'm looking peaky – and the peak is still to come,
At this rate I'll be on a bed and lying on my tum,
The respirator's wooshing in the oxygen and air" –
Cut out these silly thoughts, don't panic if you dare.
We'll keep the Rules of Boris, we'll keep to isolation,
And when this virus mess is done we'll be a stronger nation.

Easing of lockdown...

Lockdown rules are easing in a vague and piecemeal way,
Boris says that we can exercise several times a day.
The call "back to work" has got some firms quite worried,
They feel that changes needed are going to be too hurried.
Businesses will choose themselves when they can restart
Their working environment must help staff keep apart.
Schools, trains and buses will make easing very phased,
And that is probably for the best so Joe Public isn't fazed.
We are told that after lockdown 'New Normal' will be in,
But New Normal will be different from the normal we were in.
We'll suss the Rules of Boris, ease up on isolation,
And when New Normal settles down we'll be a stronger nation.

By Geoff Harvey

There was a new poet called Needham
Who was afraid of losing his freedom,
He took up a pen
To write now and then,
Hoping that Ringers would read 'em.

By John Harrison

If we can't ring bells in towers
We can walk and see the flowers.
With the wind on your face
It is good to embrace
Mother nature and all her powers.

By Mary Spence

No bells to ring, so what shall we do?
Could always stay home and learn Stedman...

But that's not so easy when learning alone
With no one to help when you're wrong
No conductor to say, "You should be in slow,
And you went in quick,
That's not right.
You were wrong at the single,
Let's call it a night".
I'd better go home and learn Stedman.

When all this is over, then what will we do?
We'll all celebrate with a quarter or two.
But what shall we ring?
Maybe Grandsire, Plain Bob,
Or Cambridge or Yorkshire, or Kent.
Not Bristol or Belfast,
They're both much too hard.
I think I would rather ring Stedman!

The PM said, 'People don't fret
We'll get through this crisis, you bet!
But it's better by far
To stay where you are,
Don't go out and socialise yet!'

Six weeks into lockdown, I'm starting to flag
All this extra spare time is becoming a drag.
I had a long list of things I must do
Now I'm nearing the end and must find something new.

I've caught up with friends using Facetime and Zoom
Weeded the garden, cleaned out the spare room.
I've tidied the cupboards, got rid of some stuff
And shampooed the cat – she went off in a huff.

I've read some new books, played Sudoku online
Tried some new recipes, drunk some new wine
Been out for some walks, but not very far
I certainly haven't been driving the car.

We've been very good
The rules we don't flout
But now – all together –
"WE WANT TO GO OUT!"

Found by Tom Blomley

(To be sung to the tune of *I will survive* by Gloria Gaynor):

At first I was afraid, I was petrified,
There was no loo roll down at Aldi and I nearly cried.
Oh I spent so many nights just thinking how you did me
wrong,
I used to wipe,
And now I'm forced to just drip dry!

No anti-bac!
No bloody soap,
and if you think you're buying pasta well you've got no bloody
hope!
I would have bought that box of eggs, I would have rationed
out my bread,
If I'd have known for just one second everyone would lose
their head!

Go on now go, walk out the door!
All you bloody stockpilers,
You are not welcome any more!
Weren't you the ones who just bought all the sodding beans?
You selfish gits!
I hope you spill them down your jeans!

Oh no not I, I won't panic buy!
Oh as long as I have alcohol, I know I'll stay alive,
Though I can't buy my usual cheese,
This will not bring me to my knees
And I'll survive, I will survive, hey, hey!

It took all the strength I had not to fall apart,
There was just apples and 1 carrot in my shopping cart,
And I spent hours walking round just feeling sorry for myself,
The empty store, with boxes strewn across the floor

And you'll see me, somebody who,
Cannot buy anything she came for, and it's all down to fecking
you
And frickin Reg from down the road is such a selfish blimmin
git
Because he stockpiled all the loo roll so nobody else can have
a s**t!

Go on now go, walk out the door!
All you bloody stockpilers,
You are not welcome any more!
Weren't you ones who just bought all the sodding cakes
Can't you make a crumble,
Do you people not know how to bake?

Oh no not I, I won't panic buy!
Oh as long as I have alcohol, I know I'll stay alive,
Though I can't buy my usual cheese
This will not bring me to my knees
And I'll survive, I will survive!

By Roland Needham (Rob's twin)

Two covid avoiders in Yateley
Did nothing considered too matey.
With puzzles and talk
With books and one walk
They continued with life adequately.

We friendly folk of the YCBC¹
No longer bowl woods so bias-y.
Must put back the jacks
Our bowls in our packs
And distance ourselves quite socially.

I've been reading science articles
To avoid those covid particles:
Don't go with party gals
Or mix with hearty pals
Instead have a walk or ride bicycles.

Now life has got quite fatalistic
As lifetime of Covid is elastic:
Three hours in air
A day on a chair
But as long as three days on plastic.

By Marlies (Roland's wife)

There was a message from the Centre
That the bowls club could no longer enter
The school or the Gym
Where the bowling was in,
Let us hope for good bowling next winter.

In the winter of twenty nineteen
Something happened quite unforeseen.
In the city of Wuhan
Bat-virus infected a man,
Now mankind is fighting Covid-19.

Corona virus is a problem,
So said Boris our newest PM.
No respecter of personality,
Even infecting royalty.
Now the lock-down is causing mayhem.

¹ YCBC – Yateley Bowls Club)

Earth-mother Gaia in extremis,
Under attack from the human species,
Pulled a trick from her hat
In the form of a bat,
To remind us we can't control this.

Two women who are living together,
Are out for a stroll through the heather,
On nice common land
That is close at hand,
Keeping their dog on a tether.

Love in the time of Covid-19
Happens in spaces mainly unseen.
But if short of the pill
Lovers continue still,
So next year many babies are seen.

The Covid virus is doing its best
To spread itself from east to west.
It wrecks our economy
Stops all our bonhomie,
Scientists are trying to beat this pest.

The lockdown rules need improvement
To give us more freedom of movement.
We should be able to wander
From the car parks, to ponder
Spring's quite magical enchantment.

The scientists cannot decide
If a virus is dead or alive.
But what they can tell
Is it needs a cell
If it wants to increase and survive.

We went to do shopping in Lidl
But found it too much of a fiddle.
A queue of shoppers
Enough to stop us –
When's the best time? That's the riddle.

Compiled by Rob Needham