

Friday 13 March 2020

The grapevine says that the Arts and Craft Exhibition and Gala Concert for the Eisteddfod have been cancelled.

X and X have returned early from Europe, on the run from Covid 19 as it has chased them through Sardinia, Corsica and France. They are taking it upon themselves to self-isolate for 14 days, with their son doing the shopping.

Saturday 14 March 2020

Walking for Health and U3A activities are postponed.

I have discovered that with 3 toilet rolls in each of our bathrooms I am down to one in the airing cupboard.

After our lunch at White Rock Cafe we went to the Co Op (Royal Hotel) and managed to buy one pack of 4 toilet rolls. I felt almost compelled to buy more because the sign indicated that the maximum allowance was 3 per customer, interesting psychology! On the way home we swung into Waitrose at Admiral Park - absolutely zero tissue (kitchen or toilet) on the shelves. Why do I find this unbelievable? Seeing is believing. Iceland across the road had as much as you wanted without restriction. We bought the largest pack. This constitutes our "panic buying". We think that there is no need to squirrel stocks away.

I do wonder what my mother would have done. She lived here during the Occupation and stock piled sugar during the Cuban crisis of 1963. We know her reason for keeping everything was "in case".

Sunday 15 March 2020

Decision is taken to cancel the Adults Guernesiais section of the Eisteddfod and my father is advised that the monthly Saturday lunch at Capelles Church is cancelled.

Conversation with my father turns to how people are going barmy in the supermarkets by panic buying, the Spanish flu pandemic (to which my maternal grandfather lost his first wife and my paternal grandmother received an emergency tracheotomy and bore the scar for the rest of her life) and nature's way of population control. For a man who served during the 1939-45 war this is very different indeed.

A relation in the UK agrees that the world is going crazy and so much hysteria is caused by the media. She finds it frustrating that the true facts are not shown. She is a teacher so classifies as a key worker. Her eldest daughter works in a lab which is contracted to test for Covid19.

I find out that when X and X returned through France they gave a lift to their niece. She is now in Guernsey but obviously not self-isolating as she has come to visit family and friends, and is cutting short her week's stay and returning to France on Monday. So if they have it, does she have it and who has come in to contact with her here and on her return? Awesome thoughts!

NOTES

On Friday 13 March it was quite clear to those of us back stage at Beau Sejour that the Music and Speech & Drama sections of the Eisteddfod, had just squeezed in under the line before Coronavirus storms ahead. The sub-committee for the Guernesiais section debated at some length as to whether the adults section should proceed on Monday 16 March. My angle was that people could surely make up their own minds as to whether they wished to attend or not. Then the death rate in the UK doubled from 10 to 20 and along with notifications from U3A and Walking for Health organisations the decision to postpone /cancel became clear. With 80% of the audience and competitors falling into the 65+ category it was a non-event.

Monday 16 March 2020

All planned training for the Meet and Greet team is cancelled. Heritage Festival events until the end of April are postponed /cancelled.

My father has an appointment at Medical Specialist Group. He was phoned last week to ask if he was in good health. All the magazines had been removed from the waiting room and it was not possible to either use the vending machine or the water dispenser. He had lost a filling over the weekend and it was super easy to make an appointment to see the dentist later in the week .

Finally a decision was taken to postpone the Junior section of the Guernesiais Eisteddfod too.

Tuesday 17 March 2020

All bell ringing is cancelled as is the staff Fire Training at Beau Sejour.

My father and I turned up at Styx for Singing for Health. Seems that the message it had been cancelled had reached everyone except us. Had a brief chat with X, my first observing social distancing. She had been due to attend a meeting at the Walled Garden later that week, but was cancelling all non-essential appointments and said she could email me some relevant information. Perhaps this is the way forward ? How many meetings are unnecessary ?

Later there were emails advising that the Literary Festival was cancelled and that Heritage sites, including Victor Hugo's house, would not be opening. I did however complete one of my assignments for Retail Maxim.

Wednesday 18 March 2020

It is now law that you have to self-isolate for 14 days if you travel into the Bailiwick. Alderney ,Sark and Herm are still open.

Liberation Day celebrations have been scaled back. X is not socialising.

I went to the doctor for a routine appointment, no need to sign in as that involves the use of a communal pen and of course no magazines or toys in the waiting room.

Completed another assignment for Retail Maxim with panic buying in process and some people wearing gloves at the supermarket .

X tells me that she is washing her hands more thoroughly now so much so that they are getting sore . "It's the waiting that is getting to me. When's it going to hit ? How bad ? Too many questions ". I understand how she feels and respond with my mantra of "one day at a time and stay safe" .

Thursday 19 March 2020

All assignments for Retail Maxim suspended until June 1, But I read the small print and completed 3 in today, and will still be paid providing the reports are sent by midnight.

U3A beach clean went ahead but there were only 3 of us ! We had a coffee at Roc Salt and booked a table for Friday. Cruise ships have been cancelled until the end of April. I cancelled a meeting with the Folk Museum. I don't actually think we will have an event at the Walled Garden on June 14. A levels are cancelled and so are church services .

We watched a sci-fi disaster movie "The Last Train to Busan";at least Covid19 isn't turning us into vampire style monsters!

We hear from hubby's grandson that Dublin is deserted . St Patricks' Day cancelled and all the pubs closed . In Ireland this is incredible. He has been working from home since Friday 13 March and although only a 7 minute walk from the city centre is just using local shops for supplies. His sister has been in Australia since February on a two year visa , she started work on Monday and is now unemployed again as the university she was working at has closed due to the pandemic.

I hear from X who was supposed to be travelling to New Zealand on Monday. She can't as NZ has laid down stringent new requirements for all people entering the country . She can hardly believe that they will be missing their son's wedding .

Friday 20 March 2020

The dentist tells us that they have had a number of cancellations and not so many people are phoning in for appointments, which explains why it has so been easy to book up.

There is sanitiser at the door and they are no longer making back to back appointments so

as to avoid too many people in the waiting room.

Pubs have to close their doors at 18.30.

Roc Salt deployed good spacing and staff were wearing black latex gloves . I thought food handlers had to wear blue, but never mind, and were these actually more hygienic than regularly washed hands? There were 12 of us eating and their capacity is for 55. Already they have decided to close for an extra day next week .

Schools will close till after Easter and the Tourist Information office is shut as is the Underground Hospital , Shell Shrine and Saumarez Manor too. The attaché evening for Island Games on 28 April is postponed.

Saturday 21 March 2020

It was decided to keep the Walled Garden open for volunteers.

We had lunch at the White Rock cafe but it was only half full. They too are adjusting opening times for next week.

In town some shops were closing early . Boots had no social distancing in place and that felt uncomfortable but Salvatore's cafe at Saumarez Park does ! Generally Town was empty, and there was loads of car parking spaces on the White Rock.

Sunday 22 March 2020

Our day starts watching the news and I have found the Worldometer website. It is Mother's Day.

Yesterday the number of cases in Guernsey jumped from 2 to 17 . I feel reassured that these people will be isolated and that gov.gg are doing the right thing .

I heard from X that her brother is in charge of one of the ICU units in Milan. It seems that his neighbours often leave a meal on his doorstep for him in the evening. Her parents have been in lock-down for one month .

My cousin in the UK is self-isolating, she is expecting to receive a letter from the Government anyday now. She tells me that they have decided not to come to Guernsey at the end of April , as she couldn't bear the thought of transmitting anything to my father. I know her heart is in the right place but I explain that they would only be allowed if they self-isolated for a fortnight on arrival. Her daughter and son-in-law did visit her today and got a Mc Donalds's as they couldn't go out for a meal: her self-isolation seems a little loose!

#### NOTES

How things have changed in a week . All but 2 of our activities have closed around us .

The town and cafes etc are looking empty. Now a crowd of people represents a germ factory and social distancing is becoming the norm . On Wednesday I was suggesting having a coffee with someone , now I wouldn't . It does seem surreal, it is touching every part of our life but not us in terms of illness .... yet .

I phoned X and X at the weekend . They are self isolating and I wondered how they were getting on and once again made an offer to do shopping, which they say they might take up with me later in the week . Then I remember that years ago, the elderly lady who lived opposite me in Leighton Buzzard, asked me to get a 1lb of plain flour , "but not Waitrose flour I don't like it, I find Home Pride is the best " she added . Silly me didn't think to ask where she bought it from as I assumed Waitrose would stock it - wrong . Neither did KwikSave ( you can tell this was decades ago ) and finally I found it in the CoOp ! Hats off and respect to anyone who has undertaken shopping trips for others during this crisis ! I feel an innate compulsion to communicate with friends and family and I write a list of phone calls to make . I intend to limit this to one a day as a treat .Thoughts of us or them being ill or dying do run through my mind, but weirdly I feel no sense of alarm .