



Lockdown Times

Sutton South
Hello

No. 2

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are all coping as well as possible during the Lockdown. It seems like every day is a Sunday. My enthusiasm for spring cleaning soon disappeared and the most exciting experience for me over the last few weeks has been cutting my own hair, and then colouring it. My hair is now a lovely ginger colour. Oh, and I have taken up cake making...I am quite pleased with the results, but my clothes are getting tighter and tighter!

Thank you very much to all those who have contributed to this newsletter. We welcome more articles on special memories or your experience of Lockdown. You can email them to me, send them by post, or dictate them over the phone.

For the artists amongst you, the next topics for watercolour pencil paintings are as follows: a tree in blossom; an exotic bird (real or fantasy); a birthday cake with candles.

If there is anyone who would like to try out Adrienne's exercise making Matisse cut out shapes and hasn't had a kit, please let me know. A big thank you to Adrienne for giving us such an exciting project.

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Need Help?

1. If you need help the Council's number is 020 8770 5000, option 6.

2. Age UK Sutton can offer general advice, welfare checks on older people, scheduled telephone well-being befriending and reassurance calls, emergency door-step food and welfare check (including basic food pack with essential groceries) for those older people assessed in need, collection of prescriptions and on-going food drops based on need and availability. Get in touch

via info@ageuksutton.org.uk, 020 8 915 2235 or 0208 078 2916.

3. If you would like some one to befriend you on the telephone (and we all need someone to talk to in these difficult times) please call Sutton Befrienders on 020 8661 5900 or email befriending@vcsutton.org.uk. They have a lot of volunteers and are very friendly.

Gentle Exercise

Many of us are finding that we're sitting down for quite a lot of the day at the moment. It's a good habit to try and get up once an hour and stretch your legs a little. Even if it's just walking to the kitchen to put the kettle on, or doing the washing up, it all helps.

But if you find standing difficult, just moving your arms and legs for a few minutes every hour will also help break up those long stretches of sitting.

COPING WITH THE CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN

Marie Baker

(Hello Arts and Crafts)

I was not happy to be isolated in my own home because of the coronavirus outbreak. But, of course, I do understand why we have to do it. I am doing my part to make sure that the virus does not spread. But I am lucky. I have one of my granddaughters, Isabelle, staying with me. We enjoy each other's company and she is a great help.

During this period it was Mother's Day, which I was not looking forward to at all. Normally I would see some of my family. However this year I was able to see all of them!

I started in Australia talking to my daughter Sandy. Then I went to Wiltshire for a catch up with my son. And then to my daughter and granddaughter in Raynes Park and I ended the day with my youngest son in Northumberland. How did I manage this? My lovely granddaughter who is staying with me arranged it all on Skype. The wonders of technology! I thoroughly enjoyed myself and forgot all about coronavirus.



AN AFRICAN EXPERIENCE – A VIEW FROM THE RANKS.

Ken Card

(Hello Arts and Crafts)

It was May 1960 and I was a regular in the armed forces. My platoon was called to arms and sent to Kenya for a nine-month posting. Our task was to support the Duke of Wellington's regiment in their role of keeping the peace.

We were based in a disused airfield next to the barracks of the pro British King's African Rifles. We lived a rough life there with soldiers living in tents, cobbled together washrooms and a dining tent. The engineer's regiment managed to set up a sewage system that led into a cesspit. (I fell into it, of course, but that's another story)

Biscuit Mattresses

My platoon (40 of us) was allocated an unused aircraft hanger. This was okay until it rained, which was every night! And then what a racket! We made do with old spring iron beds, one blanket, no sheets and a type of mattress we called biscuits. These were thin, hard, and square. We were 2 to a bed.

Our job was to drive to troubled areas and to support the infantry; to seek out Mau Mau terrorists and break up riots.

Flamingos

Our mock up camp was only about 2 miles from the jungle, quite close to Lake Nakuru, famous for flamingos. Hundreds would settle on the water and completely cover the whole lake to form a blanket of pink haze. The slightest noise would send the whole flock up into the sky forming a pink cloud blocking out the Sun. We made sure this happened during our visit, as we did not want to miss this marvellous sight

On occasions, we were allowed to leave camp, but never alone. So we ventured out, and explored, in groups of four or five, watching out for the Mau Mau.

It was always after lunch that we were allowed to go exploring, since it was too hot to work and most of our chores had been accomplished before 1 o'clock. On one occasion, together with four of my troop, I ventured into the jungle. But we went further than normal. We were sensible enough to leave markers to find our way back to camp. It was then we had the most unusual adventure.

There in the middle of the jungle the five of us were suddenly encircled by a group of Masai warriors, about 15 in number. They had distinctive red costumes, carried spears and shields and used face markings. It seemed that the average height of each warrior was over 6 feet. "Oh no, we are all going to die" one of my companions explained. I must admit I thought I would need to change my underpants if we ever got out of this situation!

Prodded By Spears

Then the Masai started to prod us lightly with their spears.! Then a quite extraordinary thing happened. They lowered their weapons and began to laugh. They were very friendly. They were hunting for food. And then, even more surprisingly, they offered each one of us one of the spears. Each warrior carried several. It was a gift. But I realised we had to return this favour. What did we have? Money was no good to them. One of my brighter companions suggested giving them out berets. Only five of the Maasai could receive a gift but the rest seemed happy. They walked away chuckling amongst themselves. For our part we walked away after a wonderful experience and the only penalty was a visit to the quartermaster store for a new beret and cap badge.

ROCK ON

Vanessa Browne

Arose from Easter needing a talk,
Took a turn round the block for a jolly
good walk.

No virus seen hidden in the flowering
trees, nor a single solitary bumble bee.
My footsteps echoed as I moved along
Christchurch, a ghost town with a missing
throng.

A postie passed with a trolley delivery,
distinctive colours, and official livery.
Back on the main road, off to the shops
with queues, spaced like chess, with
distancing stops.

Makes one aware of a hidden threat, one
all around us but not seen yet.

Three more weeks on the lockdown
scales, and nothing to do but remember
the tales.

Last but not least, to our NHS who are
likely to come out 'Only The Best!'

PARANHOS-MEETING THE IN-LAWS!

Kathy Doran-Almeida
(Wednesday Hello Club)

51 years ago I became engaged to
Manuel. He was Portuguese and took me
to meet his family in Paranhos da Beira in
central Portugal.

In those days transport was rather rough
and we spent seven hours on hard seats
during a train journey from Lisbon. The
toilet smelt to high heaven. I just could
not use it and I had to wait until we
arrived in Nelas before we dashed into a
café for a drink so I could use the loo.
The man behind the counter asked if I
needed toilet paper and handed me a key

for my use; embarrassing for a newly engaged and very innocent young woman.

After quite some time the bus arrived to take us for a further 10 km to Paranhos. What beautiful countryside we saw on that journey: spectacular snow-capped mountains, countryside covered in wildflowers, fir and eucalyptus trees. A wonderful rural scene with people working hard on the farms we passed.

Hats and Gloves in the Country

Of course, I was dressed in an ideal outfit for such a journey! I wanted to make a good impression and was wearing hat, gloves, long coat, high-heeled court shoes, and a well made up face. I tottered off the bus onto the uneven dirt track and realised I was a long way from Wimbledon.

Toilets

I was determined to adapt and, toilets being high on my list of priorities, was relieved that the house had a loo. But there was no flush. Everything just went down to a room below and landed on straw. It felt so strange to feel a breeze blowing around my private parts. For a shower, water was heated over the open fire and then taken to this small room and trickled through a sort of showerhead and was caught in the tin bath in which you stood.

Food

Food was cooked in large metal pots hanging from hooks placed above a fire. A large ham was being smoked up in the chimney. But oh dear! This odd English girl only ate chicken and vegetables. Never mind, Manuel's father came back holding a chicken complete with feathers, dripping blood. They collected the blood in a small dish to make a special delicacy. Nothing was wasted in the country.

To keep warm we all sat cosily around a circular container filled with hot coals and fir cones. The aroma was wonderful.

Women in Black

Later that evening many women came to the house, curious about the stranger who had arrived. It looked like a sea of black dresses. I discovered that most of them wore black as a measure of economy. If a husband, or a close member of the family died, then women were expected to wear black for a year. With lesser relatives it was six months. So with people dying as they would normally it made sense to wear black clothes. All these ladies were staring at me. There was no TV in those days and I had film star treatment.

Noises above the ceiling!

Finally I was shown where to put my clothes and my bedroom. That night I lay awake hearing scary noises coming from above the ceiling. The next day I was told that rats eating potatoes in the loft caused this. "Nothing to worry about"!

Below the house we helped ourselves to homemade wine kept in barrels. There were rabbit hutches; chickens running around; we collected wild mushrooms from the countryside. I saw many young lads spending their days minding goats and heard the tinkling of bells in amongst bird song and babbling brooks.

In those days, everyone was so honest. You could leave your luggage and anything else anywhere in Portugal and nothing would be stolen.

After this initiation into rural life Manuel and I visited annually. My Portuguese became fluent and I was accepted by one and all.

