

Christmas 2020

# Lockdown Times No 6

*Hello Everyone,*

Good News! Anne Lamb has agreed to take over as editor of Lockdown Times. So we will be having a fresh look at what you want to read in your newsletter. Please let Anne have your view and, get writing! Even if you are not a natural writer, put down your thoughts on paper and Anne will turn them into a fascinating story.

Lots has been happening on the Covid-19 front and this issue covers many relevant issues. Who knows, some of us might have had a jab of the new vaccine by the time the next issue is published?

You can still contact me with any queries about Hello, and we enclose Anne's details for your stories and views for the next newsletter.

Have a good Christmas.



*Heather*

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## SAVED BY THE PANDEMIC

2020 was to be the big year, I would be 80, my youngest son and his wife both 50 and my eldest granddaughter 18. I decided to take the family to Disney Florida.

I have always told my granddaughters that my favourite Disney character was Minnie Mouse. I had sobbed through Bambi, sang Hi Ho Hi Ho off to work we go (none of this Frozen or Pocahontas). I would regret saying that.

Christmas 2019 came, our holiday was to be in April. The granddaughters went to town in Primark. I had a Mickey and Minnie Mouse Baseball Cap, M & M back pack, M & M passport cover, M & M Luggage strap, M & M Handbag Dangle M & M Hairbrush and a Name That Disney Tune Game with 4 Kazoos.

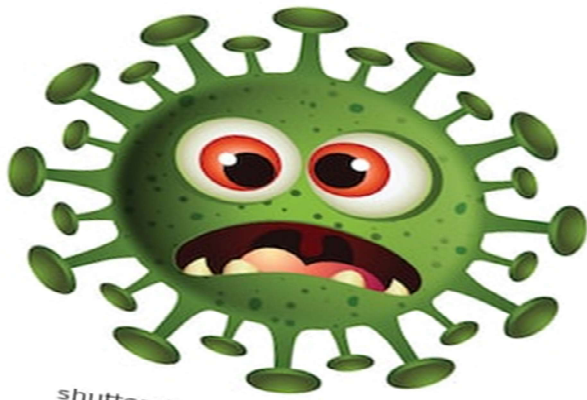
I imagined arriving at airport check-in wearing it all (it was that or hurt their feelings). My face would have been so red!!

Then came the pandemic, holiday cancelled – Phew!!

## Vicky Mouse



*At home with her Disney paraphernalia*



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## A Conversation with Covid-19

♪ ♪ *It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas everywhere you go.* ♪ ♪  
Come join me on a Sleigh Ride back in time - to last year when we innocently went about our lives preparing for Christmas and holidays to come.

*Covid 19: Stop!! You've made a poor job of protecting the planet and now I'm taking over. Welcome to my Pandemic world - the gates are open - all are welcome.*

By March it was a reality and the only way we could beat this monster was to enter Lockdown, supermarket shelves would be stripped as people went crazy to stock up before isolating, no hugs with your family as socialising was banned except from a distance.

*Covid 19: So you think if you stay in I can't get to you? Somebody has got to feed you, look after the sick, deliver your mail. Watch out I could be lurking anywhere!*

We got the message - we followed the scientific guidelines - washed our hands and wore a mask. Some of us never went outside, had everything delivered to us and hoped it didn't come with a Covid label.

Some of us dared to go for a walk - an eerie quiet pervading the air...no planes overhead, few cars on the road - this was the new norm. But we accepted it to beat this demon - after all it wouldn't last long and the sun was shining and the birds were singing - many of us spent much time in our gardens - it would all be over by the summer and we could start planning holidays, except it didn't go away.

*Covid 19: President Trump suggests injecting with disinfectant -tee, hee! Should be interesting!*  
*Breaking News: What a coup! I've infected Prince Charles and Boris, your PM. Could be you next!*

We kept going - discovered new ways to communicate with each other - suddenly mobiles were more than just a phone - WhatsApp groups kept us in touch with friends and neighbourhoods - every day there were amusing postings - then many of us discovered Zoom so we could meet friends or family in a group video chat. There was talk of Covid lasting until next summer.

There were a few lulls when we met our friends in small numbers, formed social bubbles, distanced of course but in the autumn, children returned to school and Covid numbers started to soar and we entered Lockdown 2!

*Covid 19: What did I tell you? This is a Pandemic - you won't win! And guess what I've finally got that President Trump but he's proving difficult, throwing a cocktail of drugs at me!*

Meanwhile clever scientists were working their socks off to develop a vaccine- some brave people even volunteered to trial it. As December approached, we wondered whether we could meet friends and family at Xmas. Then the news we'd longed to heard.

♪ ♪ Jingle Bells! Jingle Bells! ♪ ♪ The vaccine's on its way! ♪ ♪

Sorry Covid but I think your days are numbered and we might just dare to dream once more! But we're also learning the lesson about caring for our planet and each other!

And throughout all this time the Hello club continued to help the community. Huge thanks to Heather who worked so hard to keep us in touch, projects from Adrienne, delivering Lockdown Times, arranging an exhibition at Honeywood where we were bowled over by art from our talented members and even a model of the Tower of Pisa.

Clearly many members had worked hard while others of us had entered an unproductive mental lockdown.

Now a small group of us are meeting as a support group weekly at Christchurch with Covid limitations where we've escaped to a World of Fairies. Maggie and others, have worked their magic on our behalf so come fly with us to Honeywood in December for our next installation.

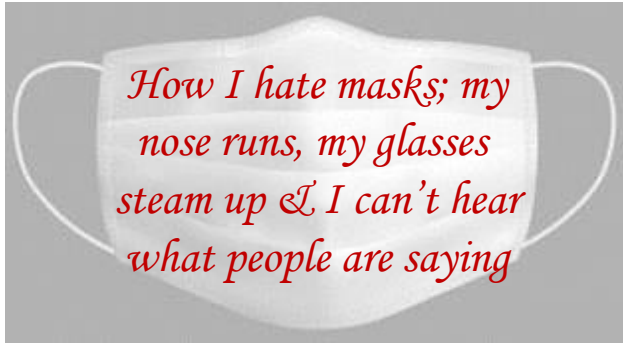
Things won't be back to normal by Christmas so continue to take care but at least we can hope for Easter.

*We wish you a Merry Christmas 2020 and hope for a Happier New Year!*

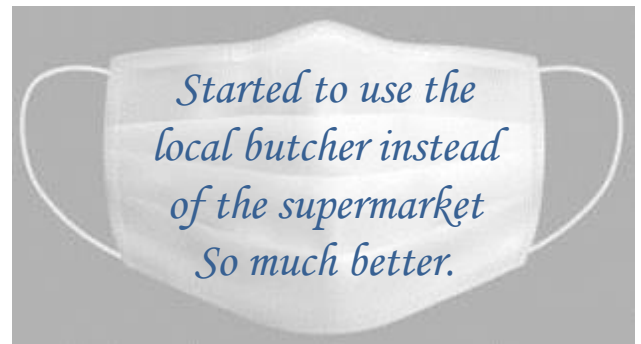
**Anne Lamb**



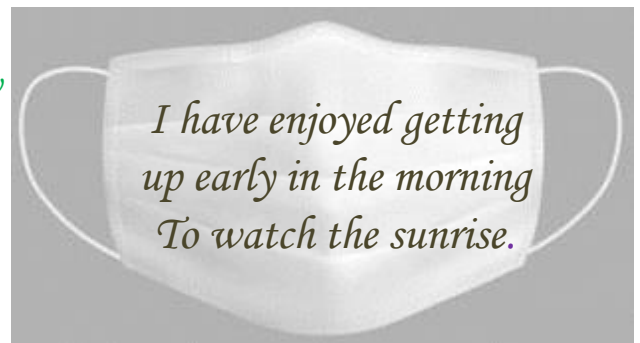
## OUR LOCKDOWN MEMORIES...



*Mostly in the workshop. Pleasant days  
on the allotment. A huge bonfire in  
November. Meeting friends & fellow  
Alzheimer people in Seers Park,*



*On VE Day.  
I live in a Close & we all  
met up on the lawns with a drink  
appropriately spaced.  
Made friends I'd not known but now  
Me outside with a drink –  
it was so lovely*



*Mother's Day  
I opened the porch to find toilet rolls  
with tulips inside from my daughter.  
No hugs of course!*

*Went with all my family on 13.8.2020 to France for a wedding in a big  
chateau - It was beautiful. Weather was lovely & food was good. I went  
swimming every day but I did not get drunk, my husband did. We had a  
disco in the evening & everyone was dancing – it was so good. We had to  
wear our mask to go & get food or a cup of tea.*

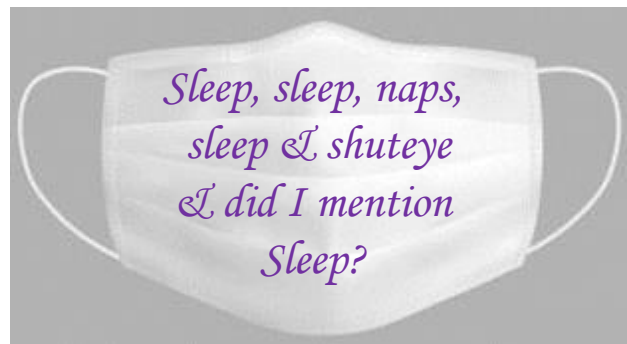


*For my 89<sup>th</sup> Birthday  
one of my granddaughters organised a  
virtual Birthday Party.*

*As a surprise my daughter from  
Australia & my other children from  
various parts of the world joined in.  
We had cake & balloons – it was  
a lovely surprise!*



*Tried a visor – went to blow my nose  
on the bus forgetting I had it on.  
Surreptitiously looked  
around to see if anyone noticed*



*Thursday at 8pm  
when we went  
outside to clap  
for the NHS*

*Kindness of  
neighbours offering  
to do shopping*

*Long walks with my daughter and  
son-in-law with their 3 dogs.  
Usually 5-6k! Around Oaks Park or  
Polesden Lacey. Talking, discussing  
current affairs & enjoying time together.*

## MY LOCKDOWN DOG



If you know me you will know that Peter and I have the most adorable dog in Sutton, Alfie. He might bark a bit, especially when there is the prospect of some doggy sausage at one of the park cafes, but apart from that he is perfect!

However, like humans, Lockdown has had a big impact on dogs as Peter and I discovered when we spent a week by the coast in August. We had booked a cottage in the former fisherman's village of Kingsdown in Kent, an area that we know well.

Things started to get rather fraught when we arrived on a bright summer's day and there was nowhere to park. Silly us, if there were no flights abroad, then everyone would be by the British coast. Then Alfie, sensing that stress levels were rising, started to bark in

sympathy, sympathy we could have done without!

Eventually, we parked some distance from the cottage, dragged our cases and the dog there, struggled to open the key box and collapsed over a welcome cup of tea and dog snacks.

Soon it was time to take Alfie for his evening walk. As Peter and I have different walking patterns we walk him separately. I am fast and furious, and Peter is more inclined to soak up the atmosphere, savour the night air, or as I frequently say, dawdle.

Alfie and I set out along the coastal path, but after a short time he sat down and refused to go any further. He kept turning his head back the way we came. He just wouldn't budge. I got the message that he didn't feel like a walk so I turned and was dragged back to the cottage where Alfie jumped up at Peter and licked his nose.

The next morning Peter set off and had the same experience; the dog would only go so far then insisted on turning back and finding me. Well, he certainly didn't come and lick my nose. I don't allow that! But he did leap at me.

This was to be the pattern of our holiday. If one of us left the cottage, Alfie sat at the door and whined, loudly. If one of us went into a shop, he barked like a banshee.

On one occasion, I had walked to the sea front, leaving Peter and his former best buddy behind. Sitting on

a bench, enjoying the sun and the passing container ships, I felt a gentle lick on my ankle. Looking down, there was Alfie. He had managed to squeeze under the bottom of the garden gate and followed my trail for five minutes.

Peter and I realised that for five months, we had all always been together throughout Lockdown. It is canine separation anxiety, and I gather many dogs have been similarly affected. The next time we were due to go away for a break, we booked him with a dog minder that he knows well. You know the rest! The country went into Lockdown again! Next time...

**Heather Honour**

## **MURDER MYSTERY MAYHEM**

"I can't believe I haven't been able to think of an unusual Christmas present for my mum this year," said Charlotte. "I've always managed to come up with something." Her friend Sarah finished the last of her lunch and nodded "yes, you gave her a spa break last year which I thought was great. I've stolen your idea for my mum this year. Anyway, there's still a few weeks to go so maybe you'll come up with something."

"Hopefully," sighed Charlotte. "Well, we'd better get back to work. My turn to pay today." She got up and went over to the counter to swipe her card.



As she turned to leave, she noticed a flyer in a pile on the counter. She picked it up. "Murder Mystery Weekends."

Have fun while trying to solve the crime!" Going to meet Sarah at the door she showed her the flyer. "What do you think? Mum always has loved detective stories and TV shows. Maybe she'd enjoy this." "Sounds like a great idea," said Sarah.

Later that evening Charlotte studied the website for the Murder Mystery Weekends. "Hmm," she thought, "sounds like fun". She looked at the dates for weekends in the following year and which hotels were available. There was one only a couple of hours away by train in the Spring which she thought would be the best.

The next evening, she 'phoned her mum. "Mum, have you anything booked for the weekend of 21st to 23rd April next year?" "No, I haven't yet", said her mum. "What's going on?" "Nothing for you to worry about Mum – just don't book anything in for that weekend", replied Charlotte. When Christmas morning arrived, Charlotte was both excited and nervous to see her mother's reaction

when she opened her gift. "Here's your present Mum. I hope you like it", she said.

Her mother opened the envelope, took out a card and read out loud: "You are cordially invited to accompany me to a Murder Mystery Weekend Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd April." Her mother looked at Charlotte. "I will absolutely love that", she said. "I've always wanted to go to one but your Dad wasn't that interested". "No," said her dad, "wouldn't suit me at all. I'd rather go and play golf – it'll be nice at that time of year". Charlotte and her mum both laughed.

It was a long winter but April 21st eventually arrived. They reached the hotel and checked in; both were given badges with their names on them. After unpacking they went downstairs and mingled with the other murder mystery guests.

Towards the end of the meal an argument broke out. Charlotte whispered to her mother "I think the drama starts now". The argument flowed back and forth getting rowdier and rowdier until eventually the two participants stormed out. About ten minutes later one of them rushed back into the room. "There's been a murder", she announced! Both Charlotte and her mother thoroughly enjoyed watching the drama unfold.

The next evening there was a party with dancing and games. Police attended, keeping a close eye on everyone enjoying themselves.

Towards the end Charlotte's mum said she was going to bed and for Charlotte to make sure she told her everything that might happen. Charlotte stayed on but after a while decided she would go to bed as well. As she walked along the corridor towards the lift, she noticed a group of people standing around muttering. Recognising them as part of the murder mystery weekend, she asked what was going on. "Someone else has been murdered", said one of the guests. It was late and Charlotte decided she'd carry on up to her room. She entered the lift and a young couple followed her in. The woman asked what was happening. Charlotte replied cheerily "Oh, there's been another murder".

From the swift intake of breath from the couple she realised they probably weren't part of the murder mystery weekend. "I'm so sorry – it isn't real. I'm here for the murder mystery weekend; I thought you were too". Laughing, the young couple reached their floor and left the lift. "Phew", said Charlotte – what a mistake.

Trying to decipher the clues provided in the Evidence Room proved too much for Charlotte and her mother and when the eventual murderer was unveiled on the last morning, neither had guessed right. But they didn't care – they'd had a great weekend.

**Fran Wilson**

