

Over the Hill

Well, these are strange times, aren't they? One thing you can be sure of is that no Senior Citizen of whatever age can actually say now, as we often do in a crisis "Oh yes, but I've seen worse. This isn't as bad as back in 19 whenever. Things were really worrying then". This is because there has not been anything before even remotely like this lockdown. The first thing to hit me was when my calendar suddenly emptied. Nothing left at all. No sport, no archery, no nights with the lads, no dining out with the In-house Adviser, not even bowls. I'm quite fond of my games of indoor bowls, but just for once I am glad that I am such a bad player. This is because when we do start playing again I won't be much worse than before, but the good players will really be out of practice. And no evenings at the pub with the lads either. Lads? Not one under 60! It's not the pints of beer I miss, you can always have those at home. It's arguing with four other experts about who was the greatest rugby scrum half in the world, ever. Or was that soccer player really offside as the VAR said. My In-house Adviser suggests that I should explain that VAR stands for Video Assistant Referee, or in other words, it's a big boy's toy. Sporting topics like these require great knowledge, debating skill and more than a few spare hours so you can talk about them at length. That's what I miss. But with nothing at all happening it has reached the point where I am having to think very hard to remember what day of the week it is. Many years ago I was present when my dear old Mum was interviewed by a doctor who called at her flat. Doctors used to do that sort of thing in the last century. He was there to check how she was doing by asking her a series of questions. One of these was counting backwards from 103 in sevens. I had trouble with that one myself, but another was a gently probe to see if she knew what day of the week it was. She hesitated before giving the correct answer, and I now know why. Because, of course, when every day is exactly the same as the one before, and the one that's to follow, it's difficult to tell them apart. At first I thought that all this spare time would be a great opportunity to start on that list of jobs that had accumulated over thewell, years really. In that time I have found that my In-house Adviser can be very creative when adding to my list. One might even call some of the items 'flights of fancy'. But I digress. After considering each of the jobs in turn it dawned on me why they were still on the list. Basically it's because I just don't want to do them. There are the ones for which I don't really have either the technical ability nor the will have to read loads of instruction manuals before starting. In my view instruction leaflets are just there to keep technical authors in work. Some jobs are boring, hard work or so long that you can't see that you are making any progress. Sometimes all of these apply on just one job. So that list is still the same as ever it was. My In-house Adviser and I drove into Weymouth for essential supplies from Marks & Spencer's recently. We fancied one of their meal deals to celebrate our wedding anniversary - many, many years together. There were only about two other vehicles parked along the entire length of the esplanade, but when we returned to our car after shopping, some mucky seagull had dropped a deposit right over the back window, along the roof, down the windscreen and across the bonnet. With all that free space to perform his droppings in, that seagull had to hit our car. Makes you wonder if they do it deliberately. And the Council have made the car parks free but are still charging for roadside parking "...to keep the roads clear." The roads are already so clear that you can walk down the middle of most of them without being in any danger of being knocked down, so why bother? They are not going to become very rich on the odd pound or two that they make from the ticket machines at the moment. But the saddest thing for us personally is not being able to visit our lovely great-granddaughter Evie on her first birthday which is just a few days away. This is because her dad, our grandson George, is a paramedic and, being in the front line, is at more than the average risk. So although we can't go anywhere near them we're videoing one all-action nursery song for her every day. My In-house Adviser is musical director on piano or ukulele and I am the props adviser and out of tune accompanist. Apparently she smiles when she sees us replayed on the telephone, which means a lot. But let's all stay safe and away from one another to slow the spread of the disease, to ease the load on the dedicated NHS staff and to buy some time for our hard working scientists to produce something that helps. Best wishes to you all and keep positive.