

## Bourne Pandemic 2020 – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020

As we work through the sixth week of lockdown, I am thinking how lucky I am. For a start, I enjoy my wife's company – even after nearly 42 years. We get on with our own projects during the day but come together for a tea break or lunch and then spend the evening watching TV, reading, listening to the radio or playing games on the tablet. I spend a large chunk of the day in the office while Lesley is downstairs. I'm busy with U3A things like preparing presentations and writing reports while Lesley is doing jigsaws, knitting or catching up with friends on her mobile and we have both spent more time in the garden.

The internet is a boon. I have had Zoom sessions with the U3A, family and our music teacher and managed to catch up with some old friends by email. Internet shopping has come into its own with purchases of wine and garden supplies and a variety of other odds and ends. Lockdown has given me the time to explore parts



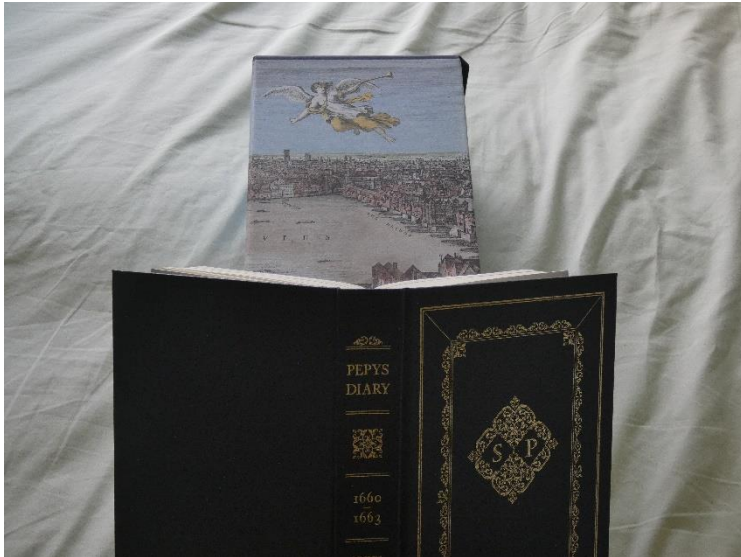
of the internet I never knew existed from actors reading the Rime of the Ancient Mariner, to a variety of TED talks and exploring the outer reaches of space. The only thing I miss is live music

performances and the occasional visit to a pub or restaurant.



Politicians and some others have compared the pandemic to the experience of the Second World War. They talk of fatalities and the sacrifice of essential workers, bravery, of turning the tide and victory over the virus. They talk of the grit and determination of the British people in the face of adversity. I think that is a bit overdone although I stand in admiration of NHS workers and other essential personnel like our

postman delivering letters with stoic resolve. Some people are certainly having a miserable time. Families who have lost a loved one and been unable to grieve properly, families sharing a tower block flat without a garden, those who have lost their job or had a big cut in income with the uncertainty of being able to pay the mortgage or rent. These hurts do not compare with being bombed or shot at, but they are nonetheless severe.



My father once explained to me what he meant when he said a friend had 'a good war'. The man in question had been taken out of low paid grinding manual work in the London's East End and joined the army where he learned a trade, assumed responsibility and saw parts of the world he had only dreamed of. His prospects at the end of the war were much better than in 1939. So, if the pandemic is like a war, I think some of us are

having a 'good pandemic' – enjoying the quiet roads, skies clear of aeroplane contrails, the return of urban wildlife, and the time to return to old interests and take up new ones. It is a quieter, more still time, and we should make the most of it before it goes.