



Gala

Water

Lockdown

Memories

Reflections

Hopes



This booklet has been created to record the extraordinary events that occurred in 2020 in the Gala Water Valley. It has been made possible by the generosity of several members of the local community who have donated images and comments about the Gala Water lockdown and has been put together by the Gala Water History and Heritage Association.

The Covid19 pandemic was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The World Health Organisation declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March. On the 23 March the Gala Water Valley went into lockdown.





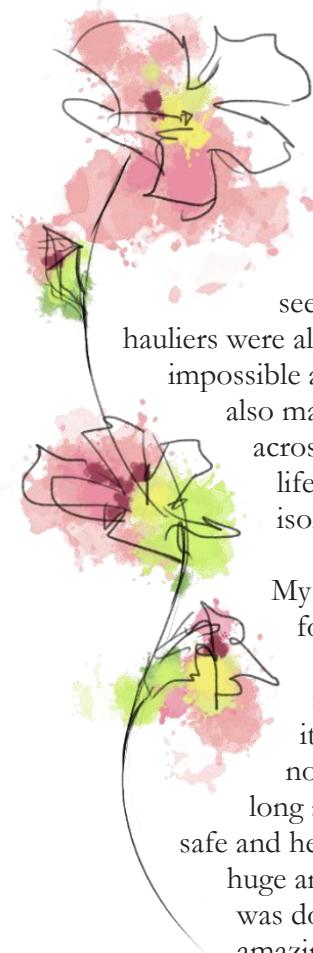
## *Homelife*

I have to confess to rather enjoying lockdown – but then I am lucky. I have plenty of space, can go for long walks with my happy dogs and ride my horse.

When my husband is working from home it means a lot of online meetings, some of which are with a video connection and others should be confidential. The rest of the family need to stay in the bedrooms when these meetings take place. I have found myself spending most of the day in my bedroom (3msq) sitting on the edge of the bed so my husband can work uninterrupted downstairs.

I feel that for our family this time has been bittersweet. We've had our ups and downs in finding our way with what works with the home schooling, and having five children aged between 6 and 14 has been a challenge.

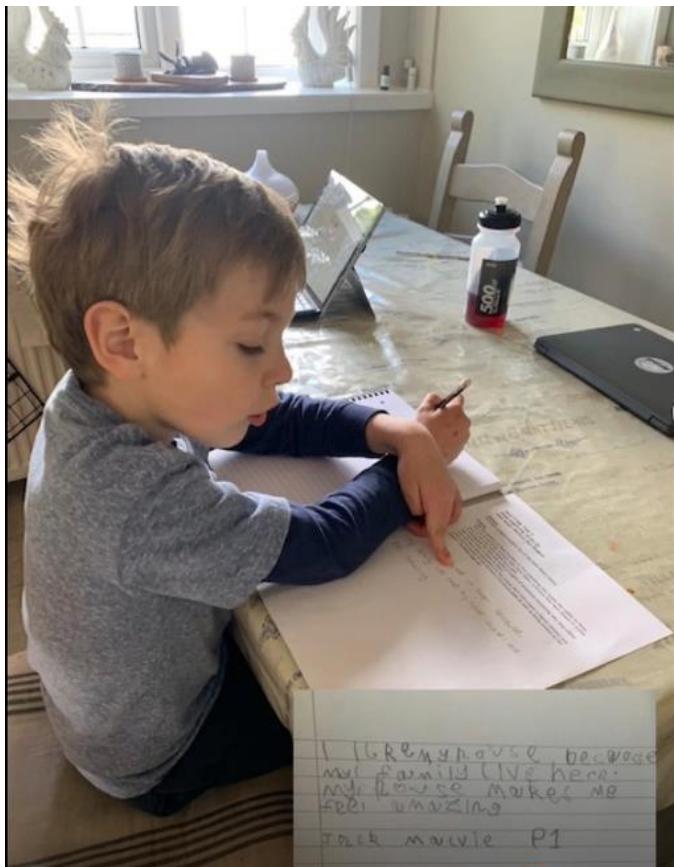




In the new normal and even during the days of lock-down when the roads and streets fell quiet the farming community was always alive.

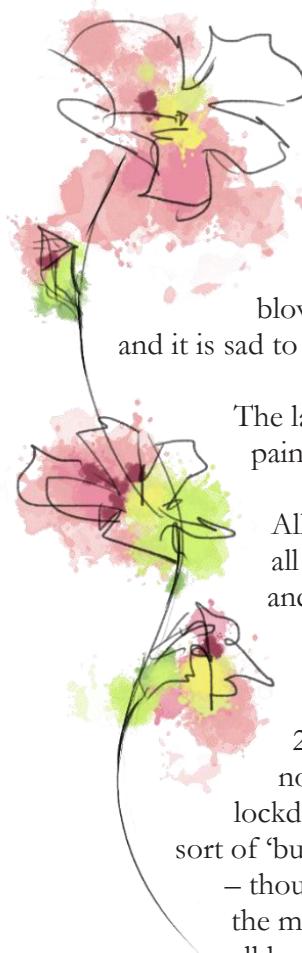
Contractors, vets, feed and seed merchants, fencers, hauliers were all there for us, nothing was impossible and that network of people also maintained a social bridge across the countryside, a social lifeline for those working in isolation.

My children aged 11, 9&9 found it strange not to be at school and instead 'home schooled' by mum. I found it stressful and difficult – I'm no teacher and in the end as long as my children were happy, safe and healthy – I was happy. Not a huge amount of classroom work was done but we explored our amazing surroundings. We were lucky as a family that my husband managed to work through it all and keep us afloat and sane!



I like my house because  
my family live here.  
My house makes me  
feel amazing

Took movie P1



My husband who was looking for a job discovered the job market had completely dried up.

I sing in a church choir and losing that was a cruel blow. We are still not together and it is sad to miss that companionship.

The lack of live sport on TV was a pain though.

All things that I helped out are all closed, archives, pensioners and lunch club.

Covid actually gave me time with my two children, now 21 and 18, which we would not have had were it not for lockdown. The three of us had a sort of 'bubble' of time together which – though in many ways it was not the most pleasant of times, as we all had the virus – was very special.

Thankfully friends went food shopping for us for the best part of two months. Very grateful for that!



We had to go into shielding. This upset the whole house routine. Everything had to be washed and cleaned all the time. I was doing it so often my hands were cracking. I've never used so much hand-cream ever!

My boys who are a big part of helping me in the shop at the weekends haven't come to help because they have their own jobs. We want to protect them from our herd base. As farmers we think about staying in our own herds. The night that lockdown was announced Stuart was preparing to start to sit up every night for the lambing. And he did so for about two and a half weeks. For that two and a half weeks I was quite alone. We were working different shifts. We didn't see each other much. But

he was there and supporting me when he could. I think the agricultural background is quite a tough one and makes you resilient.

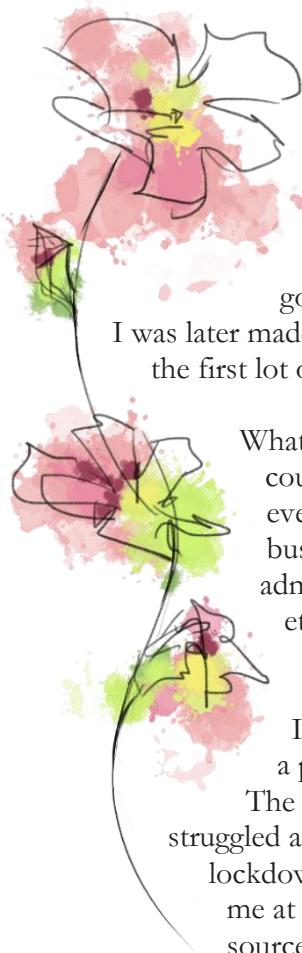


I also had my mother, who suffers from dementia, stay with us for some of lockdown. That was very challenging, partly due to her condition but also because of my work and it being so intense. I managed to develop a very effective routine for my mother and the use of streamed TV was a real godsend!

It has been difficult not to see our family and particularly our grandchildren. A bonus, however, has been speaking to people in the village and when we have been out walking who usually don't have time to stop.

I have missed seeing my two sisters in the flesh but we have mastered Skype and 'meet up' each Sunday. I became my brother's food shopper too and as he was shielding would drop his groceries off outside his front door before stepping back onto the path so we could have a five-minute chat.





## *The world of work*

When Scotland went into lockdown that was me out of a job temporarily (I thought). So I was initially put onto the government furlough scheme.

I was later made redundant in June once the first lot of furlough ended.

What has been major change of course was the lack of everything except the CC business which was busy administering hardship funds etc. walking the dog and gardening.

I am a registered landlord of a private house in Edinburgh. The family living in my property struggled at the very beginning of lockdown so this was a worry for me at the time as this is my main source of income.



One of my initial reactions to the pandemic was to pull my team together and work out what we could do to support businesses.

My team are mostly Glasgow based and sit together in Atlantic Quay on the Clyde. With Covid, everyone was instructed to work from home and instead of meeting face to face all our meetings have been held on Skype. This has worked really well most of the time with the ability to collaborate and share on-line being critical. That's been fine, however I have missed the company and socialising that you are able to get when you work in a city centre.

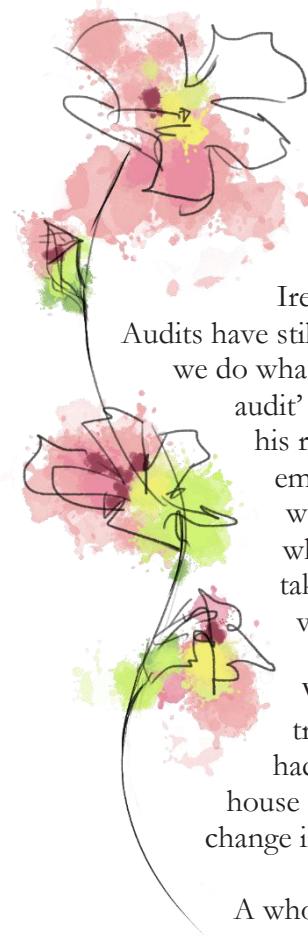
Covid has affected my work by stopping me in my tracks so to speak. Having contracted the virus, I was physically unable to work for quite a long time.

Hats off to those who have successfully worked from home. I think the teachers have done an amazing job.



As Covid strengthened its grip and lock-down became a reality, on farm we were in the build up to lambing. Through those difficult weeks, long days in the lambing shed and warm spring mornings welcoming lambs into a fresh green world were a shield to the real problems faced by too many, a bubble of normality filled with the innocent joy of new life. Without doubt those of us working on farm have been truly lucky, living yes in seasonal self-imposed isolation, but isolation filled with constant activity and the unfolding beauty of spring. In some ways lambing time is a doorway onto an escalator of jobs carrying the farm into summer; establishing and caring for crops and grass-land, calving and clipping. Perhaps that lifestyle is too inward looking but in 2020 that focus has been an escape from the problems of lock-down life which have touched many. That pathway of activity on the land has carried us into a time where Scotland at least is in a better place.





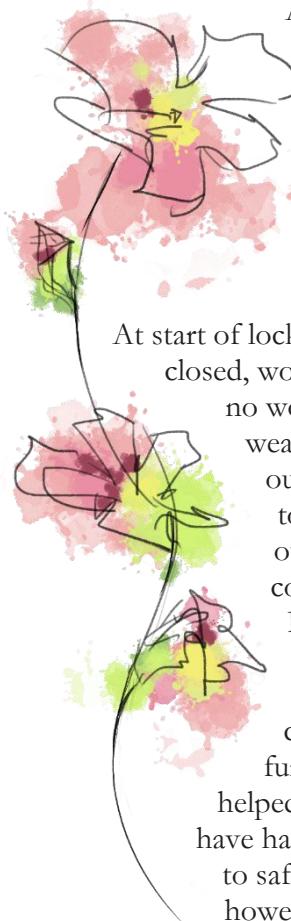
All audits on farm were postponed during lockdown, however I did have some alternative project work looking at and comparing standards in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Audits have still not returned to normal, but we do what has been called a 'remote audit' where the farmer sends all his relevant documents to me via email, I review them and then we do a 'livestream' on whatsapp where the farmer takes me on a tour of the farm via video from his phone.

We as carers quickly got new training and extra PPE which had to be worn in each client's house and then disposed of. Rapid change into the unknown.

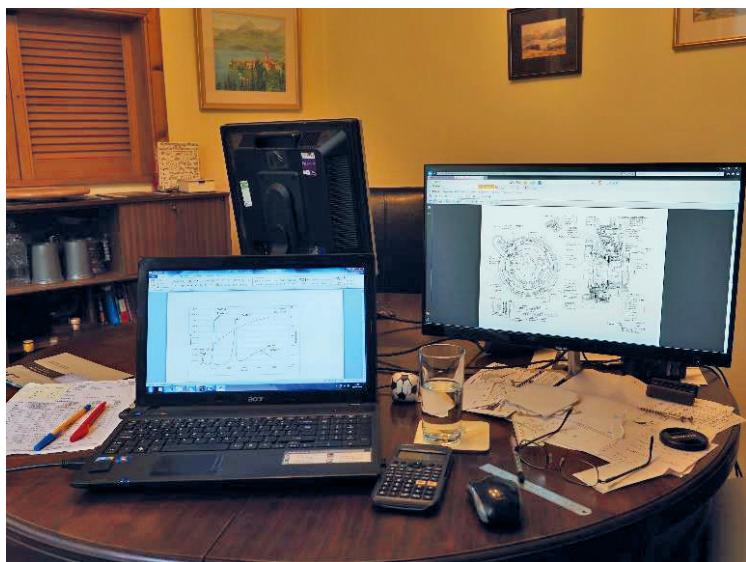
A whole new way of working. Very scary, overwhelming desire to stay at home. Amazing, strong, resilient team, we have laughed and cried and eaten many biscuits. Proved what I've known all along – we have the best health care system in the world. It's not over – the constant threat of the '2nd wave'.

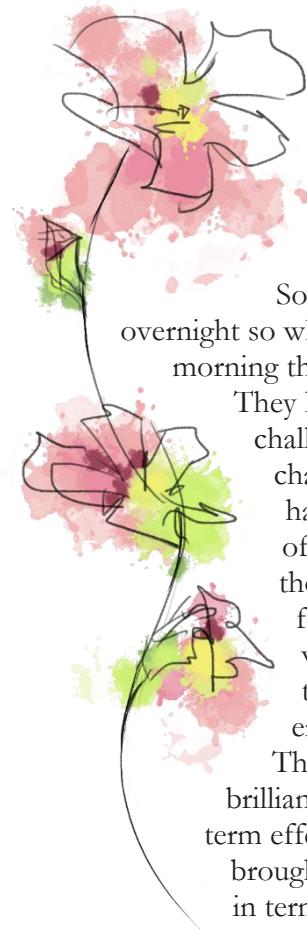




All meetings were held on computer links which were only adequate. In so many ways they do not replace “seeing” a person face to face. How they react, how they interact and body language.

At start of lockdown most textile mills closed, workflow stopped, we received no work. However, we have clients weaving medical textiles, they use our software so we were unable to close in case they needed our help. Many long-term contracts have been cancelled. Because our company is so small, each employee has a niche speciality within the company, the government furlough scheme has not really helped our business model. We have had to have times of furlough to safeguard for the future, however it has been a tricky juggle. Now we have part furlough part working on a daily basis it is much easier to manage what work we are now receiving. Our best overseas agent has died of Covid – a total shock both for our business and personally. The future is less financially secure than it was before.

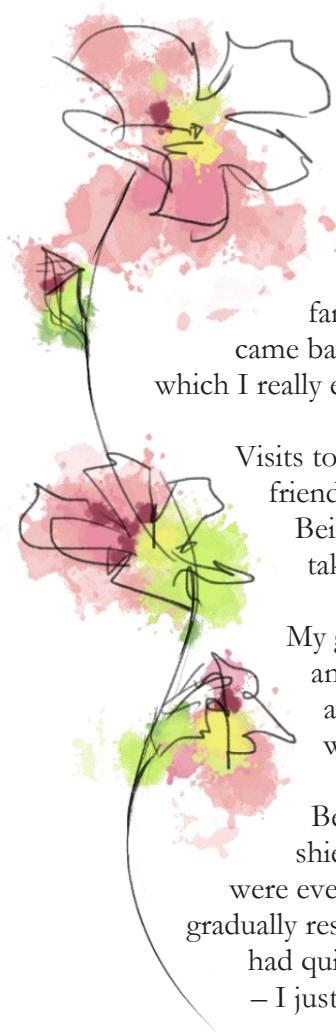




Covid had a huge impact on the building and restoration of the Station House which had just started a few weeks before lockdown.

My staff have been brilliant. Some things did change overnight so when they turned up in the morning there was a new work regime. They have just embraced the challenge. There have been changes along the way as we have gone through the stages of Covid. Some I've probably thought about day and night for three or four weeks but when they're implemented, they (the staff) just have to embrace them from day one. The customers have all been brilliant. I think it will have a long-term effect on my work. It has brought back some old fashioned in terms of shopping values, about shopping local, about not people flying off to the supermarket and filling the trolley high. Because the customers have looked at how they are living, that changes the way they shop with us.





## *Missing*

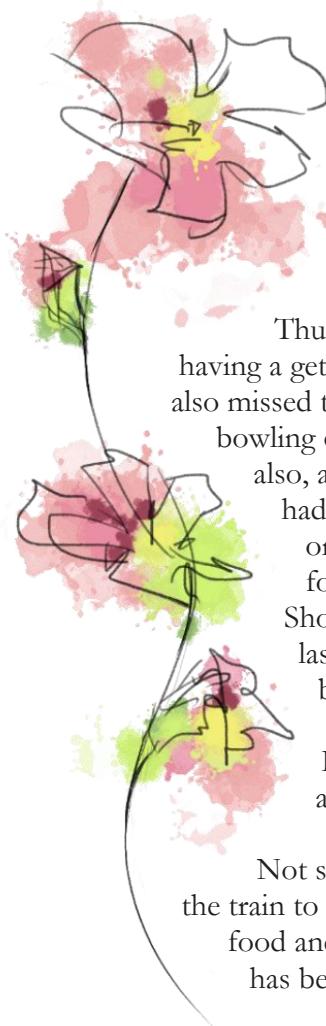
Human touch and the importance of that.

I really missed being able to go to Donegal to see my family there. My two sons came back home to stay in Stow which I really enjoyed.

Visits to the mobile library. Seeing friends at church on a Sunday. Being spontaneous and taking off for the day.

My granddaughter is only 6 and she had lost front teeth and grown in the time I wasn't able to see her.

Being forced to keep shielding when other people were eventually allowed to gradually resume a more normal life had quite a strange effect on me – I just wanted to break out!

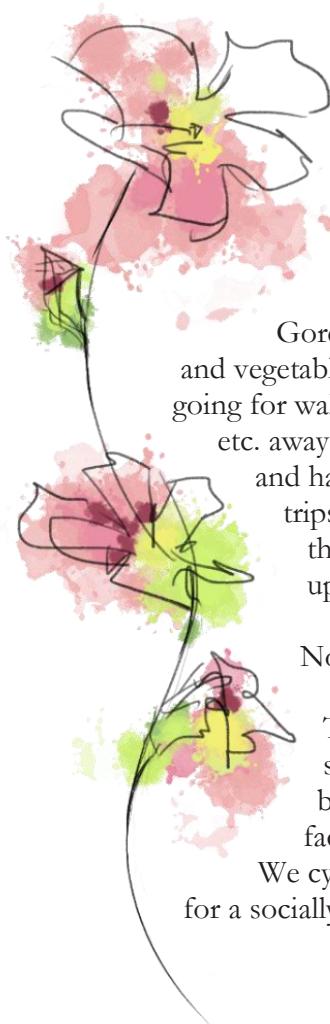


Lunch Club. Archive meetings. Going for a coffee with my brother after shopping.

Being a member of the Stow Pipe Band and not meeting up on a Thursday night to practice and having a get together was a hardship. I also missed the social side of the bowling club as the bar was shut also, and Bingo nights which we had just started up were put on hold. I was so looking forward to the Highland Show this year as I missed it last year. Let's just hope it is bigger and better next year.

Doing my exercise classes and going to the pub.

Not seeing folk or jumping on the train to Edinburgh or Gala for food and drinks at the weekend has been sorely missed.

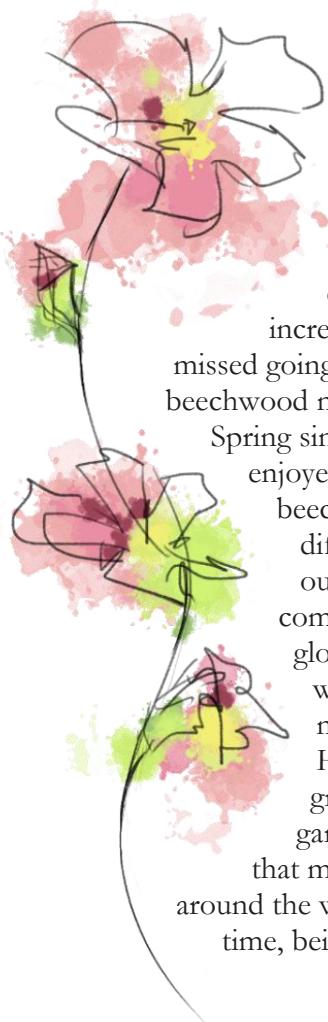


Not being shoppers, it was no hardship not to go except to get essentials and we are lucky with Alison Runciman and her team in the PO who have been excellent, and Gordon and wife with the milk and vegetable deliveries. Also just going for walks at the sea, in the hills etc. away from here, playing golf and having to cancel our annual trips to see friends. We missed the Cloudhouse café to meet up with friends.

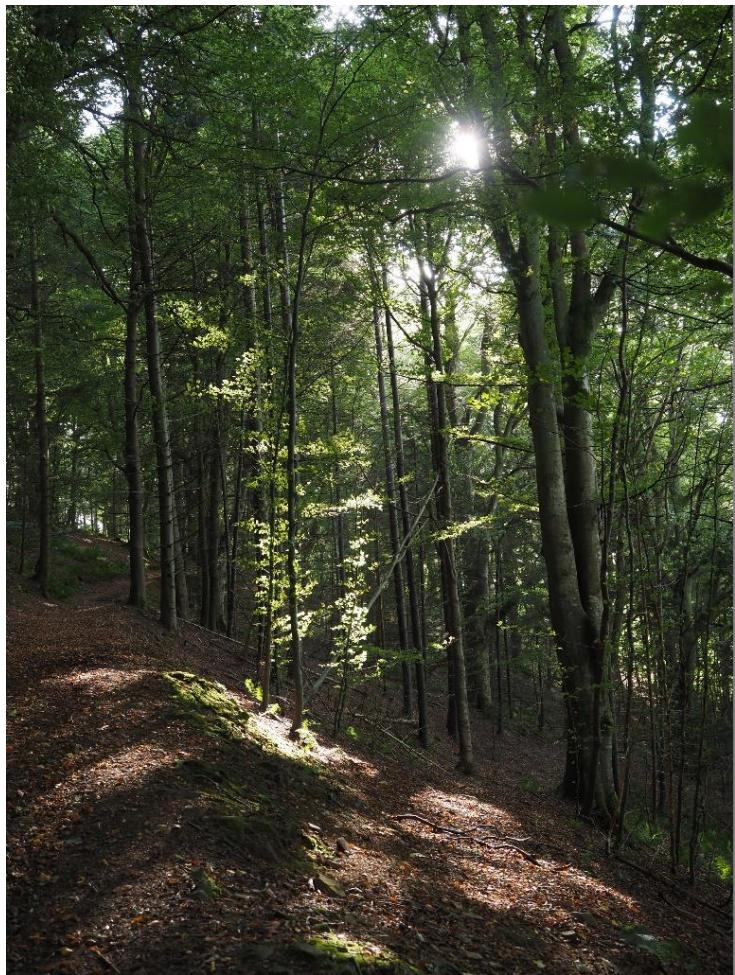
No hairdo!

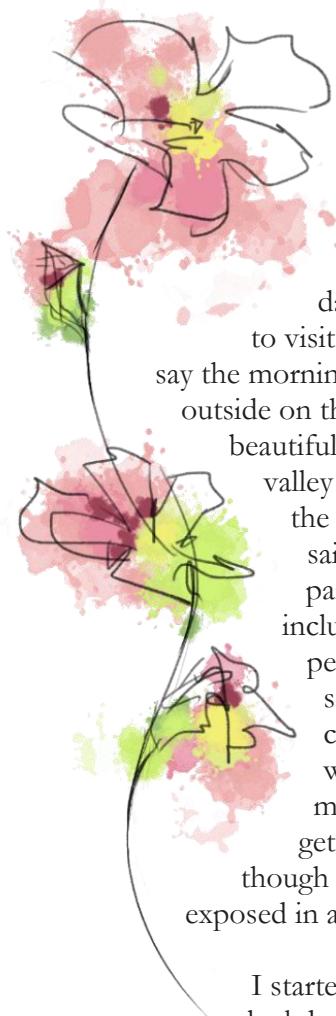
The children found not seeing their friends difficult but we were able to facetime family and friends. We cycled a lot to visit family for a socially distanced “hello”!





I was unwell for a large portion of lockdown, I missed feeling well! (I also developed anaemia whilst having the virus so my energy levels were incredibly low.) I very much missed going for walks in the beechwood near my house. Every Spring since moving here I have enjoyed watching the beechwood come to life as the different types of trees put out their leaves, I completely missed this glorious transition in the woods this year as I could not go for walks at all! However, I was also very grateful to have a lovely garden to sit in, as I know that many people living in cities around the world did not have an easy time, being completely cooped up.





## *Doing things differently*

Husband & I started to paint and have produced multiple canvases. Found it totally relaxing.

I wanted to continue daily worship and I decided to visit the church every day to say the morning service. This had to be outside on the banking, it was rather beautiful to sit looking over the valley whilst saying prayers for the parish. Prayers were also said for many aspects of the pandemic around the world including the challenges people faced locally. This service was at 9.30am to coincide with parish online worship led by our minister. I will be happy to get back inside the church though as the banking is rather exposed in all weathers!

I started the week before lockdown to continue to get up at the same time (6.15am) and walk to Watherston and back every morning, no matter the weather. I'm still doing it and the number of miles I've accumulated could take me to London!





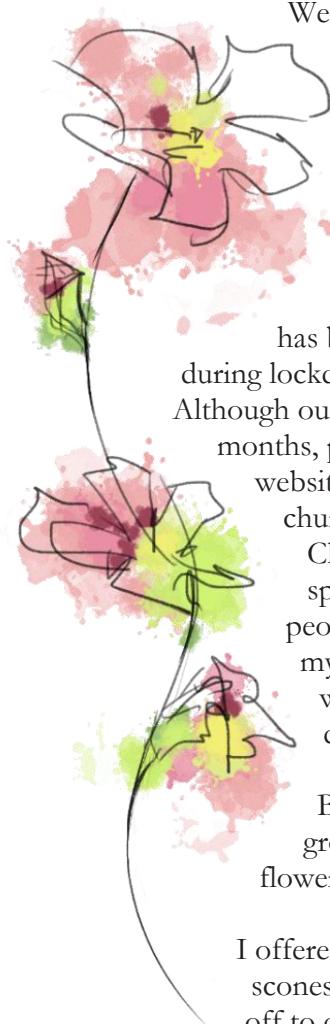
I certainly did more exercise during lockdown. We also made our food a lot more than ever before including our own bread on a daily basis.

This was great because I'm sure we've all eaten a lot healthier during this time. The children have also become very good cooks and we've stopped buying biscuits and cakes and we only eat anything like this that we make ourselves.

Lockdown has introduced me to, and enslaved me to, zoom and Microsoft teams. For me a new way of keeping in touch and to maintain formal meeting schedules. It is not the same as sitting round a table but sadly it works well and I guess it's here to stay. A culture shock for an old man!

Completed a couple of jigsaws I thought I might never get to – great sense of achievement! Mastered making my mother's recipe for girdle scones.





Wearing a face mask in the shops was a new experience. Going for walks and crossing the road to stay apart from other walkers was strange too.

In some ways, church life has become more visible during lockdown rather than less. Although our buildings were closed for months, people could go onto our website and find out what church is about and what Christians believe. This has sparked conversations as people have asked me about my online sermons, or asked whether I still had a job despite lockdown.

Built a greenhouse and grown tomatoes and various flowers.

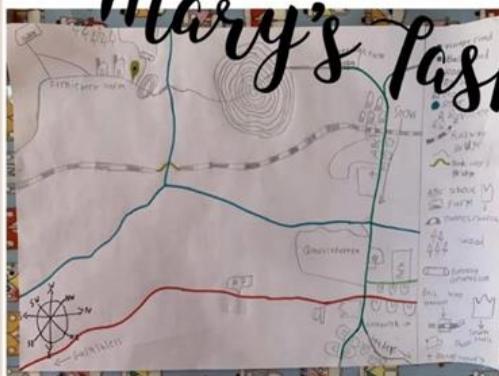
I offered the services of cakes and scones for the village, dropped off to door steps. As well as ‘selling’ products I also dropped off to our heroes at the doctors as a treat, as well as dropping off goodies to my regular customers at the café and neighbours.

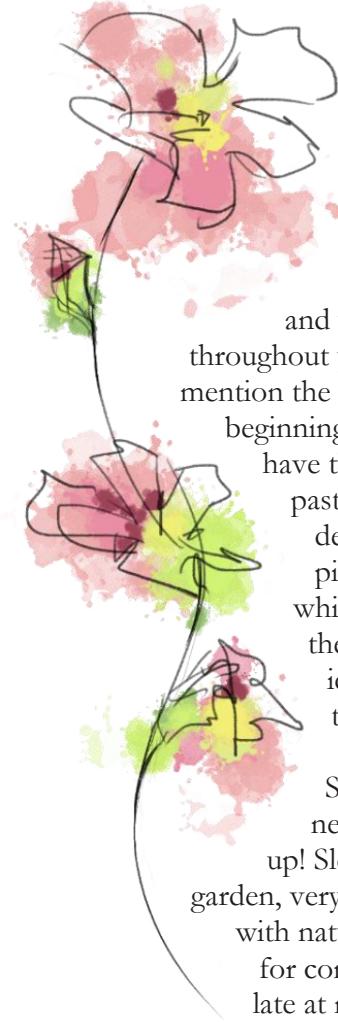
# Our Community Challenges

Anna's  
Challenges



Mary's Tasks

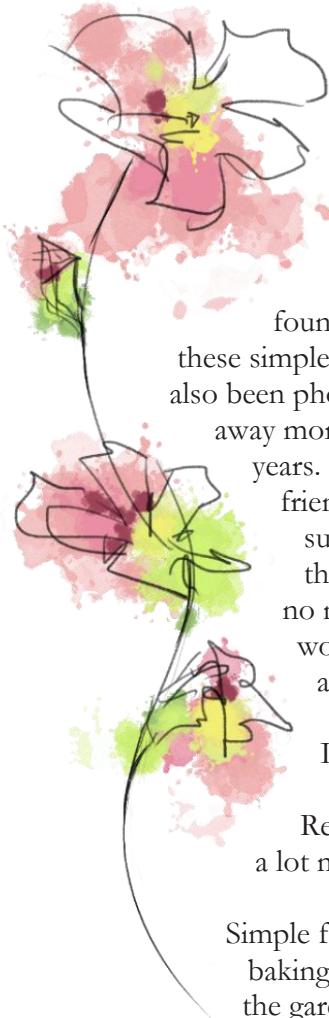




Shopping was a different experience to say the least. Having to queue outside the shop on 2m markers, having to sanitise your hands at a sanitise station before and after shopping and wearing a mask throughout your shop. Not to mention the food shortages at the beginning of lockdown, who would have thought toilet rolls and pasta would be in so much demand. A new thing was piping on a Thursday night which was in appreciation for the NHS, this was a great idea and brought the village together.

Stopped watching the news, that really wound me up! Slept in the open air in the garden, very peaceful being right there with nature. Other times watched for comets and shooting stars late at night on Lauder common (did not need to worry about having to get up and everyone out to work/school next morning) Made bags and scrub caps for BGH, made a lot of face masks.





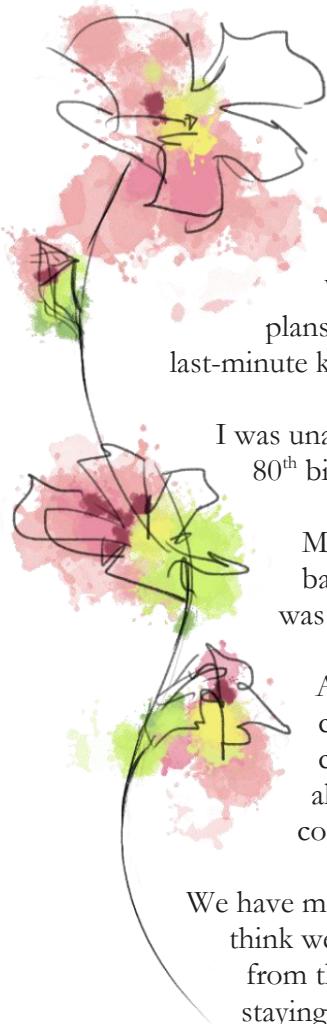
I enjoyed listening to the birds and I also spent more time just watching the sky, the clouds and the birds in the garden. I had to sit still or lie down for much of my time so I found myself appreciating these simple things very much. I have also been phoning friends who live far away more often than I have for years. I feel closer to those friends because of this. I suppose we all now share this experience of the virus, no matter where we are in the world, so it kind of brings us all closer.

I went into my shell.

Really started to use my bike a lot more during lockdown.

Simple family walks around Stow, baking, movie nights, playing in the garden.





## *Disruption*

My 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations were severely disrupted, including a fancy trip to Rome!

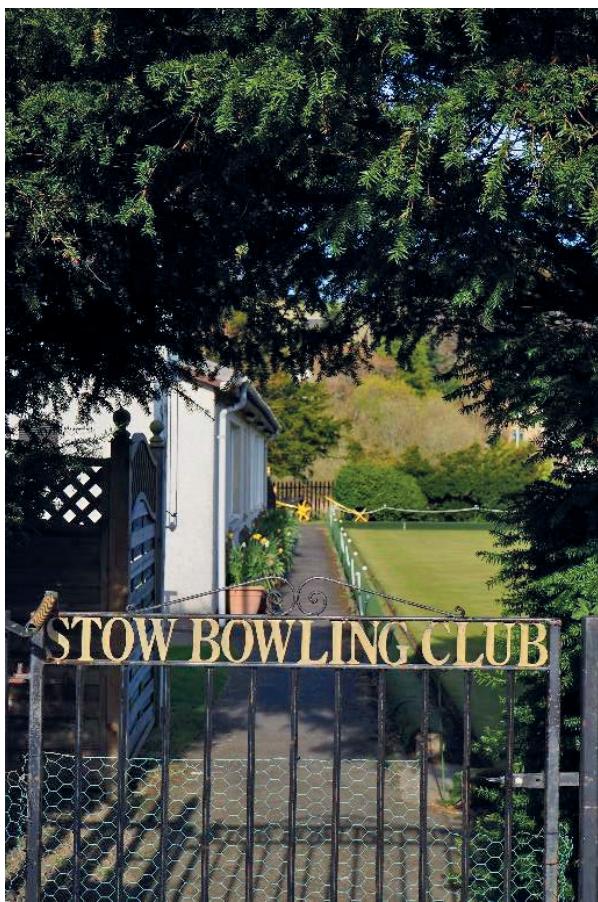
We didn't have many plans in the diary – we are a last-minute kind of family for holidays!

I was unable to attend my brother's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations.

My grand-daughter's baptism was cancelled as was my niece's wedding.

All the bowling club league competitions were cancelled for the year and all the pipe band competitions were cancelled.

We have missed going south but I think we were all pretty exhausted from the home schooling so staying more local has suited us well as a family.





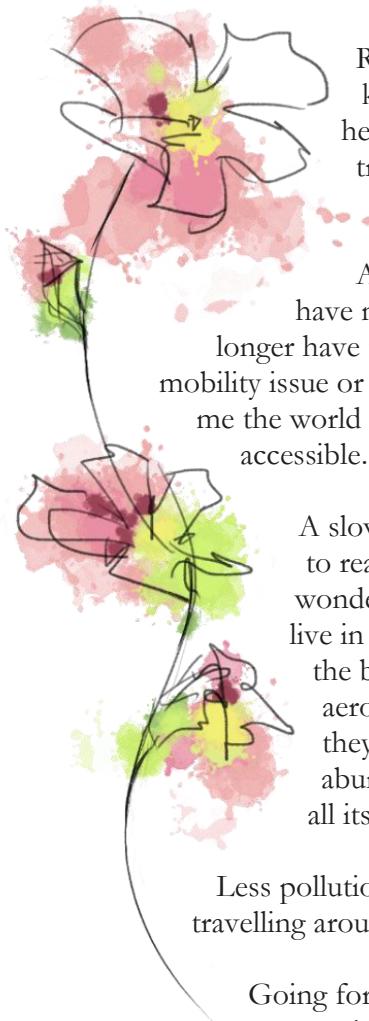
We missed my sister's birthday and my son usually goes to a respite holiday home in Fife for a week in the summer so he couldn't go and I found it hard to explain it to him that he couldn't go.

We were going to Eurovision 2020 and Salzburg festival for our 30th anniversary. Instead we got a lovely puppy called Sidney.

A friend's son was to be married last week, so we missed that wedding which for them was obviously very sudden. They're lucky they can rebook it but obviously quite sad for them as well.

I also fully expected to go to the Scottish Football Cup Final at Hampden. That may still happen!

## *Positives*



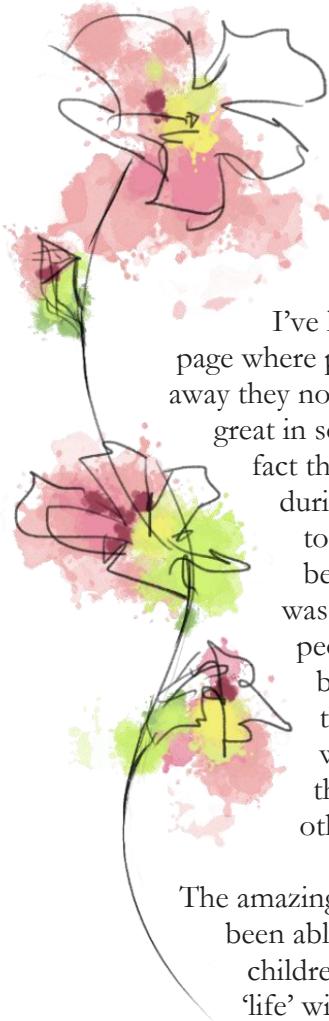
Random acts of kindness – neighbour hemming my uniform trousers. Quiet time together.

As more of these events have moved online I no longer have to explain that I have a mobility issue or a health problem. For me the world is now a lot more accessible.

A slowing down of life. Time to really take in the wonderful countryside we live in and really appreciate the birdlife without aeroplanes or large lorries they seemed to be in abundance – and nature in all its glory.

Less pollution – people not travelling around.

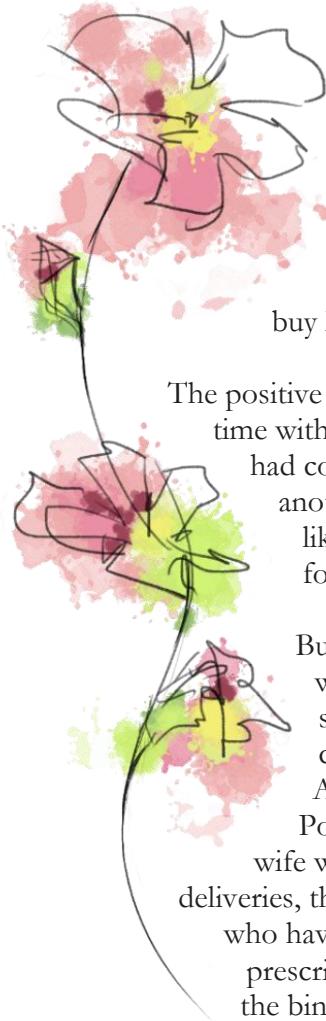
Going for walks in the countryside during lockdown gave me a real appreciation of nature.



I think we've been lucky being locked down in Stow and the great community spirit that has been stronger than ever and the willingness of people to help each other out.

I've loved the Stow Facebook page where people were giving things away they no longer need which is great in so many ways. I loved the fact that going out for a walk during lockdown in Stow took longer than ever because everyone you met was keen to chat and I met people that I've never met before. It's been wonderful the people in the village who have been supplying the village with eggs and other produce.

The amazing amount of time I have been able to spend with my children, time we never get as 'life' with jobs, school and after school clubs takes over our days. New skills learned from having time to do it.



It is almost like having time to take stock, check you are going in the right direction, analyse where you are.

I have enjoyed cooking more and taking the opportunity to buy local foods.

The positive for me has been the extra time with my children. We have had conversations with one another which we would most likely not have had if not for lockdown.

But there are a few people who have been excellent in supporting the community, particularly Alison and the team in the Post Office, Gordon and his wife with milk and vegetable deliveries, the surgery, the volunteers who have delivered the prescriptions, the post man and the bin men who kept going, John at the garage.



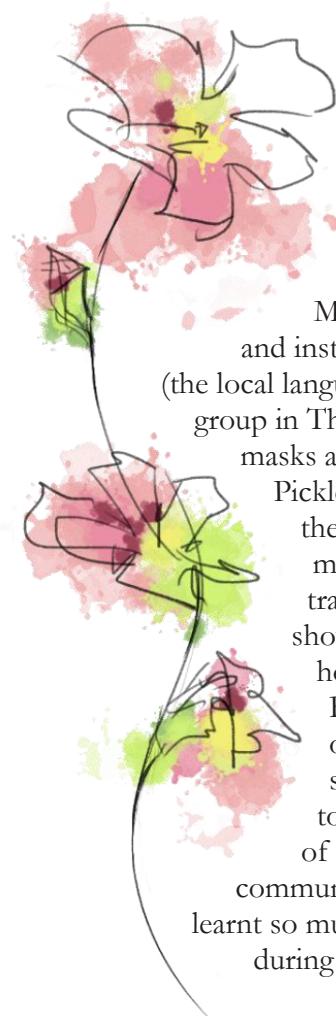
Community and knowing our neighbours, friends and family and valuing life, but the quality of life is high on our agenda where it should be! Will that be permanent? I hope so.

Being a small village has helped. I think there was a very good community spirit, pulling together.

For me, I feel more in touch with my environment than I ever have. My daily walks have let me observe the changing seasons, the wildlife and the farm life in ways that I never have before.

Thursday hand claps, ourselves and two other neighbours always there. Good opportunity to touch base with them to check they were OK and some good banter, when Thursday hand clap stopped we carried on with drinks at a distance!





## *final thoughts*

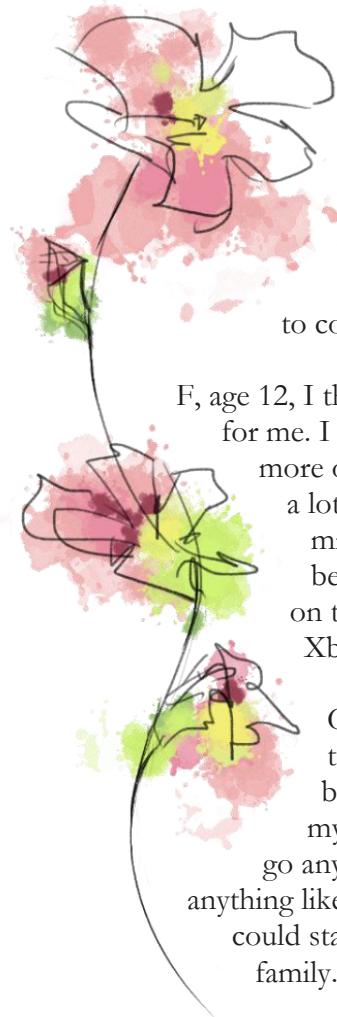
The church has friends in Malawi. Rather than send masks made here we teamed up with a group in Innerleithen (ITW).

Mask patterns were tested and instructions sent in Chichewa (the local language in Malawi). A local group in Thondwe learnt to make the masks and so did their pastor Rev.

Picklen. Funds raised here were then sent to Luwatala to buy materials and Rev. Picklen travelled to Luwatala to show a group of young tailors how to sew the masks.

Borrowing two foot-operated sewing machines, six young tailors then set to work to make hundreds of masks for the local community in Luwatala. We have learnt so much from each other during the pandemic.

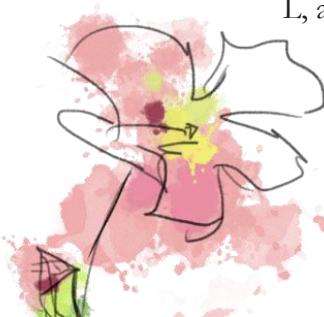




C, age 14, I was bored at the start of lockdown but I enjoyed it at the end. I enjoyed it because I could go out biking a lot more. I didn't really enjoy the home schooling, I found it hard to concentrate.

F, age 12, I think lockdown was good for me. I could concentrate a lot more on school work and learnt a lot of new things. I didn't miss my friends so much because I could talk to them on the phone and on the Xbox.

C, age 9, Lockdown wasn't too much fun at the start because I didn't get to see my friends. We didn't get to go anywhere exciting or anything like that. I did enjoy that you could stay in your house with your family.



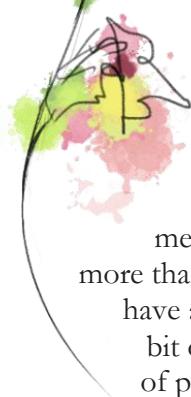
L, age 8, I liked lockdown because I was with my Mum. I liked the home schooling and being at home.



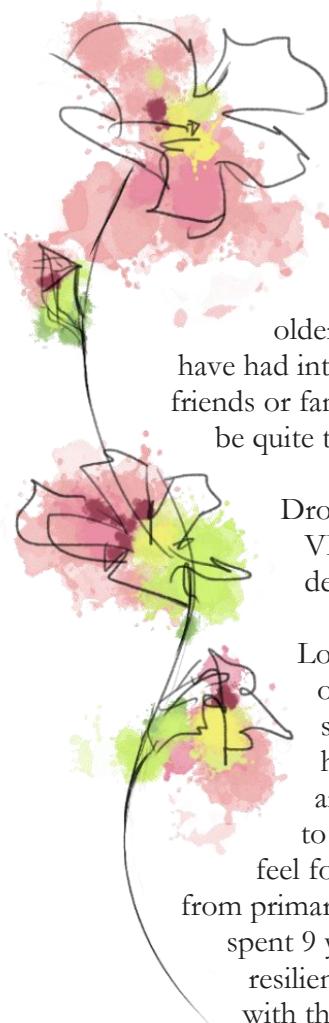
D, age 6, I didn't like lockdown because I missed my friends. I liked home schooling being with Mum. I liked being able to play in the garden.



There were many acts of random kindness. One of my friends made scones and tablet for my clients to cheer them up.



How thankful we are for good neighbours and community and the fact we have phones and internet access. Laughed too and quite a lot of 'make do and mend'. Having baked a lot, or more than normal, over lockdown, I have also eaten more!! Definitely a bit of comfort eating. Like a lot of people, I did a fair bit of clearing out.



I think lockdown during Covid has had the greatest impact on those living alone. I can't imagine what it must have been like for those who are alone all day, every day. Especially older people who might not have had internet access to video call friends or family. I think life will never be quite the same after lockdown.

Drove around the village on VE Day seeing the decorations.

Lockdown has been hard for our children. My eldest is starting high school so he hasn't managed to go up and see where he is going to – no 2 day visit to get a feel for the place. No goodbye from primary school where he has spent 9 years of his life. He is resilient though and will cope with the changes.



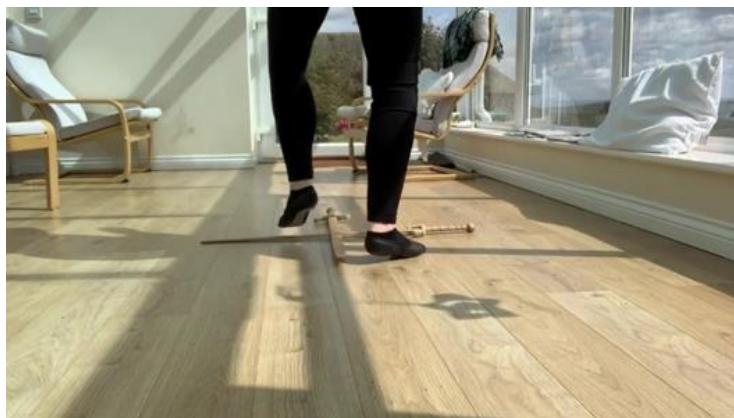


It was total bliss not having traffic on the A7, it was peaceful and refreshing, however traffic is already back to its dangerous speeding.

It is amazing that something so small can completely stop the world in its tracks and bring our modern hectic lives to a complete standstill.

Maybe the new Norm will be better and maybe we will learn from this.

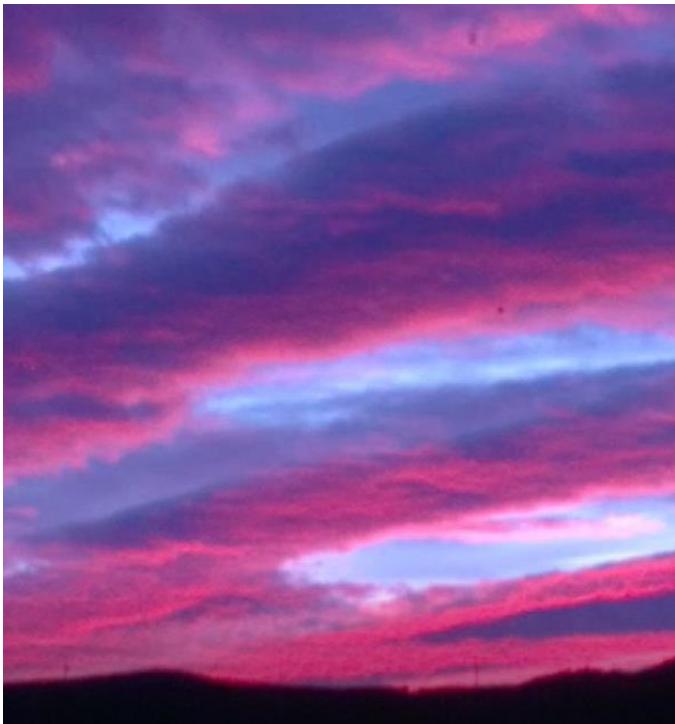
I think the children have been fabulous. They've been so upbeat about their school work and their school projects, it's great that people like the archive have been involved in that, the highland dancing and Anna Houston with the things she put forward with the kids. One Thursday evening on a clapping night there was a wee envelope through my door from a little boy down the street and it was a little rainbow friendship bracelet with a little note saying he'd made it for me to make me smile.





We noticed the birdsong much more than usual, mostly because of lighter traffic and partly because the weather in the early part of lockdown was so good that we sat out much more than normal and watched the birds feeding their young.

. People came from outwith Stow because they felt that Stow post office was a very safe place to shop. We had people from Lauder, we had a phone call from somebody the other week from Galashiels because they thought it would be a safe place for their elderly parents to come. Our reputation is as a safe community, because it is not just a shop it is a community. That was worth all the hard work.



*Nothing beats kindness*

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