

So here we are again. Today is much like yesterday, and tomorrow will probably be much like today. Most things seem insignificant when compared with the chaos and the tragedies that the virus has caused throughout the world, but after weeks of lockdown it is the little things that seem to loom large at a personal level. So I cleared my calendar of all those events that were definitely not going to happen, to avoid being reminded of things like e.g. not being able to meet family and friends. The result of this clearance is of course that 98% of events have disappeared. All that are left are the indicators for days of waste collection, Over the Hill deadlines and birthdays/anniversaries of nearest and dearest. But this list of social appointments was rapidly replaced by a list of things to do. Oh, yes, a Senior Citizen must have a list of things to do. Sometimes they are the only thing between you and that disapproving look from your In-house Adviser. There can be no better defence than “Of course I am going to do it my love. Look it’s on the list” But in lockdown it rapidly became apparent that just one list of major jobs was not going to work. Mainly this was because the thing that really wasn’t going to work was me – not much anyway - so the list would not change a great deal. What was needed was a daily list of lesser activities, some of which could be tackled successfully so there would be a nice feeling of making progress, and which would provide something to discuss with my In-house Adviser. This process started fairly well, and I diligently copied the few uncompleted items onto a new list dated the next day. However it rapidly became apparent that this was a waste of time as more and more of the jobs weren’t going to get started, let alone completed. So now every morning I just change the date on the list. But then came another minor problem. The Archers radio programme was taken off the air. After weeks of staggering along, refusing to acknowledge that the lockdown had occurred, it finally ceased altogether. This may not seem much to non-Archers fans, but I have been listening to the programme for well over 50 years. The habit started when I was a youngster sharing digs with four other lads. After our evening meal we all gathered around the transistor radio in the largest bedroom to hear ‘an everyday story of country folk’, and to make ribald comments about what was supposedly going on in Ambridge. Over the years since I haven’t listened to every episode as you don’t have to be that diligent. After a long layoff you can drop back into any episode and within minutes it is as though you have never been away. It’s exactly like meeting a dear friend after a long separation. Which is very lucky as, in the past, finding time at exactly two minutes after seven every evening whilst juggling work, family and a social life was not easy. But during lockdown it is no problem at all to find the time – it’s not like we have much else to do – so then what, in their infinite wisdom, do the BBC do next? They take the bloomin’ programme off the air. Just when we need it most. And talking of the radio, surely I am not the only one to find four or five comedians broadcasting from their own homes profoundly unfunny. Then they run the credits at the end, and it turns out that somebody, and often more than one person, has supposedly written the ‘script’. So are they seriously saying that somebody spent time and effort compiling a script for that load of old hogwash? You might begin to suspect from the foregoing that the many weeks of enforced idleness and isolation have not greatly improved my sense of humour or mellowed my view of my fellow man. But that’s just my view of a some of my fellow men. Others, including ladies as my In-house Adviser so rightly points out, have reaffirmed my faith in human nature. Those essential workers who have stuck at their tasks. Not just the NHS staff and care workers, wonderful though they are, but the postmen, delivery drivers, waste collectors, water board and telecoms engineers and shop staff to name but a few of the many. And of course, all those volunteers delivering food and medicines to the vulnerable in our local communities. It’s odd to think that there is a generation coming along, for instance like our own year old great granddaughter Evie – no doubt you can add little ones of your own to the list - who won’t have any recollection at all of this strange and worrying time. In the same way youngsters born after 1945 have no personal memories of the Second World War. But later in life they could at least ask their grandfathers “What did you do during the war, Gramps?” and get an account of how they helped in the fight to beat Hitler. When today’s infants ask later on in their life “What did you do during the lockdown, Grandad?” the answer in many cases will be a disappointing “Not a lot”. But that’s the way it has to be for those of us not on the front line, and as I write this there appears to be a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel, so let’s try to stay strong and be positive - because the option is to be weak and miserable, which isn’t the Senior Citizen way at all.