

TT (the Dog Blog 13) Day 9



Zoom is not an ice lolly! Well, it is as a matter of fact but not in the way an elderly man sees it these days when he is isolated and slightly bewildered but determined to carry on calmly, if not regardless. Today, and while Skype has its uses, Zoom allows meetings to take place digitally, remotely and without too much fuss. That said, a certain amount of discipline is required.

I listened in amazement to the first Zoom-enabled meeting in the village. It involved six of them and, unsurprisingly, they managed to set it up quite easily. But that is what they are good at; all former executives having achieved various levels of expertise, responsibility and competence, they are all fairly adept at installing an app and then navigating their way through the instructions via the keys in their various devices. So far, so good; six or seven little boxes on the screen each with a live participant and on backgrounds varying from kitchen to study to bedroom to conservatory (but not, thankfully, to lavatory).

I settled back in my bed to await details, or even hints, of scandals or simple gossip that I could file away for use later in my blog. I was disappointed because as they added spouses, packets of crisps, glasses of wine and bottles of beer and cranked up the volume to Level 9 it all devolved into chaos. Everyone began talking at once but then the Chairman found the mute button

and began to experiment by turning each participant off in turn but not telling them he was doing so. Results varied from missing the one who was banging on about some party they had attended in 1966 (and thus before any of them had even married each other so that excluded some of the team) to cutting off another just as he was reaching the punchline of what had promised to be a really good joke.

Someone then left the meeting to replenish their drinks but did not excuse himself so everyone else assumed his Wifi had failed; when he returned, another went to the loo without even attempting to amuse the rest by raising his hand and saying, "Please Miss, wanna go toilet". I tuned out as the mute button was unmuted and the noise levels rose to a crescendo reminiscent of a party of the hard of hearing in a small room with a low ceiling and a flagstone floor.

After an hour of much jollity they set a date for the next bunfight but did agree that in future some discipline must be imposed. In principle, it is a great idea but unlike using the telephone you probably have to take a few basic precautions:

- Check your appearance in the mirror to make sure the chip poked into your ear by a child at teatime isn't still there.
- Ensure the almost empty bottle of wine shown in the picture at 10 am or 3 pm does not inadvertently give the wrong impression.

I am left wondering if their early impression of a nursery school of screaming children at break time may evolve into a virtual drinks party and then to Book Club and finish up with dinner? I'm agog (which is not a spelling mistake).