

TT 13 Day 28 (four weeks in)

I heard some interesting news this week about helping combat the virus. Of course, testing and finding antibodies, finding a vaccine and various other things now have a canine aspect. As we already have dogs that can cleverly detect cancer, Parkinsons and bacterial infections, dogs are being trained to smell out Caronavirus. This would be marvellous and if I were to be called up for service, I would offer my help in exchange for a serious amount of local currency (i.e. biscuits filled with marrow bone jelly and my favourite). I am well qualified; I have a highly developed nose for seeking out pheasants and partridges and I reckon I could be useful. Re smells, the Guvnor's favourite cartoonist, who stars daily in the newspaper he reads, has a woman leaving her house and pausing to inform her neighbour (from two metres displacement, naturally) "My husband is cooking supper so I'm off to catch the Caronavirus. They say it takes away all sense of taste and smell".

The Guvnor tapped the side of his nose in that knowledgeable way he has to indicate that there is something he knows and I don't but it was lost on me; all I could think of was that he should try harder to remember not to touch his face.

They are getting quite adept at using the Zoom mechanism that enables visual contact to be made via the 'cloud' and so far, as well as meetings and general chat sessions they have attended three church services and have just attended a 'drinks party' to celebrate a birthday. With all sport cancelled it is interesting to note that an age-old yardstick that was used to measure the popularity of the Church of England among British people has had a

remarkable boost. There was a time when numbers of attendees at church services on a Sunday outnumbered those attending football matches on the preceding Saturday. Then the fulcrum shifted the other way around and the method has not been used since it did everything for the FA and nothing for the C of E. If the National Office for Statistics conducted a survey today, and if virtual services via Zoom or Houseparty or Facetime were allowed, the C of E would win hands down.

In what we used to know as 'normal' times, both the Guvnor and his wife attended Rosie's Pilates classes in the village. Today, she offered to send a list of the exercises which will be followed, I'll be bound, by a class for a hundred on Zoom. That would be good for everyone except the skivers and all those who do the exercises, but in their pyjamas.

Early in their marriage there was a fitness guru on the telly called Diana Moran, or 'the Green Goddess' as she wore a leotard in a nasty shade of green. Many will remember Andy Capp, the northern serial layabout who appeared in the Daily Mirror from about 1957 onwards. He is lying on the sofa, with a glass of stout nearby and a fag burning in the ashtray, while raising his arm and then his leg to the Green Goddess's orders. All is going well until she says, "Now, from the upright position..." and he switches the TV off and begins to snooze.

Just in case death is round the corner, the Guvnor has been practising new prayers: "Lord, the umpire of our lives, help us to play our innings with a straight bat, accept life's yorkers without complaint and when, at last, our wicket falls, may we have notched up a worthy score".