

## Journeys

The theme this month seems most ironic,  
    As journeys now we must not make.  
Once anciently a plague bubonic  
    Brought death and sorrow in its wake,  
While westward out of Asia heading  
And over Europe terror spreading  
    It reached our island where it killed  
    So very many and instilled  
A dreadful fear throughout the nation.  
    A virus now has likewise spread  
    And likewise brought both death and dread,  
While causing worldwide consternation.  
    And we locked down at home must stay;  
    No journeys make, no visits pay.

On journeys that were not I ponder;  
    Intended trips that were not made.  
For Eastertide last year was fonder  
    When fam'ly came and fam'ly stayed;  
Thirteen there were around the table  
On Easter Day when we were able  
    To celebrate the feast with cheer.  
    But all alone we were this year;  
On TV screen at home we followed  
    Our priest who Easter Mass did say  
    To empty church on Easter Day;  
And nor in merrymaking wallowed  
    Convivially as hitherto,  
    But sat at Easter lunch for two.

Nor shall we now be journey taking  
    To travel to the USA.  
And so our hopeful plans forsaking  
    We'll stay alone at home in May.  
And since we can't fly o'er the water,  
The only way to see our daughter  
    Is through the global Internet.  
    We keep in touch, 'tis true, and yet  
'Tis not the same as going thither  
    And being there with her at home;  
    And being free with her to roam  
Her neighbourhood or ramble whither  
    Our mood suggests the way commends,  
    Or visit in-laws, meet her friends.

How did we get to this position?  
    Along what journey have we fared?  
For was there not an admonition  
    Our health service was unprepared  
To cope with any such pandemic?  
No simulation academic  
    Did underlying faults reveal;  
    For Exercise Cygnus was real  
And showed resources sadly lacking.  
    In twenty-sixteen this took place.  
    And did the government embrace  
The findings, give th' report their backing?  
    They classified it, put the lid  
    On scrutiny and kept it hid.

The Maybot thought of nought but Brexit;  
    Pandemics - they must wait their turn.  
“But from the EU we must exit,”  
    The Maybot said, “’tis my concern  
“Above all else to get us leaving.  
“For ’tis my goal and worth achieving.”  
    For her was Brexit all sublime;  
    And Brexit took up all the time.  
“To pay the nurses more – you’re joking!  
    “For there’s no magic money tree.  
    “We have no dosh, for can’t you see  
“That Brexit’s paramount and soaking  
    “Up all the time and cash we’ve got;  
    “Get Brexit done! Don’t lose the plot!”

So three years passed with no one thinking  
    About pandemics which might strike.  
The Maybot’s Brexit hopes were sinking  
    For Bovid Johnson did not like  
The deal she’d got for our secession;  
And having failed with her obsession  
    She went, and Bovid took control,  
    And did his exit plan unroll.  
On Brexit was his concentration;  
    Withdrawal terms were soon agreed.  
    Now on with trade talks with all speed;  
Let’s get them done! No hesitation!  
    “Coronavirus? Bah, oh pooh!  
    “We’ve more important things to do!”

“The virus here? We've had some cases?  
“Lockdown, you say? Let's not be rash.  
“Let folk go to the Chelt'nham races!  
“And we shall yet this virus thrash.  
“Oh let us not be self-defeating;  
“I shake hands with all I'm meeting.  
“We're Brits; we'll take it on the chin;  
“We'll not succumb to scarers' spin.”  
But then alarm bells started ringing;  
The hospitals now found it tough,  
Protective gear was not enough  
And criticism got more stinging.  
“Oh crikey! Lockdown!” Bovid cried.  
“Be safe! Go home and stay inside!”

Thus rather late we were in lockdown,  
Forbidden needless goings out.  
The virus did poor Bovid knock down  
But he survived the Covid bout.  
So shall we see a change in Bovid?  
And how much longer rages Covid  
As we keep safe and stay at home,  
Frustrating any will to roam?  
And Covid now our time's consuming,  
And putting us in deeper debt.  
And still there looms another threat  
Of no trade deal when we're resuming  
The Brexit process once again.  
So shall our journey end in pain?

Have we forgotten global warming -  
A greater threat than Covid makes?  
Shall we our selfish ways transforming  
Wake up and do whate'er it takes  
To save our planet from disaster?  
Or just apply more sticking plaster  
And go back to our feckless ways?  
When Covid's done then shall our days  
Be occupied with Bovid's bumbings  
And Govid's vacuous remarks?  
Or shall we fan to life the sparks  
Of hope and heed our planet's grumbings  
And journey to a world more sane?  
Or blindly insular remain?