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Email: kentishgazette@thekmgroup.co.uk **300 words max please to be submitted by 5pm Monday**

John Nurden



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Odd shopping experience is hard to mask

I never thought I'd utter these words but after 'M-Day' I have taken to using a line from Adam Ant, one of Britain's most underrated beat poets.

For months I had ignored the prospect of wearing masks, mainly because Boris had said we didn't need one.

Those in other countries were welcome to run around wearing face coverings in the street, in the shops and probably in bed. But us Brits are different. Coronavirus knows better than to strike Blighty. We won the war and the World Cup, once.

Besides, scientists said masks made no difference unless you already had Covid-19. But as none of us had been tested we were all in the clear.

The only problem was some of us had been watching the news and realised this bug could be quite nasty and not at all pleasant to catch.

Furthermore, it is still there lurking in the shadows.

When Boris told us to stay indoors we surprised him and did as we were told.

I'm pretty sure he was expecting us to ignore him like we usually do so we'd go and catch the blighter and create 'herd immunity'.

Instead, we batted down the hatches, bought enough toilet rolls to take us to 2030 and made up our minds to never shop again, unless it was from Amazon.

So when Boris said shops could reopen, we stayed away in droves.

This upset the shopkeepers. So Boris said it was perfectly safe to go back, as long as we all wore masks. Apart from those who didn't have to wear masks.

But when you do go into the high street the only thing shops are now selling is masks.

You can get them in different colours. Some come with glitter. Others feature huge Joker-like smiles.

Mine's like a dandy highwayman. Stand and deliver...

'We batted down the hatches, bought enough toilet rolls to take us to 2030 and made up our minds to never shop again, unless it was from Amazon'

Photo of the week



Sheila Webb captured this serene shot from the Great Stour Way on a sunny Sunday afternoon

However, if you find yourself in the water, you need to be able to propel yourself if need be.

I therefore find it quite astonishing that Mr Mangnall does not require his customers to be able to swim.

If after having fallen in to a river, canal, lake or pond you start to experience a high temperature, headache, nausea, vomiting, aching muscles/joints, red eyes or loss of appetite, visit your GP as these are symptoms of Weil's Disease, also known as Leptospirosis. Ask for an urgent appointment if any of these symptoms are accompanied by swelling or coughing up blood.

Above all, remember one thing. If you are involved in any incident on water, you are not a survivor, until you are ashore.

Mark Kennett
 Hudson Close, Sturry

Why did old friends fall out?

On Friday, July 12, 1174, King Henry II came to Canterbury to do penance to the bishops and monks of the Cathedral at the tomb of Thomas Becket, for the murder of the Archbishop.

After praying at the Leper Hospital in Harbledown, the King walked to St Dunstan's Church, where he stripped down to his shirt before walking barefoot through the city. On arrival at the Cathedral, he kissed the flagstones in the martyrdom transept where Thomas Becket's body had lain, before the King proceeded to the Archbishop's temporary tomb in the crypt, where he was whipped.

But what had caused the King to have so disastrously fallen out with his old friend, which subsequently led to the murder of the Archbishop in the Cathedral on December 29 1170?

Catholic clerics had a long-standing right of appeal to the Pope, who took precedence over the sovereign head of state in their allegiance.

Read my article on the Constitutions of Clarendon, which led to the King uttering those immortal words: "Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?" 850 years ago, under Latest Articles on the chaucer. university website.

Thomas Becket had three sisters: Agnes, Roheise, and Mary. Both Agnes and Roheise Becket subsequently married and had children. Mary became abbess of Barking in 1173, having been appointed by charter granted by King Henry II as restitution for Thomas Becket's

murder.

How King Henry III came to grant privileges to Canterbury City Council in return for city rate payers taking over responsibility for paying the King's Leper Hospital annual penance payment is another story for a later time!

Richard West
 Tudor Road, Canterbury

Boris is a hero with bottle

Thank goodness we now have a Prime Minister who is a man of action.

We have had several Prime Ministers recently who were craven enough to change their own attitudes and resolve to suit the opposing political forces.

They refused to stand up for what the British People wanted and voted for.

We now have someone who has positive and well-thought-out attitudes and resolve, and who is going to attack and change the opposing political forces to suit himself.

He has also gathered like-minded people around him and ruthlessly excluded ditherers and flip-flopers.

In previous ages he would be called a buccaneer.

In this age he is a hero with a lot of bottle.

Graham Beckett
 Cedarview, Canterbury

Take collections truly in-house

It is not true that transferring the waste collection contract from Serco to the Canterbury Environment Company Limited will bring waste collection "in-house".

It will transfer it to a company of which the council is the sole member, which is entirely different from making waste collection a function of the council, delivered day-to-day by council employees.

Mr David Ford, an officer of the council, was conspicuously vague as to how this company will be constrained to do its job properly.

He told the Gazette "So we'll be coming up with different ways of incentivising performance." ["Bin not emptied? Call trucks back using app", July 23].

Readers will recall Shakespeare's portrayal of King Lear wandering on the heath: "I will do such things—/ What they are yet I know not, but they shall be/ The terrors of the earth."

Mr Ford promises an app to recall lorries when bins are not emptied.

We recall Henry IV Part 1: Glendower: "I can call spirits from the vasty deep." Hotspur: "Why, so can I, or so can any man; But will they come when you do call for them?"

This exercise threatens to be another expensive fiasco further undermining local democracy in

our district.

What is needed is a small and competent management team, employed by the council, who will deal promptly either with a phone call to the council or with a message from a councillor raising an issue for a resident in their ward.

Bin collection needs to be under the supervision of elected councillors.

Under Articles drawn up under the Companies Act 2006, the directors of this new company can only be given instructions by the council through a resolution at a special meeting.

This will require a meeting of the council or a committee with delegated powers.

Councillors will have no legal power to review the performance of the management of the company, while they would have power to review the performance of the council employees.

Elected councillors will find themselves toothless and unable to deal quickly and effectively with problems raised by residents.

In May 2019, the electorate gave the boot to Simon Cook and Ben Fitter-Harding, the leaders of the group that had cooked up this mad scheme.

Councillors elected in May 2019 should consider it afresh.

There is nothing wrong with taking refuse collection in-house – but please let it be in-house.

Joe Egerton
 Palace Street, Canterbury



Corrections & clarifications

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