



Letters from Lockdown

"WE ARE WRITING AND PERFORMING A WEEKLY SOAP OVER ZOOM"

At Ageing Better in Camden we firmly believe in amplifying the voices of older people in our communities. Now, more than ever, we strive to support our members to raise their voices and share their experiences.

Far from being a great equalizer, the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed some of the deepest inequalities that have often remained hidden in our society. Our members have been writing a weekly newsletter for one another, to keep informed and connected in these challenging times. It has also brought us all closer together as we share our personal experiences of lockdown.



Here, Jim Mulligan shares his experiences.

I usually get up around seven and am out on my bike to ride round Regents Park by eight. I have watched every day of spring: the leaves and blossom come, the blossom blown off into pink and white drifts.

Then I got a puncture in the back wheel of my Brompton. That is a real sod to repair. I watched how-to films on You Tube and got to within one move of fitting it all back but then had to give up.

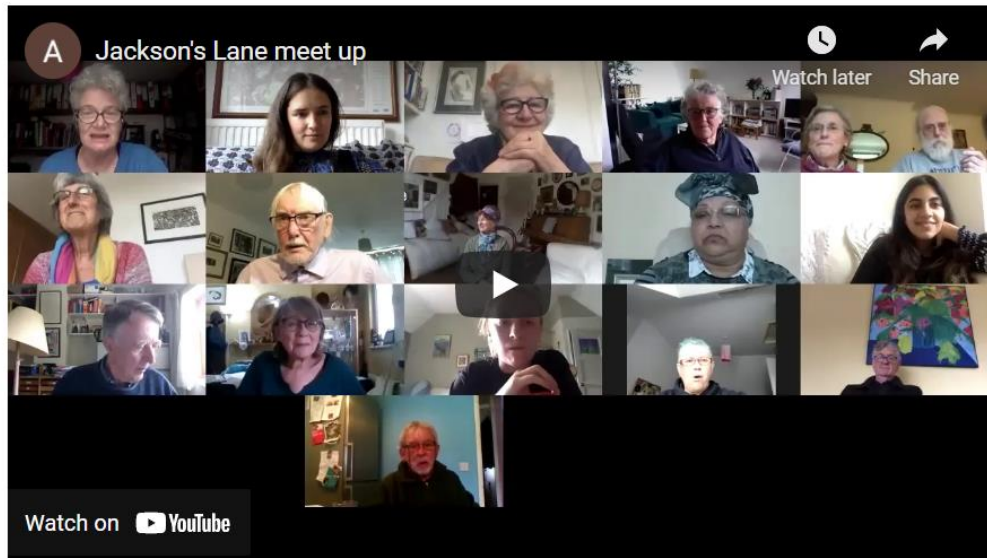
If anyone knows how to do that give me a call.

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Here are three creative things that I have done in lock-down that I wasn't doing before.

Jacksons Lane Arts Centre is a creative Space in Highgate, north London. Before lock-down it hosted a monthly lunch on Thursdays for over-sixties. After their lunch and aided by theatre professionals, the participants can perform whatever they like.

on



Watch

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TPfXn9pVyl>

on Thursdays we perform the Soap and anyone can read or sing anything related to a theme

A couple of weeks after lock-down began, Clair Chapwell, set up a Thursdays Zoom Lock-Down Lunch centred around a soap opera The Corona Sisters. After three episodes, I was roped in to play the part of Richard. Too complicated to explain what it is about. We Zoom on Mondays to plan that week's episode which Clair then writes.

We Zoom again on Wednesdays to rehearse then on Thursdays we perform the Soap and anyone can read or sing anything related to a theme which Clair has given out the week before. The latest one was London. This was my contribution.



Watch on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QULczcuvC3w>

I'm also involved in a mysterious film project, The Platforms directed by Charles Molloy, a technical wizard who was in RADA Elders with me. He has written a script of about fifty lines and sent it to a group of actors – I don't know how many. Don't know who they are.

I'm also involved in a mysterious film project

There are six characters but they have no names, we know nothing about them, we don't know who is speaking or to whom. That's why I say it is mysterious. All I have to do is film myself speaking each line with a five second pause in between each one. Then I email it to Charles and he cuts it up and mixes it with what the other actors have sent in. I have no idea what he is trying to achieve but I have learned a lot about using digital technology.

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My third lock-down project is with Persona Collective directed by Rocio Ayllon. They are creating a site-specific production in St Martin's School of Art which has stood empty since it moved to their Kings Cross site.

The Collective has St Martins until the end of September and they plan to create a performance in each room. The audience in socially-distanced groups will move from room to room and experience something which doesn't exist yet but will be created in June and July.

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Every morning that I ride my Brompton round Regents Park and I spend the half hour thinking about the projects, creating and rehearsing in my head.

I feel a bit selfish really. So many people have suffered and died and their families are devastated. I go out and clap on Thursday evenings but that is tokenism. It infuriates me to hear Tory politicians urging us to clap the NHS when it those same people who have damn near ruined it. Still better not get started on that.

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