

THE HASHLESS TIMES

“Was that the doorbell?” Donut whispered urgently. “I don’t think so.” I gasped back. “I’ll go and have a look.” I leapt from the settee, ran to the front door, grabbed its handle and flung it open. Nothing. Disappointment draped itself over me like a damp duvet. I gave the door post a frustrated kick, bending a little toe in the process.

Closing the door, I tramped moodily back and plumped myself down again on the settee. We had been waiting eagerly most of the day, ever since the text had arrived on Donut’s mobile. The sense of expectation had screwed us up tighter than a well-wound clock spring. The doorbell rang!



Donut was up and at the door faster than a champion whippet out of the trap at Walthamstow Stadium. Seeing the package that had been left there, she tore up and down the hall a couple of times with her T-shirt pulled up over her head; then crashed to one knee, fist pumping in the air, “YES!!” bursting from her lips.

Hurrah! Our soup maker had arrived! This is now the type of thing that gets us more excited than a stray dog that’s found its way into a butcher’s dustbin. Lockdown is really honing

our appreciation for, well, anything really.

Following a WhatsApp video call with Mr and Mrs Blobby, during which they extolled the soupy virtues of the aforementioned kitchen appliance we felt we needed one too, since Donut has been making soup the labour-intensive way, like a woman possessed. It’s quite surprising where I’ve been finding soup. The fridge is full of it, the freezer contains many objects filled with blocks of the stuff. I opened the cupboard under the sink to find bowls of consommé balanced carefully on top of each other. The cutlery drawer contained several Tupperware containers full of gazpacho. The loft is almost full of pans of bouillabaisse. I almost put my sock-clad foot in a large pot of gumbo in the study.

The excellent soup maker will save a whole lot of time and effort. Just hope I can still get in the shed in a week or so...

Speaking of exciting things to do during lockdown, is anyone else taking part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch? You can find details at: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/everything-you-need-to-know-about-big-garden-birdwatch/>. The idea was (for an hour during the day) to record details of the birds you saw in your garden or near where you lived and upload the results to the RSPB website so they can use the data to assess which of our feathered friends are around and how well they are doing. You can upload your sightings until February 19th.

Donut and I, in our constant and rabid pursuit of hedonism, decided to take part in the event last weekend. Since we are lucky enough to have a garden in which we have hung a bird feeder full of seeds and nuts, we figured we could be on for a massive haul of all things feathered. At about 9:15 in the morning the breakfast croissants were ready and butter, marmalade and cups of tea were on the table where we could see the garden. We settled down with a large notepad and several pens to await the vast flocks that would block out the light of day as they swooped upon the nuts and seeds...

... Ten minutes later a robin swung lazily out of the sky and settled lightly on the nut container. We wrote down 'Robin x 1'. Off he flew. We munched thoughtfully on our croissants, concentrating hard on trying not to blink in case we missed anything with a beak. Claire's sister sent a message – she was doing the same as us – “Wow!” She enthused. “We've just seen a blackcap!” “B*****s” Was almost our reply. Though we toned that down to a polite “Well done.”

We continued watching. Another 30 minutes to go. I figured I knew why bird watchers are called 'Twitchers'. I was beginning to exhibit irritating tics myself. A couple of sparrows flew past the window,



A Bar-Tailed Godwit - didn't see one of these b*ggers either!

arguing noisily. My pen was poised above the notepad. Aaarrggghhhh!! The little b*ggers hadn't landed but had flown off over the fence and you could only record birds that actually landed. Where, oh where, I thought was a Black Redstart? Where a Noddy Tern? Whither the Cirl Bunting, the Garden Warbler, the Jack Snipe? Would a magnificent Andean Condor break its epic round-the-world journey to circle above our house, then glide gracefully down to feast upon our bird feeder? Perhaps we would see a murder of crows; a parliament of rooks; a pretence of bitterns; a water dance of grebes? By this time, frankly, a pair of tits peeping out from behind the shed would do. But it was not to be. We uploaded our meagre list to the RSPB website... whereupon two blackbirds arrived in the garden, a pigeon perched on the fence, two robins squabbled noisily, a jackdaw swooped down. Doh!

I do hope you are all finding interesting things to do during lockdown. Would you like to send in your stories for publication in the Gobsheet? 😊

NON-HASH 31ST JANUARY

Mr Blobby kindly submitted the below to the Gobsheet to let you know that at least some Hashers are still running about. 😊

C5 and I were up before the sunrise again this week and there was yet another picturesque one:



However, it was just about light enough to see our way. C5 and rendezvoused roughly half way between our two houses and started off by running over towards Mortimer, splashing and sliding our way through the mud and water!! Eventually the sun did rise.



We ended up running looping through the Fairground at Mortimer and returning to Burghfield and the rendezvous point where we then went our separate ways back to our homes.

On On C5 and Mr B

QUIZ

Your reporter did hear that at least one person attempted the pussycat quiz a couple of week's ago. Emboldened and enthused by this knowledge he persuaded the editor to include another. Here it is for your enjoyment. Some of the questions are a doddle – some are fiendishly difficult. Answers in next week's edition.

Questions	Answers
1. Who wrote Oliver Twist?	
2. What colour is a giraffe's tongue?	
3. What do you call a group of jellyfish?	
4. What was the name of Tom Cruise's character in Top Gun?	
5. In 'The Jungle Book', what kind of animal is Baloo?	
6. What is the proper term for your funny bone?	
7. Which animal name means river horse?	
8. In which English county would you find Slough?	
9. In the film "The Lion King", what kind of animal is Timon?	
10. Earth is located in which galaxy?	

Take good care of yourselves.

On On. [Hashgate](#).

If anyone has something they would like to see in the Gobsheet, either send it to your reporter/editor/tea boy/floor mopper at hashgate@hotmail.com or to Iceman at the address above.