

Notes from a Blooming Garden, 31 May

So here I still am, nearly 11 weeks into my notional 12-week lockdown, and I'm still OK but missing my family hugely. So I sip a glass of chilled rosé and stick my nose into blousy Gertrude Jekyll – it's a rose in case you're wondering ... With new garden furniture set up it's a delight to sit out in this glorious May weather. The spring tulips are over, the blackbird fledglings have flown, and summer alliums, irises, roses and clematis and annuals have taken over. And I'm happy to say I found good homes for all the surplus seedlings I sowed.

To keep busy I've been working on a Covid-19 archive on DOL History so future generations can see how life changed when lockdown hit Deddington at the end of March, and how we gradually came out of it. I expect to keep it going for up to a year.

Not a lot has actually changed since my last ramblings as far as Covid-19 is concerned. The government thinks it's time to release lockdown, scientists disagree and fear another spike. Mixed messages and confused interpretation are everywhere. There's a real danger that trust in the government's policy is beginning to break down and I find myself shouting at politicians on the radio – a sure sign I'm getting fed up with my own company. Perhaps I'll find a spad-type excuse to visit my grandchildren – but perhaps I won't.

For a time I was bombarded with daily texts from the NHS saying I was vulnerable and should be shielding: don't go outside, even to empty your bins, have a bag packed ready to go to hospital – and yet I didn't fit any of the government's listed health concern criteria. I began to get spooked that they knew something about me that I didn't. Reassured by my GP, I went from the critically endangered species list to the merely endangered.

It's going to take a huge leap of faith to get me out again into shops, cinemas, on to a train or into an aeroplane, so I hope the struggling retail sector isn't relying on me for some time yet. I'll do what's right for me and my family, to keep us safe, irrespective of what politicians say it's OK for us to do.

Next week's task is to make some masks from fabric offcuts, so if you see an odd creature wandering round with a pair of curtains on her head, that's me. At least it detracts from the very dodgy haircut ...

Mary Robinson