

## *Sunshine and Daffodils*

'Are we nearly there yet?' Well not exactly, but it looked as if it just might be possible if everyone continued to obey the rules – which they won't – and if a lot more people opted to have a Covid jab. There were still pockets of resistance, mainly among those who could least afford to refuse a vaccine.

The conversation in the socially distanced and masked queue for the weekly fish van revolved around who went where for what Covid jab, with everyone recognising it was a very welcome first step. The danger now was that we'd all be tempted to relax just a bit too much and we'd be back to square one.

The January gloom was replaced by heavy snow early in the month which, fortunately for us old crumblyies, didn't last long. Looked good though and it was great for kids to get away from home schooling for a bit to sledge down the Castle Grounds embankments. By the end of the month we had blue skies, sunshine and early daffodils – all guaranteed to lift the spirits.

As did the eternal joy of music, the value of which was increasingly recognised with listening figures even for Radio 3 soaring like never before. I've taken to listening full blast to either opera, Queen or Abba while out for a walk. With an iPhone and AirPods I hear sounds I've never heard before. Same with headphone indoors. Live music might still be a way off until audience confidence returns, but it's the sounds in the head that matter. Balm for the soul in troubled times.

The garden is perking up, saying it's open for business, spring bulbs being even more welcome this year than any other. And seed sowing has started, honeysuckle, nicotiana, cosmos and scabias again. Cheap and cheerful, bring it on.

I'm no further on with thoughts of a holiday, but tempted to look at ideas for the autumn. Probably a UK holiday until the question of vaccination passports/certificates get sorted out to enable travel abroad. The government is hesitating but I can't see the problem myself. We've always had to have a Yellow Fever certificate to visit certain countries – what's the difference? But then I've never had a problem with the idea of ID cards, it's all about rights and responsibilities. I tell you a bit about myself and you tell me whether I can do what I want to do. Or am I missing something?

*Mary Robinson*