

Stop The World, I Want To Get Off

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By Chris Grist



"Stop the world, I want to get off."

These words appeared on a well-known poster in my youth. What have the last eighteen months done to you? Last spring/summer we could walk the village lanes each day, with no fear of traffic, we watched the crops grow through to harvest. I even bought a bike pre lock down so that I could cycle each day with the impending threat to the gym closure. I could cycle the village with no fear of traffic. With no planes in the air and no cars on the road, the world began to recover. Even the murky waters in the canals of Venice cleared. I didn't even have to drive to church, what a boom Zoom is, but oh, how I missed the personal contact.

As we return to a new normal, we have continued with our destruction of the planet.

Now I have returned to the gym, lots of the staff and customers have moved on, and the place seems quite empty compared to what it once was. In March I returned to my volunteering role at Ickworth, again everything has change. Some of the staff had faced redundancy and moved on, others had to reapply for their own jobs. A number of older volunteers had chosen not to return when we reopened, so we are now seeking new volunteers. I seem also to have lost so many family and friends during this time.

Some people coped well with lock down and time on their hands, others not so much. I see people who managed all the way through lock down, are now experiencing mental health issues. I read recently that our A and E departments are dealing with 300 people a day with mental health issues. Some of this I am seeing firsthand, and having been through 2 breakdowns myself, I can empathise.

But where do we go from here? Electric Cars? Heat Source Pumps? Do we continuing jetting and sailing around the world? Apparently, Christmas is also threatened, but only for those who don't know what it is really about.

I can see why some people are at the point of "Stop the world, I want to get off".

Something I found useful during the last year is a music video I found on YouTube: a young man from Saffron Walden singing all the parts to John Rutter's *'The Lord Bless You And Keep you'*. This is my prayer for each one of you:

*The Lord bless you and keep you:
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,
To shine upon you and be gracious, and be gracious unto you
The Lord bless you and keep you:
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,
To shine upon you and be gracious, and be gracious unto you
The Lord lift up the light
Of His countenance upon you,
The Lord lift up the light
Of His countenance upon you,
And give you peace,
And give you peace,
And give you peace,
And give you peace
Amen
Amen
Amen
Amen
Amen
Amen*

(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5C0Zg5C2Us>)

(Photo supplied by author of Gaia earth sculpture on display in Norwich. For more information, visit <https://my-earth.org/about/>)