

Wednesday 10.38am

*I'm afraid...*

Well, maybe not afraid, but disconcerted, unsettled, a little perturbed. The ground beneath my feet feels unstable, a bit like one of those fairground attractions I remember from my childhood with the sliding floors and wonky mirrors.

Yesterday the university I work for cancelled most of the face-to-face teaching due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. I walked out of the building with as much of my desk as I could fit in my rucksack; a laptop, some vital paperwork, a print I'd swapped with a colleague and as much of the library as I could carry. I abandoned my favourite mug, watered the plants and left, wondering if we'd be back in September complete with a cohort of shiny new undergraduates or if the whole place would be opened up in fifty years like a giant time capsule.

So now as I write, the financial markets are in freefall and social media is divided between predictions of the apocalypse, people wanting virtual validation of their integrity for checking on elderly neighbours and, satirical (dark, but amusing) memes. Fake news abounds and the capacity for human lunacy is astonishing. I'm trying to take the wide view with as much logical pragmatism as I can muster, applying a degree of criticality to everything I read. That said, I did panic buy three packets of biscuits yesterday in the supermarket, but who doesn't need a Jammie Wagon Wheel in a time of crisis?

On the train on my way home I hatched a plan; I feel the need to document events as they unfold.

What if I keep a diary? Not the traditional written kind, but one made of objects – a cup(?) - every day for as long as necessary. The global context is larger than I can deal with. We could lose people we love; some already have. Jobs, businesses, livelihoods will inevitably be damaged and the effects of this level of disruption might rumble on for years. But what about the minutiae? How will we remember that? The actual lived experience of a global event plotted as it unravels. If nothing else it will give me something to focus on during what promises to be a challenging time.

I'm starting today. My new year's resolutions have historically lasted on average three to four days, so I'm sceptical about my own ability to maintain momentum. Nevertheless, here goes...