

## June 2020

Nothing really much going on. I'm keeping myself busy listening to the news and researching different countries. I am particularly interested how different countries deal with Covid. Also, how the WHO has dealt with it (or not dealt with it) from the start.

I am busy exploring international affairs and writing articles for my school newspaper. Really happy my twin brother and I were made lead editors.

We are also keeping ourselves busy by filling out research forms for Barnet Youth Council.

I am playing hearts of iron 4 online. I have discovered some of my friends play it too.

We are still studying every day from 9:00 until 17:30 with one hour lunch break. I feel really confident that I'm doing well. I really, really miss going to school, but I feel I'm getting a lot done from home. But I don't know how well I'm doing compared with all my friends that are going to private schools. They have been having zoom classes since the first day of lock-down. When I talk to these friends I can see that I am really behind despite all my efforts.

The weather is really nice and my parents are complaining that my brother and I are not going out. But there is nothing to do. We're not allowed to see anyone. All we do is play games on line with our friends. My dad complains a lot about it, but my mum understands that this is the only way we can interact with our friends at the moment.

We have been pestering my parents for a puppy for a long time now. I think my mum is starting to give in. She thinks if we had a puppy we would go out more.

## July 2020

My aunt who lives very close to us got a puppy on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July. We were allowed to go and see it in the park. But we had to keep our distance because my aunt's partner is highly vulnerable and has to shield. It looks like my dad is softening to the idea of getting a puppy.

On July 9<sup>th</sup> we got a puppy!!! It is only 5 weeks old and weighs 600gr. It fits in the palm of my hand. We are going to call it Humphrey. My brother came up with that name. A bit grand for a tiny puppy. I like the name because it reminds my both of Humphrey Bogart (who I think was great!) and also Sir Humphrey Appleby from "Yes Minister" and "Yes Prime Minister". My favourite character from one

of my favourite sitcoms. My other favourite is "Only Fools and Horses". We've been watching it a lot during lock-down.

My mum has started an Instagram account for him. Humphrey von Yilmazhausen. In English it's something like Humphrey of the House of Yilmaz. In German it sounds like a noble name.

We have been busy doing quite a few short videos. We did some for Barnet Youth Council on how we are coping with Covid. They have now asked us if we would do voice-overs for them.

We also did one for our school. Since the new year 7 won't be able to visit the school we were picked amongst a number of children to make a short video about our school.

We have also had virtual sports day. We have been filming 10 second clips of all the exercise we were doing. Humphrey was in all of these.

It's the last three weeks of school and we're going in twice a week for two hours. Only year 10 and year 12. I think they are a bit worried because we are going to sit GCSEs and A levels next year. I was really looking forward to going back and seeing my friends but I was really disappointed. I couldn't really mix with anyone. I knew that this was going to be the case, but I was still disappointed. And I had hoped that maybe they would do something fun with us but we had real lessons. Luckily my brother and I have been studying every day. So it looks like we're ok – for now.

We were supposed to travel to Greece for two weeks to stay with our grandmother, but this has been cancelled. My grandmother is 86. I hope that I can see her next year.

It's really boring and I also miss all my uncles and my cousins who live nearby. Some of my uncles are shielding.

### **August 2020**

Holidays! And the weather is lovely and we can now meet some people. Some of my uncles and cousins have come round and we have been sitting far away from each other in the garden.

There was an explosion in Beirut. I'm following this really closely. What a terrible, avoidable tragedy! I wonder if there are any kids that are taking part in this research that were directly affected by this tragedy. I'm waiting to see what they have to write about it. I wish I could be in touch with other kids that are part of this research. It reminded me of something Stalin said: "One man's death is a tragedy. A million is a statistic". That's how I feel about what happened in Beirut. Because I know

that there are children that may be taking part in this research I feel it's personal. They might be at this very moment taking pictures or videos of what happened. They might be writing about it.

My friends who did their "sort of" GCSEs this year got their results back. The ones that go to private school had really, really good results. The others not really. I have to admit I am a bit worried about taking my GCSEs next year. School is starting again next month and nobody knows what's going to happen.

I'm researching universities. Scotland sounds good. I want to study history and politics. Sometimes I write little articles and make videos about current and international affairs for my Instagram page. I follow everything that goes on really closely.

My mum said she doesn't think we will have a family Christmas party this year. Usually we have a big family get-together just before Christmas for the whole family. Over 30 people! I'm quite disappointed. I love my family. It's a mixture of Greeks and Turks – and they know how to have a good time. And good food is never far away.

My brother and I submitted our entries for the "Storychest – Children of the Lockdown". Apparently 200 kids from all over the country took part in it. All the stories will be stored for future generations to see.

Humphrey is growing by the day and we are having a lot of fun with him. But my mum is quite stressed because he pees everywhere. I love having him around. He's so much fun. He follows my mum around everywhere.

We went to get our new school uniform. We had to book an appointment in order to go and buy them. They only allow a certain number of people into the shop. My mum said it was a waste of money to buy the sports uniform because she doesn't think we are going to use it. I think she's a bit worried about money.

### **September 2020**

We started school. I was really looking forward to it. It was great to see all my friends again. Even though we have to socially distance, it doesn't actually work. And after school we're all on the same bus with lots of other school children. My parents said that it's only a matter of time before we all get Covid. I think they are worried because of their age. They are in their mid and late 50s and my

dad has asthma. We have stopped seeing any uncles and aunts since we started school. Just to be on the safe side.

We had three weeks of school in September. But they were interrupted by days where we couldn't go in. My brother had a cough so we both had to isolate for 5 days.

I am getting more and more concerned about how I'm going to sit GCSEs. It looks like I'm doing ok at school but I'm not sure how I'm going to do in exams. We're having mocks in November. We were really lucky to keep on our history teacher. She's head of history. And we got a new geography teacher and a new RS teacher. They are both really, really good. Looks like they tried really hard to get us some good teachers.

We started going to our fencing classes again once a week. I LOVE it! I missed my fencing classes during lock-down.

### **October 2020**

This is really bad! We have been back at school now for 4 weeks. Some of my friends have only been 4 days! There have been several confirmed Covid cases. So they had to send home different year groups and their siblings. And last week the school closed down for three days. In four weeks my brother and I have only been to school for 2 weeks. The three days we were at home the school put on some live classes for us. It was really bad. They put all of us in the same class. 150 children! Why can't we have our normal classes??? We only had three lessons on each day. In maths the teacher made the students admin by mistake. Some kids started streaming games. Some of us told the teacher how to take the admin off again so these kids muted us. Looking back at it, it was very funny but at the time a lot of kids that actually wanted to learn were really upset.

I know some of my friends have asked their parents for tuitions but some of the parents said they couldn't afford it because they had lost their jobs. I also heard that the food bank at our school is always really busy. My brother and one of our friends have set up a group chat and invited all our close friends onto it, so we can support each other with our studies. I'm helping with history. One of our other friends is really good at maths and another one very good at English. At least we're doing something. If it all goes wrong, at least we've done our best.

I'm following the Armenia / Azerbaijan conflict really closely. I have to admit I didn't see that one coming.

We have been sent home again. We won't be going back to school until after the holidays beginning of November. We hardly had two weeks at school since school started after the summer holidays. Now they have started giving us proper classes on line. The teachers go a bit too fast and the classes are laggy but it's better than before.

The government is talking about a short sharp lockdown. Already we are at level 2 in London. But I think we will be moving to level 3 soon.

When I finish my schoolwork I follow the US elections closely. I think Biden is going to win. But then I thought Hillary was going to win last time. I got that wrong.

My brother and I have our own rooms for the first time. We were sharing so far. It feels great to have my own space.