Be Well – A Curation of Random Resources for Lockdown Life

Members of the Robinson community are invited to contribute a resource to this collection (something that is helping you get through this unusual time) Please email library@robinson.cam.ac.uk

1. Yarns and Stitches

A study found that the act of knitting lowers the heart rate by an average of 11 beats per minute: it also releases the mood-regulator serotonin in the brain. If you’re new to the craft but would like to give it a go this article, How to Start Knitting (and learn to love it) is a great place to start.

During lockdown the RCSA has initiated a collective art project inviting members of college to submit crocheted squares which when sewn together will make a Big Robinson Blanket.

Reading suggestions (link included if available):

- This Golden Fleece: a journey through Britain’s Knitted History by Esther Rutter. Published by Granta, 2019
- Fashion Knitwear by Jenny Udale. Temporary access to ebook (expires 30th June) http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/8p41kq/44CAM_ALMA51616359990003606

2. Qu'ils mangent de la brioche

Pasta has been scarce during the start of lockdown and despite the shortage of flour we are all apparently baking banana bread now. If you want to have a go at baking there is an easy recipe here, a vegan one here, and suggestions for flour alternatives from Jack Monroe here. For those wondering what’s the difference between banana bread and banana cake then this article is for you.

Reading suggestions (link included if available):

- The Geometry of Pasta by Caz Hildebrand and Jacob Kenedy. Published by Boxtree, 2010
- Cooking with Chef Silvio: stories and authentic recipes from Campania by Silvio Suppa. Temporary access to ebook (expires 30th June) http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/8p41kq/44CAM_ALMA51615877810003606

3. Found Pebbles

The craze for painting pebbles and leaving them for others to find is well established, though I have yet to find one in the gardens at Robinson. The Kindness Rocks Project encourages people to leave rocks painted with inspiring messages along the path of life. It has an inspiring website.

Thich Nhat Hanh has a technique for using a pebble (or other tactile object) to induce a sense of calm – you can use this for anger, anxiety, stress or sadness.

Reading suggestions (link included if available):

- The Book of Pebbles: from prehistory to the Pet Shop Boys by Christopher Stocks and Angie Lewin. Published by Random Spectacular, 2019
4. Walking Therapy

Lockdown walks have become a cherished part of the day for many of us. With the reduction of traffic noise, birdsong has become much more noticeable. If you’re craving a walk somewhere further afield, here are some suggestions for virtual variety.

- A fabulous series of podcasts from nature writer and novelist Melissa Harrison called The Stubborn Light of Things
- Wellness Wanders from Cambridge University Botanical Garden. These are weekly 10-15 minute videos where you can experience the sights and sounds of the garden.
- National Trust walking podcasts
- Woodland walks from the Woodland Trust

Reading suggestions (link included if available):

- The Salt Path by Raynor Winn. Published by Penguin, 2018
- The Living Mountain: a celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland by Nan Shepherd.
  http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/1asv7p8/44CAM_ALMA51621629860003606

5. Puzzling

Doing a jigsaw helps us relax because it requires our full attention, necessitates that we use the right and left sides of our brain together and gives a real sense of achievement when complete. If you want to while away half an hour there is a custom-made one here https://t.co/EK5LWIXNJ5?amp=1

6. Good Grief

The Harvard Business Review article That Discomfort You’re Feeling Is Grief struck me as one of the best articles I’d read on the emotional toll of this pandemic. If you want to explore grief further Griefcast by Cariad Lloyd is an excellent series of 109 episodes where comedians talk about their experiences of grief and death.

Reading suggestion (link included if available):

Life After Loss: the lessons of grief by Vamik D Volkan and E Zintl Temporary access during COVID-19
http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/1asv7p8/44CAM_ALMA51621111970003606

More mindfulness books:

http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/1asv7p8/44CAM_ALMA51615832330003606
A Mindfulness Based Stress-Reduction Workbook by Bob Stahl and Elisha Goldstein. Temporary access during COVID-19
http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/8p41kg/44CAM_ALMA51618980070003606

Happiness: essential mindfulness practices by Thich Nhat Hanh. Temporary access during COVID-19
http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/8p41kg/44CAM_ALMA51623620270003606

A Mindfulness Guide for the Frazzled by Ruby Wax. Restricted to one user access.
http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/8p41kg/44CAM_ALMA51626542800003606

Reasons to Stay Alive by Matt Haig. Restricted to one user access
http://idiscover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/8p41kg/44CAM_ALMA5162654265000360