Dear friends

Whilst writing the October Note from the wilds of Suffolk I reflected on what initially started as a brief communication in March yet, seven months later the notes seem to be developing on par with the much missed 'Alistair Cook's Letter from America' as we still remain in a 'shifting sands' situation of Covid-19. Regardless of which hemisphere we live in October is an interesting month as we associate it with Halloween, time zone changes, international awareness days and a month of vibrant music, art festivals, the famous Catalan legendary human tower dating back to the 18th century and numerous religious festivals.

It's also a month where millions of people around the world would normally gather at organised events to observe World Food Day (WFD) on October 16th but, due to social restrictions other creativities have been undertaken to raise this important international awareness day. A recent example of emphasising social inequality relating to child hunger and poverty was highlighted by a UK footballer canvassing the UK government to address this catastrophe. It is a global humanitarian disaster and in Britain alone circa 3m people of all age groups are going hungry since the pandemic began due to loss of work and income, driving many families into poverty since lockdown. Additionally, nearly half of seniors reside alone in the UK and two million (16%) pensioners in the UK live in poverty! My late husband always supported the humanitarian (WFD) projects and this year the Venous-Lymphatics World International Foundation (vWin) was elected for their outstanding entrepreneurial worldwide *'not for profit'* 12 week education webinars with all monies donated to WFD. Globally 197 million older people are living in poverty and the number of people suffering acute hunger is estimated to be more than a quarter of a billion by the end of 2020 (UN World Food Programme, April 2020) posing a threat within fragile humanitarian settings. *If you want to eliminate hunger, everybody has to be involved". Bono*

As the days start drawing in with a chill in the air October is a fantastic time to forage for edible fruits and berries that nature provides us free in our hedgerows offering autumnal delights enabling us to to make produce such as jams, pies or even a cheeky tipple such as Plum Vodka or Sloe Gin. At one time we had a wonderful old country pub where an annual Sloe Gin competition was held. The landlady, a great Sloe Gin maker (& judge) introduced me to the vitures of making it. Hence, I embraced this new hobby with great gusto, and became rather partial to the results, purely for medicinal reasons!!. This year there is an abundance of Sloes in the garden which I duly harvested hence, the 2020 Sloe Gin is well under way. However, my Sloe Gin is an acquired taste but terribly moorish although my husband always stated it was rather on par with cough mixture, yet on the other hand it's been enjoyed (or tolerated) by friends over the years!

Active involvement and participation in our family, professional and social lives is known to have health and mental wellbeing benefits, but due to the current resurgence of Covid-19 we are experiencing further universal restrictions hindering our ability to reintegrate back fully into society. With this in mind please remember your friends and loved ones who are living alone as most of us appreciate and value social interaction, which for many is achieved through touch, creativity, intellectual stimuli, debates, laughter, support, genuine friendships and love. As I end this note please remember you are all very much in my thoughts during this extraordinary time *"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."* Leo Buscaglia.

Warmest regards

Ellie