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informed



FINANCIAL
EMERGENCIES

STEVE & GERALDINE
REVISITED

LITTLE FREE
LIBRARIES

MEET THE TEAM

DREAM TEAM

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THE VALUE OF INVESTMENTS CAN GO DOWN AS
WELL AS UP, PAST PERFORMANCE IS NOT
NECESSARILY A GUIDE TO FUTURE RETURNS.

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IN THIS EDITION



WELCOME



Shelley McCarthy, Manging Director

Welcome to the eighth edition of informed magazine.

These are and continue to be strange times. Since lockdown began in March, the way we work and interact with our colleagues has changed considerably.

At Informed Choice, we were able to take advantage of our investment in technology to swiftly move from working in Sundial House (Cranleigh), and Holders Barn (Petersfield) to our home offices or kitchens, spare rooms or even bedrooms!

The exception was Andrea, who every day worked in isolation at Sundial House, scanning the post to the team and dealing with phone calls and outgoing post.

We have kept in touch with each other via weekly Zoom team meetings and a Tuesday afternoon quiz which has had a massive variety of topics including cocktail contents, ponies and the history of Bristol plus plenty of music rounds.

Most importantly we have continued to meet with our clients, usually via Zoom and being available to deliver our professional services. Who knows what the future might hold, but we have learned that change isn't always as frightening as it first appears to be.

CELEBRATING THE COMMUNITY

Local hero John Menlove completed his sponsored walk around Cranleigh Common Cricket Ground during the lockdown.

Ninety-year-old John, Cranleigh Resident and Member of Cranleigh Rotary Club, started his one circuit a day for ten days on 20th July.

By the 1st August, John had raised £3,825 on behalf of Cranleigh Rotary Club for Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care.

Phyllis Tuckwell provides supportive and end of life care to adult patients and their families who are living with an advanced or terminal illness, in West Surrey and part of North East Hampshire.

Every day, it supports over 250 patients, carers and relatives either at the Hospice, out in the community or in patients' own homes.



WORKING FROM HOME

The onset of the lockdown in March resulted in a swift change in working practices for the Informed Choice team.

Instead of working from our offices in Cranleigh and Petersfield, we all had to find convenient spots at home to setup a laptop and second monitor.

This move to remote-working has been (mostly!) smooth sailing to date, with a range of creative looking workspaces, for writing reports, answering emails and chatting via Zoom - with clients and colleagues.

In this feature, our team share their working from home photos.



Lizanne created an office space off the side of her husband's car workshop, with the two puppies for company.

Phil wins the competition for the most monitors in his home office setup, with three allowing him to keep up to date with what's happening in the world of Financial Planning!

WORKING FROM HOME



Top left: Karen.

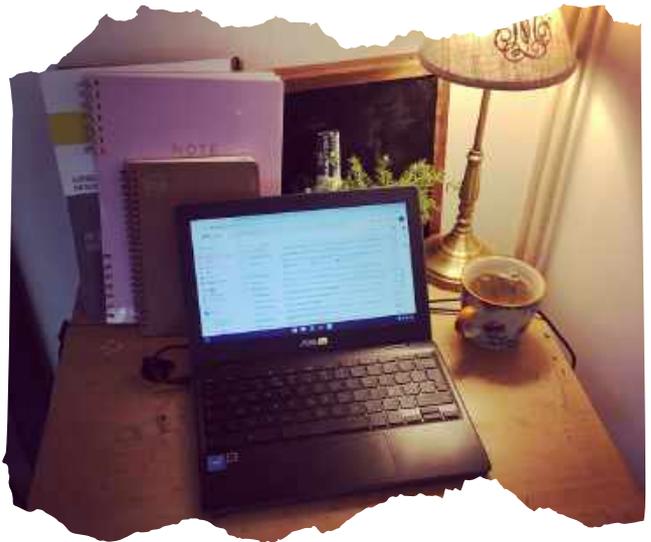
Top right: Shelley

Bottom left: Amanda

Bottom right: Victoria

Everyone in the Informed Choice team expressed their happiness with not having to do the daily commute, but also said that working from home means they miss seeing their colleagues.

WORKING FROM HOME



Top left: Martin, who built a log cabin in his garden in June to create a home office space.

Top right: Andy Bodman, who we think spent a lot of time tidying his desk for this photo!

Bottom left: Vanessa with a home office setup that looks smarter than our office desks.

Bottom right: Emma, who says she is working in the darkest corner of her house.

If you're working from home during the pandemic, please do share a photo of your home office space. Email us at hello@icfp.co.uk or tag us on social media @informedchoice.

PROFILE: VANESSA JUDD



My first job was...working in a shoe shop, Freeman Hardy Willis, and also my Nan's local Greengrocers. I also did a paper round in the mornings.

I started in financial services...in 1991 as an office junior, attending college one day a week.

My nearest and dearest are...my husband Richard and my two daughters, Abbie and Olivia, they are 15 and 13. I come from a large family so there is never a dull moment. My Nan is my absolute hero and my friend, so she deserves a mention.

My favourite thing about working at Informed Choice is...the people. To have started a new job from home and be welcomed the way I have has been amazing. I already feel part of a great team with a good support network.

My favourite film is...Dirty Dancing! But there are many I love! My passion is theatre/musicals though, I am really missing them right now.

The type of music I most like is...anything easy listening really but I do have a soft spot for Robbie Williams!

One thing people might be surprised to learn about me is...My second child who I was assured by the midwife, that my ever increasing bump, was going to be all water but turned out to be a whopping 10lb 2 oz baby delivered with no pain relief!

PROFILE: LIZANNE DOYLE



My first job was...egg collecting.

I started in financial services...in June 1990.

In my spare time I...walk my dogs and help my husband with his business (he calls it giving him my unwanted opinion).

My nearest and dearest is...my husband, Sean.

My favourite thing about working at Informed Choice is...the people and the ethos of the company. I left Informed Choice to help my husband get his business up and running, and then came back because I don't like working on cars (I like driving them). I missed the sense of accomplishment that I had in my job and love working as part of a team and focussing on constantly improving our systems and processes to deliver an excellent service to our clients.

My favourite film is...The Departed

The type of music I most like is...Blues Rock

One thing people might be surprised to learn about me is...I am a Black Belt in a Korean Martial Art



STEVE & GERALDINE

The March 2020 edition of informed magazine is mostly sat in boxes in Sundial House. The printing arrived at the start of the lockdown and we made the decision not to post physical copies to our clients, due to fears at that time about spreading the virus.

Our cover stars for the March edition were Steve and Geraldine Barker. Here's their story, along with an update on how Covid-19 has impacted on their business and their lives.

In February, we were in a holding pattern above Ireland West Airport, listening to the cabin crew conversing behind us. It seemed that the stark choices we faced were either returning to London Gatwick or diverting to Dublin. Fortunately, the latter option was chosen by the pilot.

Unfortunately, it meant then hiring a car and driving for 3 hours across Ireland, to reach our destination just to the north of the county town of Sligo.

Ireland certainly wasn't the Emerald Isle on this occasion. Snow and hail storms coupled with strong winds were the cause of our flight problems and also made for difficult driving conditions.

We did though persevere, and we (me, Associate Financial Planner - Andy Bodman and Bamford Media photographer - Joe Denyer), are so glad we did. The end prize was joining Geraldine and Steve Barker to hear about their marvellous adventure.





STEVE & GERALDINE

Milk Harbour Holidays is their business in the beautiful coastal region south of Mullaghmore Head in County Sligo. Their story is a great example of what Financial Planning can help our clients to achieve. Geraldine tells us a little about her family background here in Ireland:

“We are just a couple of miles outside of a little village called Grange. My Mum was born on the site, and as far as we know, we can trace back to my great grandfather, but we think it probably went back beyond that.

“My grandfather and my uncles were boat builders. They built traditional wooden fishing boats. When my uncle John died in 2013, they left the property to me. We’ve never felt comfortable about owning a second home for two reasons; first it’s just incredibly wasteful, and secondly it means you go on holiday to the same place all the time.



“So we were then left with a decision about what to do with the house.

“It’s on quite an exposed position, and we are directly facing the Atlantic. Having it as a holiday home wasn’t really a proposition for us, well not one that we wanted to follow. Maintenance costs are huge, and we’ve got a massive boat shed on the land as well.

“Nonetheless, for us, it’s always been a special place, and we thought we need to throw everything we have at it and look after the family legacy.

“We started planning how we were going to move across. Our initial idea was to sell our home in England at some point and just move across, lock, stock and barrel.”

STEVE & GERALDINE

Steve picks up the story:

“So, if we were going to move here we go all-in. We’ve worked corporately for years, commuting from East Grinstead to Central London. Up at 5.30 am, catch the 6.32 am train into London, and not back into East Grinstead until 7.15 pm. Then it was dinner at 7.30 pm, and time for bed because then you are up again at 5.30 am the next morning.

“I’ve said before, commuting can become a miserable existence. But we recognised that we had an opportunity for change and started wondering about what we would actually do.

“We did know that we would need an income. So our plan started in earnest in 2013 by clearing the site and applying for planning permission. It’s worth saying that our plans evolved, initially we thought we would build two houses on the site, live in one and have the other for self-catering, but the council wouldn’t let us build two separate properties so we could have the B&B as we liked but not self-catering.”

It’s worth pointing out that this is not a traditional B&B. In Steve and Geraldine’s words, it is “boutique”. This is a very high standard with en-suite bedrooms, a dining room and two sitting rooms, all separate from the couple’s living accommodation.

What also makes it different is Steve and Geraldine’s attitude; this is more about providing a retreat for their clients - they don’t turf them out at 10.00 am and ask them not to return until 4.00 pm!

The boatshed needs explaining as well. This separate building is not only a combination of storage for activity equipment (a good selection of kayaks), but a third of the floor space is devoted to a room used for art activities. It’s also in high demand by yoga teachers whose pupils also benefit from the high-class B&B facilities.



Location wise, if I had climbed out of my bedroom window and jumped the low wall and started swimming, my next stop might well have been Newfoundland! A somewhat soothing, low rumble is noticeable; it's not road traffic, but the surf of the Atlantic Ocean, visible between the islands ringing the harbour, crashing to shore.

Dawn broke on our visit at 8.32 am and to use the term breathtaking is no exaggeration.

Behind Milk Harbour is Benbulbin Mountain, flat-topped and on our visit snow-covered. The area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and actually on the Wild Atlantic Way. There is a seal colony on the sand spit opposite the house less than 400 meters away.

This is a perfect place for walking, surfing, watching wildlife (particularly the birdlife), and most importantly experiencing Irish culture. I don't just mean Guinness! The Poet WB Yeats is buried some five miles from their home.

A single word that sums it all up is, unspoilt.

Steve explains the journey on which they have been:

"2013 was the trigger point when Geraldine was left the family home. We had a background plan to clear the site because it had been an industrial site. We had to go to the planning commission, and they wouldn't let us have two houses here, so we had to remain as one building. That meant we had one set of drawings from the architect and could cost the project.

"The exchange rate between the Pound Sterling and the Euro was significantly different - €1.45 to £1. However, when we went to Ireland, it was only €1.14 to £1 that made one hell of a difference to our business plan.

"It was becoming very real, and we recognised that we had to get our financial priorities in order. Some neighbours of ours in East Grinstead introduced us to Informed Choice.

"You started by asking us what we had, where it was and we had a long conversation about our risk profile. You also asked us all about our income and expenditure so that you could prepare the lifetime cashflow forecasting.

"During that meeting, we did the 'What if?' part and we thought that was going to be a dry conversation where you just told us what we had and what we could do with it which is funny because it wasn't dry at all! You listened intently and what was really insightful was you showed us our options and asked us if we had considered doing it now."

Geraldine adds,

"You looked at us and said, 'Why are you still working, you can do it now?' In fact, you said it to us three times, after the meeting I said to Steve, I think he meant it!"

STEVE & GERALDINE

Steve joins in with his building metaphor about an arch:

“You came back a week later, and while we thought we were imposing on your time, it was such a very, very big message for us. We discussed it long and hard. You were the last piece of the building process. We had all the other bricks, but the only thing that fixes it all together is the one that takes the longest, the keystone is the one that holds it all together.

“We put the house on the market at the beginning of August 2017 and exchanged at the start of January 2018. I moved over here straight away and Geraldine moved into the rented flat in East Grinstead. The building started in late February.”

It was a massive project and Geraldine and Steve faced some significant challenges along the way including a sink-hole under the property that swallowed a 13-ton digger (the driver escaped safely) which could have ended the whole project.

However, 120-tons of concrete delivered down the narrow country lane by five trucks and more brickwork underground on one side of the house than above the ground solved the problem, even if it did use up the whole of their contingency fund. Any number of episodes of Grand Designs spring to mind!

It's a nice house, although the word nice is sometimes seen as a bit of a pejorative term.

We are having this conversation in a local pub, one of huge character and history. Geraldine's grandfather built the bar and the other wooden fittings. It has a grocery shop, a bar, restaurant and in the past contained the post office and a barber.

We are introduced to a local man who has not met Geraldine and Steve before but knows of what they have done at the McCanns Boatyard. He tells them that “they have the nicest house in Ireland” which is high praise indeed.

The activity centre in the Boathouse has a yoga studio and is now used by a local teacher for her yoga classes with the participants staying in the B&B rooms. They have also engaged with local artists to let them know about the availability of the studio.

Steve shows us around the Boathouse and the racks of kayaks available for when the weather turns better.

They call the business a retreat, and it really is. They want people to learn about the local community, the people, its history and culture and the local wildlife. They have been able to apply for the Wild Atlantic Way branding, and the buildings are literally on the Wild Atlantic Way!

Who are their clients then? Walkers, kayakers, cyclists, artists and Yoga enthusiasts - to use Steve's words, “People who do stuff!”

We went to the other side of the harbour to take photos while the sleet fell and the wind was quite strong. It's truly a magical place. Wild, scenic, embracing, and relaxing all at the same time.

We look across the harbour at McCanns Boathouse and the house that Steve and Geraldine have built and can only agree with the comments of the locals at the pub last night; it could well be the nicest house in Ireland.

STEVE & GERALDINE (AN UPDATE)

Early March 2020, half our predicted first year sales budget secured, then Covid-19 struck. All bookings cancelled and the realisation that our 'Retreats' business model would not be viable until a vaccine is delivered effectively. Strategic re-think required!

With some minor alterations to the building, we converted Milk Harbour Holidays to become a venue for self catering holiday breaks by creating two luxury apartments. The building alterations completed on the 20th July and we announced we're 'open for business' on the same day.

We had also undertaken the training and achieved certification to the Covid-19 Safety Standard to reassure potential guests that we are a safe option for a short break. This includes 'snap inspections' to prove we are maintaining the required standards. One has already happened – and we passed with flying colours!



Our new business offering has become a one bedroom, two person apartment in the former studio, named The Boat House, and a two bedroom, four person apartment on the ground floor of the main house, named The Forge.

Our marketing platforms have been our own website (www.milkharbourholidays.ie), 'Failte Ireland' and Airbnb. We have been almost fully booked in both apartments since then and have now secured enough bookings to meet our planned 2020 business turnover. Phew!

At present we can only accept bookings from guests who live on the island of Ireland. When national and international constraints are eased, we will be looking forward to welcoming guests from the UK, Europe and beyond. We are open all year. (The wild west of Ireland is beautiful in all weathers, and we have real peat/log burning fires too!)

The feedback we have had from guests has been overwhelmingly positive – the main comment has been that we should improve the photographs on our website to reflect reality better.

LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES

You may have noticed as you walk around your local area, that little book-sharing boxes are springing up in the most unusual places.

The first time I noticed this new phenomenon was after visiting some friends in Nyewood, Hampshire. On the green opposite their house was an old BT red telephone box which had been converted into a library. I was inspired!

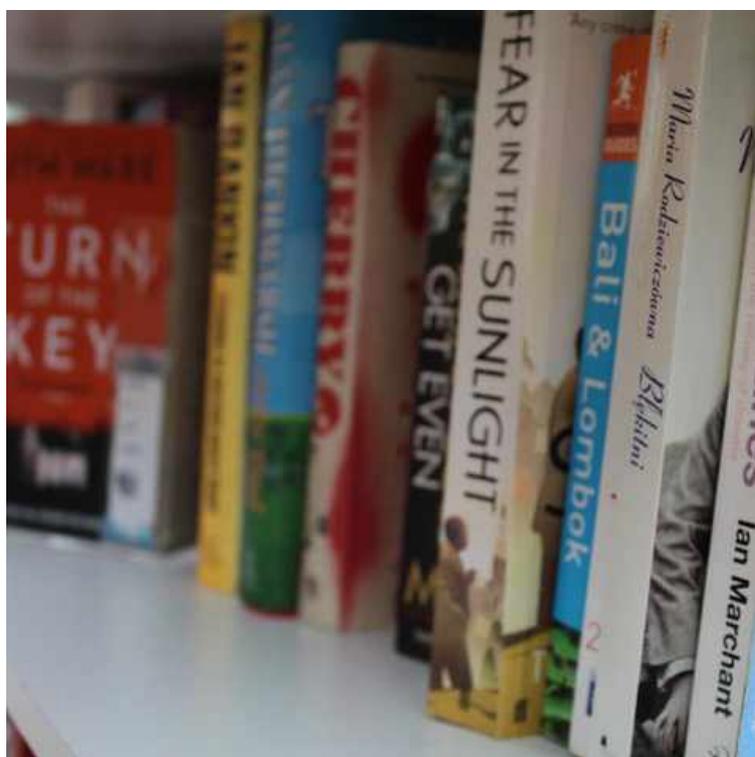
I looked into the possibility of adopting a phone box near my parents' house where I had grown up, unfortunately, this box turned out to be privately owned, the owner was not receptive to my desire to fill the phonebox with books. Undeterred I stumbled upon the Little Free Library organisation online.

Little Free Library is a nonprofit organisation that inspires a love of reading, builds community, and sparks creativity by fostering neighbourhood book exchanges around the world.

Through Little Free Library book exchanges, millions of books are exchanged each year, profoundly increasing access to books for readers of all ages and backgrounds.

I set about decorating a repurposed kitchen cabinet and painted it with images of sea creatures and jungle animals. During the Easter school holidays in 2019 the Cranleigh Mead Little Free Library was born. It has undergone many weather proofing adaptations since then and countless books have been shared.

I still get excited when I notice a visitor walking away with a new read or when I discover a bag of donated books on my doorstep. Being a Little Free Library steward comes with it's own responsibilities and my husband is reluctantly getting used to the piles of books stored around our living room.



LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES

My Little Library isn't the only one in the area, after a walk at Winkworth Arboretum last year, I made my family turn around so I could make a quick stop at one I had spotted in Hascombe.

I also discovered on Instagram that there was a telephone box library in Petersfield a few streets away from the Informed Choice office.

Melody created the Petersfield Phonebox Library in September 2019 after seeing the phone box very dirty and spiders taking residence. It had shelving but never had any books inside and that's when she had an idea.

Melody says, "I work in Emergency Services as my day job but love books and had recently applied to volunteer in a local bookshop but waited three months and no response. So the phonebox idea seemed to come at the right time and decided to do something that the whole community can enjoy, and I knew I could make it work, free for all to use."

Melody cleaned the box, made some bunting and red book ends, set about collecting books and created an Instagram account.

She adds, "It has been a huge success and I go to the box every other day to photograph, clean and make sure all is ok and the books are of excellent quality. A few followers on Instagram also keep an eye out for me if they are passing and none of this would work without the local community donating and using it.

I arrange a themed box for Halloween and Christmas etc, giveaways with books and one of the greatest pleasures is speaking to the community as they walk past whilst I'm either tidying or cleaning. I have had elderly people say that they look forward to coming out and choosing a book and it gets them out of the house, the thank you's, compliments have made this all worthwhile."

Before the Covid19 pandemic took hold, I had been working with the volunteers from Cranleigh In Bloom to turn the phonebox they have adopted on the Ewhurst Road in Cranleigh into another book exchange. We hope that the book exchange will be up and running by the end of the year.

Emma Hill is Marketing Assistant at Informed Choice and steward of the Cranleigh Mead Little Free Library.



HOW TO LAUNCH A BOOK DURING A PANDEMIC

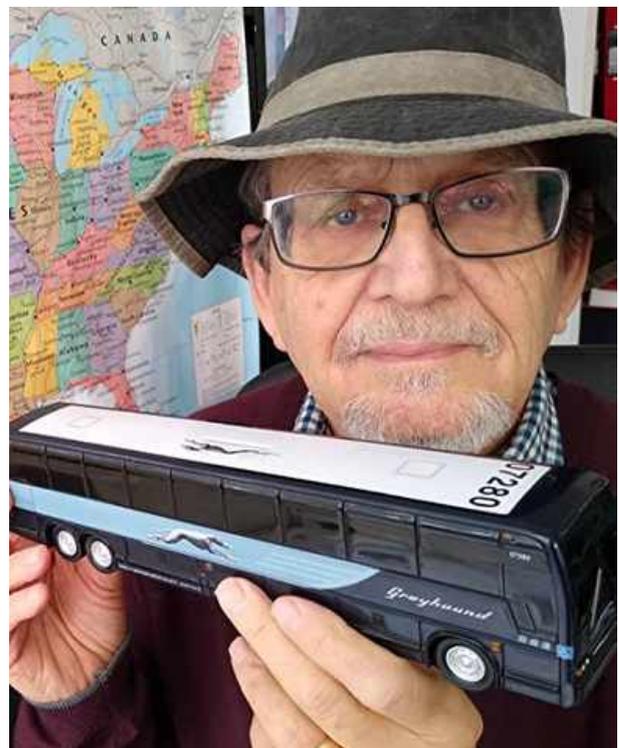
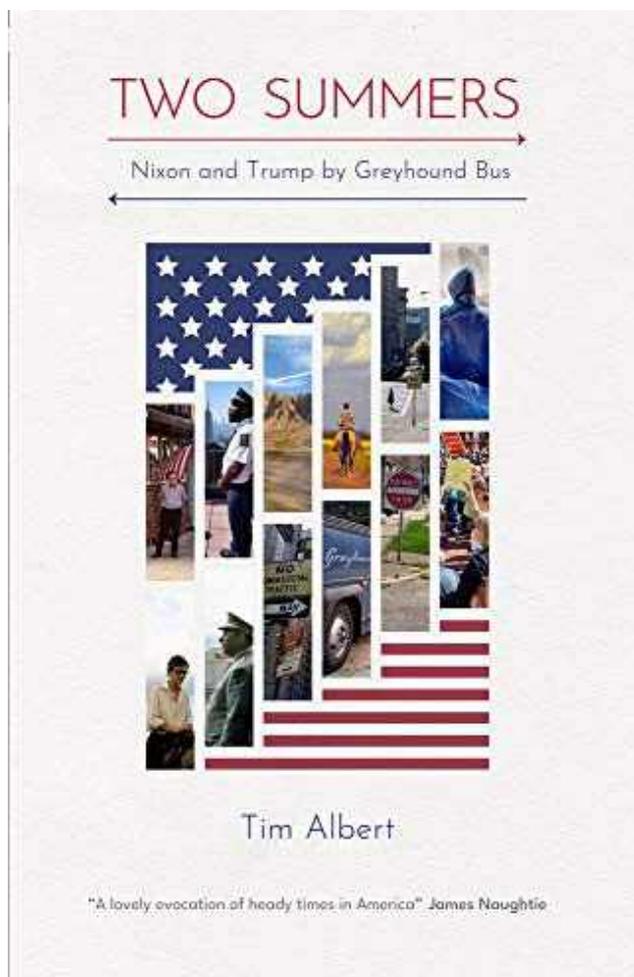
How do you launch a book during a pandemic?

The classic book launch involves people gathering together eating nibbles and drinking wine. Social distancing and households not being allowed to gather together puts a stop to that.

Our client Tim Albert responded to this challenge with flying colours. Tim published his new book *Two Summers: Nixon and Trump by Greyhound Bus* and launched it brilliantly, via Zoom. A group of us gathered together to hear the fascinating story of Tim's trip around the USA.

In 1969 the 22-year-old Tim Albert spent three happy months on a 12,000 mile road trip around the United States on Greyhound buses. Half a century later - to the day - he set out to revisit his trip, armed with his original 30,000-word diary.

Would he find the America of President Donald Trump much altered from the America of President Richard Nixon? How would Greyhound bus travel have changed in a world flooded by motor cars and electronic devices? And would his 72-year-old body last the course?



HOW TO LAUNCH A BOOK DURING A PANDEMIC

In this funny and finely observed account, our game hero tours New York with a 50-year-old Michelin Guide; discovers that bus passengers speak into their phones and not to each other; celebrates the golden jubilees of the moon landings, the gay rights movement and Kermit the Frog; declines the offer of a mail-order AK-47; and is told by half the people he meets that the President is a dangerous embarrassment and by the other half that he is a saviour who never lies.

When two older ladies assume our scruffy traveller is homeless and reach into their handbags to give him money for food, he realises that one thing hasn't changed - the generosity of Americans.

You can buy a copy from timalbert.co.uk.



NICK'S LOCKDOWN DIARY

Lockdown arrived for me one day after my 65th birthday.

I started working from home but determined that every day I would carry out some exercise. For me that was walking and I am fortunate to have a route to walk that never gets boring. Each day the weather and the state of nature changes and makes it a fascinating experience.

I have witnessed some amazing wildlife fauna and flora in the past six months and as we move into late summer and autumn I am looking forward to witnessing even more change.

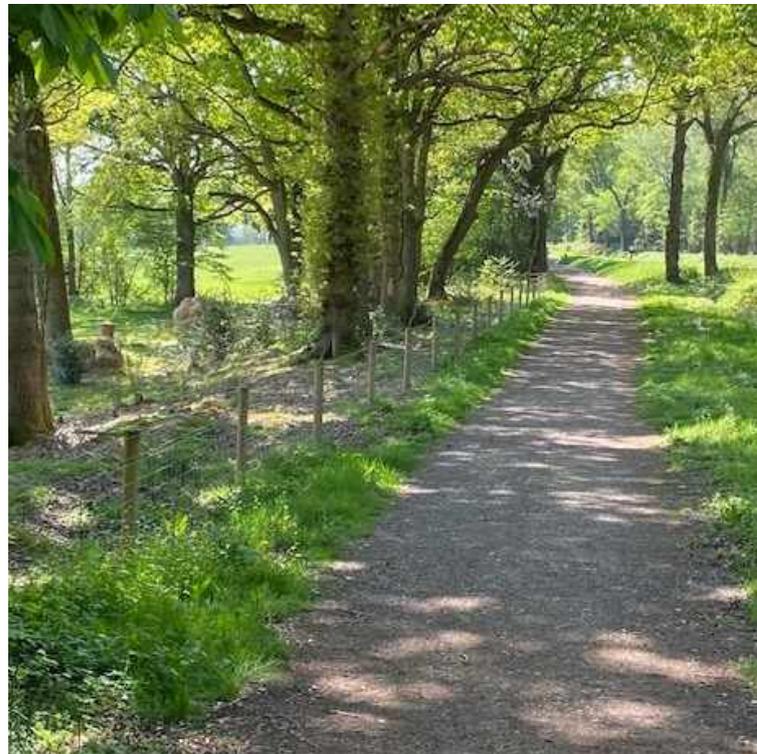
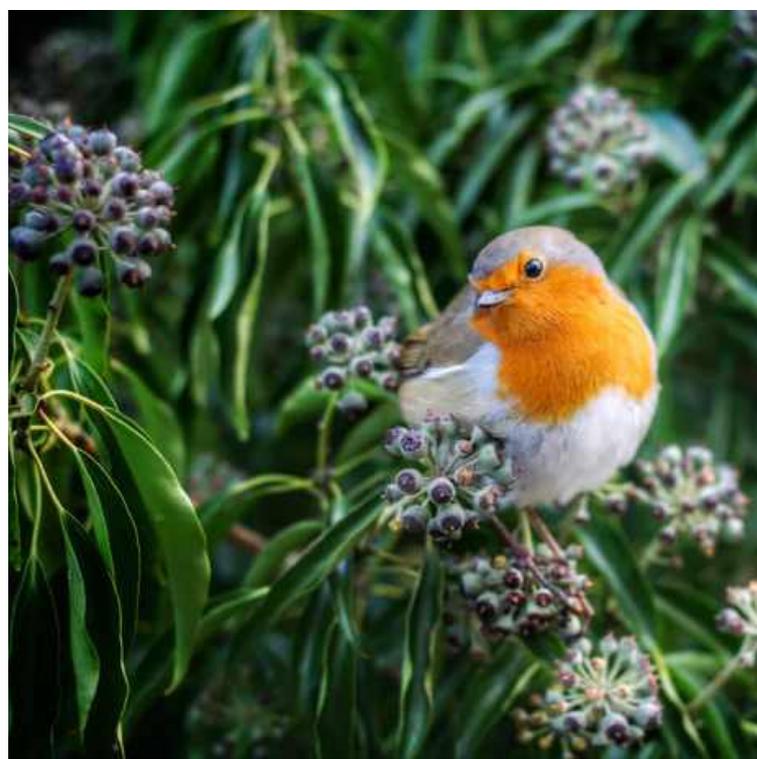
I started writing a weekly lockdown diary for our website and some of the highlights are reproduced below.

In March, the Robins in our garden proved to be a distraction. I started with a mission to feed them from my hand with mealworms; something I would later succeed in doing.

Each day, I go for a 4-mile brisk walk to make sure I remain healthy. On the way, there's no escaping the beautiful nature we have right on our doorstep.

I like to combine my daily walk with some litterpicking, and it turned out I wasn't the only one demonstrating this community spirit.

Informed Choice client John Green had been alerted by his wife to a fallen tree blocking part of the old railway line (The Downs Link) and set out with his saw to restore access for walkers, cyclists and horseriders.



NICK'S LOCKDOWN DIARY

Despite not being much of a fan of hot weather, the heatwave in August gave me an opportunity to head to the beach.

Along with the rest of the family, we met at Rustington Beach in West Sussex to spend an evening swimming in the sea and enjoying the sunshine.

Pleasingly, the beach was not crowded, and there must have been at least 50 metres between our family group and anyone else who was there, so no problem with social distancing.

Also pleasing was the relative absence of litter; it must be a better class of visitor to this beach than some of the press reports we saw during the summer.



What is your favourite animal? For my youngest grandson Samuel, it is undoubtedly the Sloth.

He can tell you the difference between the two and three-toed varieties.

As lockdown measures eased, we enjoyed a family trip to Marwell Zoo near Winchester in Hampshire, where Sammy had his fill of sloths and we got to enjoy seeing a variety of other animals.

As to my favourite, I am torn between the Giraffes (the Rothschild variety at Marwell) or Zebras, (three species Grevy's, Hartmann's Mountain Zebra and the Plains Zebra at Marwell). Each is graceful and beautifully marked creatures.

Animals aside, the highlight for me was lunch, some of the best sausages and chips I have had in ages. However, about a third of them were consumed by Samuel.

He may love Sloths, but there is nothing slow about him when it comes to tucking into Grandad's food.



Philip Wise, Retirement Income Planning Director

As a nation, our financial resilience has been put to the test over the last few months.

Fortunately, for many of us, the financial implications of the coronavirus pandemic have had less impact than might have otherwise been the case, thanks to the government's support schemes.

But this is an excellent time to reassess your financial resilience and to consider if you are sufficiently well prepared for future emergencies, whatever they might be.

The received wisdom from the financial advice community is that you should have between three and six months' worth of income put to one side, in cash or Premium Bonds, to enable you to cope with emergencies.

This received wisdom doesn't stand up to much scrutiny. It's always struck me that there should be a more logical way of working out how much you need for emergencies.

HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU SET ASIDE FOR FINANCIAL EMERGENCIES?

In my experience, there are three determinants, which you should use to calculate the size of your emergency fund:

- 1 – Your stage of life
- 2 – Your access and attitude to borrowing
- 3 – The amount which makes you feel comfortable.

The most recent research into financial emergencies is some seven years old now, but still useful.

Some things have changed since then (we've become more reliant on home computers and smartphones). But it's clear from that research that your stage in life will affect the size of the emergency fund you need – and, in particular, people with children experience more unexpected costs in a year than those without children.

The most common unexpected costs were car repairs and replacement, opticians fees and glasses, dental expenses, technology and phones, pets, washing machine and home repairs, and lending to family and friends. Lending to family and friends was the most expensive unexpected cost, followed by car repairs and replacements.

Some of these “unexpected costs” come up so frequently that they really shouldn't be unexpected – for example, we should all be budgeting for repairs to our cars, and you'll inevitably need to replace your glasses now and then.

The best way to deal with these costs is through saving (these expected costs should be part of your annual budget).

If you are responsible for several cars (including those of young adults!), own your home (and maybe a holiday home), and have children and pets, it's more likely that you'll have to deal with a financial emergency, so your emergency fund should, therefore, be more significant.

If you are employed, as opposed to being retired, it's sensible to have some money set aside, which you can access, in case you lose your job – so, for this reason, during your working life, it's advisable to have money set aside for this possibility.

Once you've retired, you don't need to worry about losing your job, so there's one less emergency to worry about, and your emergency fund can be smaller.

The availability of borrowing varies significantly from one person to another, according to life stage, but most of us can borrow money if we need to.



HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU SET ASIDE FOR FINANCIAL EMERGENCIES?

Many take the view that there is no point in leaving cash available for emergencies, particularly as the returns paid by immediate access savings accounts are so poor.

If you adopt this approach when an emergency comes along, it can usually be covered on a credit card, at least in the short term, and the credit card balance can then be repaid.

There is a logic to this for those who are working, particularly when credit cards offer extended zero interest periods. If you are in a position where you can clear debt quickly, and borrowing doesn't result in sleepless nights, this is a reasonable approach.

However, many of us feel uncomfortable about borrowing, and the average number of unexpected costs per year is about 1.6, so, if you take this approach, it is perhaps inevitable that the credit card will need to be used during the year.



So, if you don't like going into the red, this won't be the right approach for you.

Over the years, I've had many a conversation with clients about how large their fund for emergencies should be. And, much of the time, the logic about the size of the fund needed is outweighed by the "round number" in the client's mind.

Philip Wise has more than 25 years' experience providing financial planning and advice, with a focus on managing income withdrawals for clients in retirement. He is a Chartered Financial Planner and CFP professional.

LOCKDOWN RADIO

At the start of the lockdown, working with other members of the local community, Martin helped to launch Cranleigh Community Radio.

Initially a weekly audio podcast, Cranleigh Community Radio is designed to bring a voice to the village and the surrounding areas. It carries the strapline, pulling together while staying apart.

Each episode of Cranleigh Community Radio features local voices, news and information, and entertainment to get us all through these challenging times.

Feedback from the project has been heartening, with many local residents expressing their gratitude for the episodes which give them a much needed lifeline as they self-isolate at home.

Informed Choice was one of the initial sponsors for Petersfield Community Radio, making a financial donation so they could purchase microphones and other recording equipment.

We are delighted to see how well Petersfield Community Radio has performed since its inception, and especially during the pandemic when presenters and volunteers did a fantastic job of keeping the local community informed.

In August, Petersfield Community Radio became a 24-hour dedicated digital radio with the launch of Shine Radio.

Shine Radio is a leap into internet radio by the team at Petersfield Community Radio, which has been producing podcasts and online audio content for the town for more than 18 months.



THE LAST WORD



Andy Bodman, Associate Financial Planner

Work life balance is the expression used to describe the importance of getting the right mix in life between work and the other things we want to do to ensure we have a fulfilling life.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made many people think hard about what is important to them. The way many people work has changed dramatically. Many have discovered that that daily commute isn't necessary for them to do their jobs. That alone might save them hours of time and the associated cost and stress.

Working from home can be effective and the commuting time saved might be invested in family, friends or hobbies

Some clients have explained to us how they had previously never thought of selling their home and moving elsewhere but have changed their views as a result of working from home. After all why hold onto a large property and the costs associated with that property if a smaller place in another location, perhaps the countryside, might work just as well?

Travelling abroad has clearly been a problem so perhaps people have rediscovered the delights of our home islands. Certainly as I write this it's almost impossible to book a country or seaside cottage, demand is so high.

You will I hope forgive the plug, but one way of testing if your finances are able to support the changes you require to deliver work life balance is to engage with us to create your financial plan because that will answer the important questions you may have.

INFORMED CHOICE RADIO

Our personal finance podcast, Informed Choice Radio, has continued with new episodes published throughout the lockdown.

Here are some of our favourite guest conversations from the past few months, in case you have missed any episodes!

There's no getting around the fact that tough times hurt. Right now, we're all living through some pretty tough times.

In May, Martin spoke to Suzy Reading, a chartered psychologist (B. Psych (Hons), M.Psych (Org)) and qualified yoga teacher from Australia, specializing in wellbeing.

In her latest book, *Self-care for Tough Times*, Suzy offers a gentle yet powerful process for developing a self-care toolkit to call on during difficult periods.

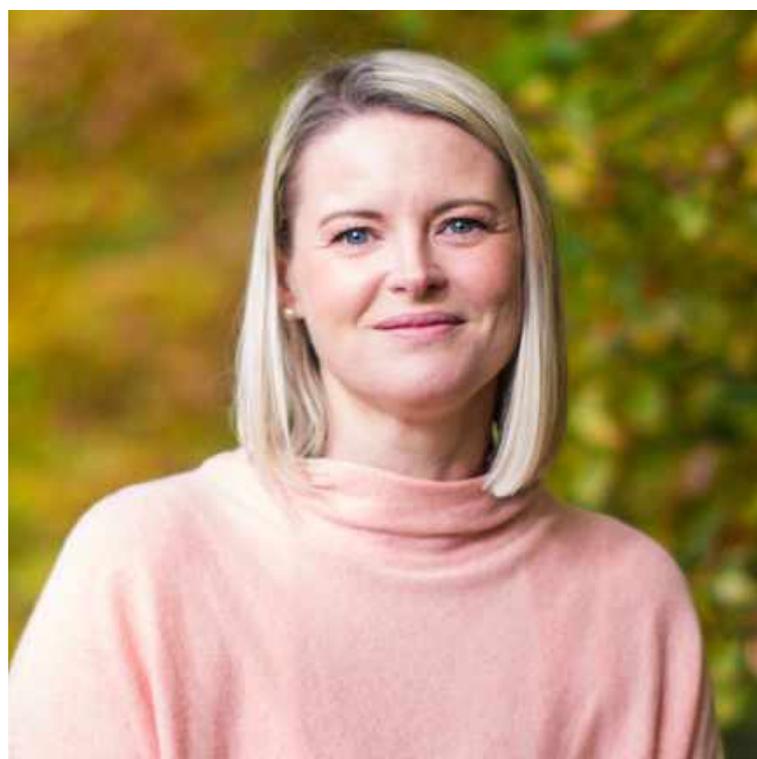
Finding hope and opportunity in the depths of adversity was the topic of conversation when Beth Kempton joined Martin on the podcast in June.

Beth is author of *We Are in This Together*; a fantastic new book designed to help you prioritise different things and feel less vulnerable to sudden change in the future.

An often overlooked area of Financial Planning is financial protection.

Martin spoke to LifeSearch founder Tom Baigrie in July to get the ABCs of life assurance and protection.

In this conversation, Tom runs us through the three most important forms of individual insurance, and some of the things to think about when taking out cover.



INFORMED CHOICE RADIO

In the world of personal finance, the biggest challenge is the sense that there's never going to be enough.

It is this mindset of scarcity, and not the amount spent on lattes, that holds people back the most from achieving their financial dreams.

Martin spoke to Leisa Peterson, a lady on a mission to help 1,000,000 people elevate their financial consciousness.

As a money coach, business consultant and spiritual teacher, Leisa hosts the Mindful Millionaire podcast as well as virtual workshops and deep-dive retreats.

Her masterful blend of sound financial strategy and mindfulness training helps people break free of patterns of lack, scarcity and money fears, allowing them to finally lead the rewarding, fulfilling, and abundant lives they most desire.



Living your best life someday starts with saving smarter for retirement.

In July, Martin spoke to Allison Tom and Dylín Redling, authors of *START Your F.I.R.E.: A Modern Guide to Early Retirement*.

Allison and Dylín are a married couple who achieved financial independence back in 2015, in their early 40s, following a couple of important wake-up moments, which we talk about in this interview.

Informed Choice Radio is the personal finance podcast all about achieving your financial goals and living a better life. Learn more and subscribe at icradio.co.uk or search for Informed Choice Radio in your favourite podcast player.

