

CitySolicitor

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CITY OF LONDON SOLICITORS' COMPANY AND THE CITY OF LONDON LAW SOCIETY

“Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are. Let me learn from you, love you, bless you before you depart. Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow. Let me hold you while I may, for it may not always be so. One day I shall dig my nails into the earth, or bury my face in the pillow, or stretch myself taut, or raise my hands to the sky and want, more than all the world, your return.”

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WELCOME TO OUR AUTUMN ISSUE OF CITY SOLICITOR. IT GIVES ME SOME PLEASURE THAT IN A WORLD THAT IS INCREASINGLY BECOMING UNRECOGNISABLE, OUR MAGAZINE REMAINS CONSTANT. I HOPE THAT IT ALSO PROVIDES YOU WITH A REASSURING FEELING OF FAMILIARITY.

It is precisely this subject of a changing world that we have chosen to examine in this issue. As it is becoming apparent that the world as we knew it pre March 23rd may never return, we now look at what has replaced it, our "new normal" as it is being described.

COVID-19, and the lockdown it precipitated, have had huge impacts on our professions, our social lives and our health – in short, everything. This has demonstrated our resilience and our determination not merely to survive difficult times but also to find some positives and even to have fun.

We look at how the legal profession has fared, how mental health has been affected and how the things we chose to do in our leisure hours have adapted and changed.

I hope, as ever, you will find our content informative, stimulating and enjoyable and I welcome any feedback you may have.

Finally, and most importantly, I hope that you and your friends and family remain safe and healthy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Henson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Philip Henson
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“COVID-19, and the lockdown it precipitated, have had huge impacts on our professions, our social lives and our health – in short, everything.”

A perspective view of a subway tunnel. The walls are covered in various posters and advertisements. The ceiling has several rectangular light fixtures. The floor is made of dark tiles. The overall atmosphere is dimly lit and industrial.

THE NEW NORMAL

Think back to March 23rd. It seems like a lifetime ago. And, in many ways, it was a different life. When lockdown first happened, many of us thought this would be a contained period of disruption and, in time, everything would go back to how it was. But as time passed, it became increasingly obvious that our old “normal” would be no more. Businesses, including our own legal profession, our leisure activities, our home lives and each and every individual all over the world have all been impacted by COVID-19 and the effects will transform us, our lives and our ways of working and socialising forever – for better as well as for worse. The enforced pause button has forced us to reflect on our patterns of behaviour, to reassess and evaluate, to clear out way more important “cupboards” than simply the kitchen ones. What does our “new normal” look like? The events of the past few months have shown us how quickly we are able to process change and to adapt. What might have seemed unimaginable at the start of this year has not just become a reality but we are already getting very used to our new ways of life. We have talked to people from many different walks of society, from many different disciplines to examine what life post lockdown will be like. We look at what we have lost and what we have gained. We discuss the repercussions on our mental health as well as our economic health.

We celebrate the creativity that has come into play to allow us not to just survive but also to flourish.



THE SKILL THAT WILL MAKE OR BREAK A LAWYER

It is probably fair to say that there are certain skills, one in particular, that when a lot of the senior partners of our law firms were first entering the profession were simply not on their radar, never mind essential for their work.

Recent years have seen an increasing importance in the role that technology is playing in the legal profession and one effect of the pandemic has been to accelerate the rate of this.

Raphael Heffron is Professor for Global Energy Law & Sustainability at the Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy at the University of Dundee. He believes that the pandemic has accelerated the role of technology within the legal profession by between three and five years.

“The pandemic has ensured that people have had to learn how to use technology in ways that we may not have before.”

How will this impact the “new normal” of the profession itself, those educating future lawyers and law students?

Heffron views this through a positive lens:

“The pandemic has ensured that people have had to learn how to use technology in ways that we may not have before. It has become a vital part of our day to day existence and there are huge benefits around it.

This has led us to a big crossroads for the legal community and for those of us educating them.

Trainee barristers and solicitors can now do practically everything online including being examined so, realistically, how often can we expect them to attend “live” classes or be in their Inns of Court for training when they can be out in practice?

“As educators, we need to be inspiring the next leaders and not just delivering good content and key skills.”

My Energy Law & Policy Centre here in Dundee has been going for 43 years and in that time we have had students from over 140 different countries come through our doors. 90% of our students are international.

Now, with the ability to do so very much online, competition is even more fierce as students can literally pick anywhere in the world to study as the time they need to spend away from home has been minimised by technology. If they only have to turn up for a few classes over the next few years then they have a bigger choice within a global marketplace.

Post pandemic, students preparing for their dissertations or PhDs will be rewarded on their proven ability to use technology to analyse. This will determine whether they get a distinction or not. The ability to manipulate data to make a point is becoming an important asset in winning cases and students who show a better grasp of this whilst they are at university will be the ones in demand when they are looking for jobs.

Traditional skills now need to be combined with a fluency in technology.



One of the biggest challenges facing practising lawyers in the commercial sector is that, as people's knowledge of technology increases, so there is an expectation and pressure for lawyers to understand the tech world. For example, lawyers in the energy sector have to understand, say, how renewable energy is sold and constructed into the electricity grid – in short, they need to develop a tech focus and fully grasp the technology across their specific sector.

In the big energy cases we have seen, NGOs have been successful in their actions against big corporations and governments because of the access to data that technology affords them. The ability to collect and analyse data online is

changing everything. This has made it possible to work out, for example, how a new runway at Heathrow could impact on public health.

Technology has allowed a lawyer living in one country to be able to effectively represent clients in other locations. It is probably the biggest influence in the end of being on site in the office five days a week. I do not see this in the downbeat way others do. There will always be a need, in the legal profession as well as others, for meetings in person; to be able to read body language or to discuss something off the record. Students too can be a bit more reticent to give a differing view to the consensus if they feel someone is recording it. This can tend to inhibit students which is a huge motivation to get back to the classroom.

But having said that, the future for lawyers is really all about technology.

As educators, we need to be inspiring the next leaders and not just delivering good content and key skills. Today, to have that knowledge of technology and the ability to analyse and interpret data in different ways are the single most important factors that will separate students looking for corporate law careers.

This has brought with it a positive outcome for the legal profession but many still need to upskill as a portion of our business that used to be conducted in person will now be carried out through other sophisticated technology options.

This is a challenge for those currently in the profession; students will be more familiar with it and that will add strength to their job applications.

This is not just true for lawyers but many other professions too – GPs are another example. It could be that those approaching retirement may choose to end their careers sooner than they originally planned rather than try to adopt an entirely new way of working.

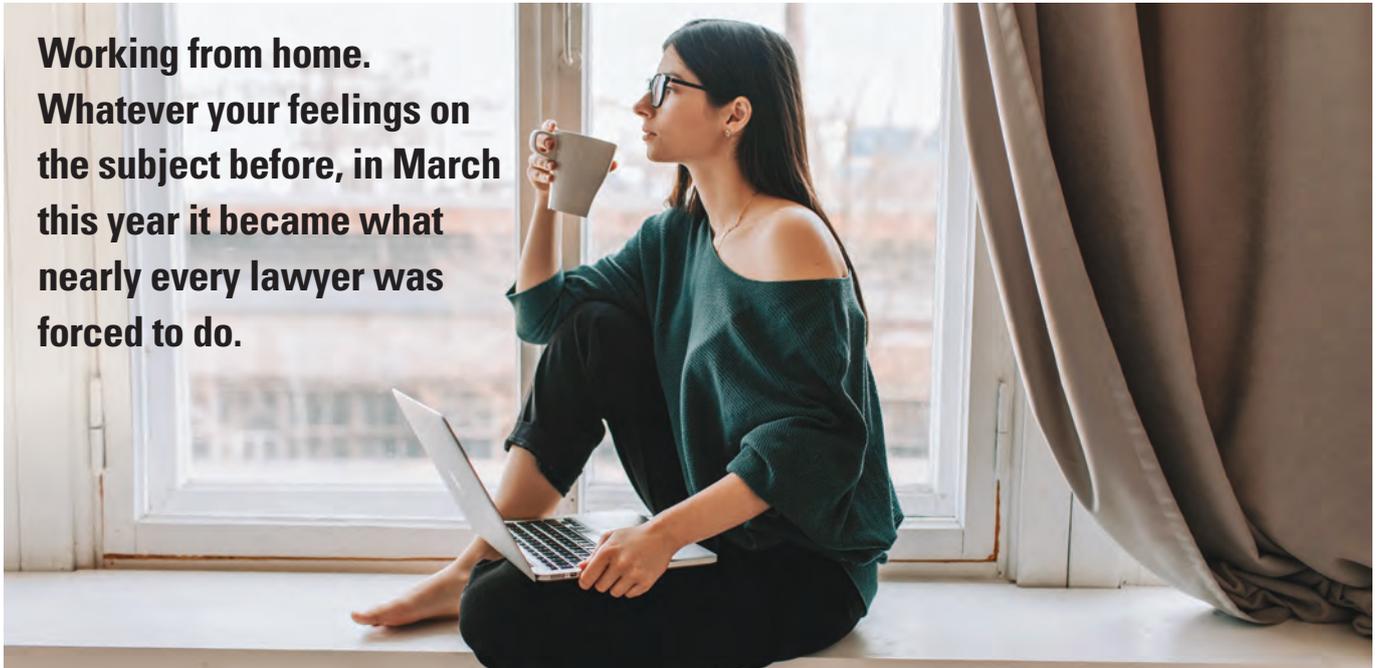
The pandemic has made sure that, crucially, even if a lawyer is not personally good with technology, they still need to be fully aware of what it can do and its benefits.

You might not be able to use different software or, indeed, the programme necessary to draw charts, but you need to have someone in your team who can. You need to understand what types of software are being used and how they can affect not just you but your client.

A lawyer's relationship with technology is what will cause them to win or lose a client."

IS THE LIVING ROOM THE NEW OFFICE?

Working from home. Whatever your feelings on the subject before, in March this year it became what nearly every lawyer was forced to do.



Whilst many lawyers, particularly the younger ones, were already au fait with how technology can be used to make working from home efficient, effective and productive, this presented somewhat of a challenge to those who were tech luddites.

Simon Davis has been President of the Law Society of England and Wales since July 2019. He was also a commercial litigation partner at Clifford Chance LLP.

He feels the attitudes towards working from home have changed substantially from life before COVID-19, through lockdown and starting to see light at the end of the tunnel.

“The immediate reaction, from those who were previously not used to using Zoom, Google Meet, Teams and other video conferencing platforms, was pleasant surprise at how effective they can be for meetings with clients or colleagues or to carry out court work.”

This facility, combined with not having to commute to the office, provided the ability to work more flexibly but equally, if not more, productively than in the office and led very quickly in the early days of lockdown to an initial reaction that this was the beginning of a long term reduction in office space.

But as the pandemic turned from short to medium term, so the fatigue started to set in.

Yes, the use of video conferencing has proven useful as an add-on and to better connect those working from home, but it is no substitute for office life.

We started to remember what we had just taken for granted for so long.

What is an office? Why do you have it?

It brings people together in one space to provide a combined and efficient service to clients. It’s a place to bounce ideas off each

other. To learn not just from doing but from observing others doing. To build up team spirit. To grow together.

How is that achieved sitting at home? Not so easy...

Firm after firm are pausing to work out from the experiences of the past few months what is important.

Many developing lawyers learn best in the physical presence of others. They need to feel what it’s like to be a lawyer. After all, we are not bother bees. The legal profession is a people business. It’s all about people.

Pre COVID-19, working from an office and working from home were seen as binary. There was sometimes a cynicism that working from home actually meant not really working. That has totally changed. Working from home can be seen as being even more productive. But it depends how you define productive. If it is about chargeable hours then, yes, working from home definitely is more productive. No commuting. No travelling to meetings. No walking up and down corridors to chat with colleagues. At home, if you have a spare minute, you think you may as well work.

But being productive in terms of hours on a timesheet is not the same as being productive as a person.

There will be greater use of video conferencing as an add-on and even a healthy substitute for email and telephone, as well as avoiding unnecessary meetings and overseas travel.

There will be greater flexibility between working from home and working in the office, less ‘presenteeism’, more ‘what works best for you’. But news of the end of the office is much exaggerated.”

It looks like it will soon be time to shave off the beards, get the roots coloured and replace the leisurewear with some sharp suits. And that time can’t come soon enough.

AGILITY, FLEXIBILITY AND REINVENTION: HOW TO SURVIVE THE PANDEMIC

Daniel Winterfeldt is an honorary QC, a Partner at Reed Smith LLP, a heavyweight in Capital Markets and an award winning Diversity Advocate as the founder and Chair of the InterLaw Diversity Forum.

He believes that it is the most agile amongst us who will come out on the other side of this pandemic in a healthy place; those flexible enough to reshape their ways of work and those creative enough to reinvent their structures and environments.

“What is going to happen to the world and, more specifically, to our legal profession? That is a really interesting question.

On the one hand, people are saying there has been a seismic shift and the world has changed forever. But that is not how human nature works. We don't like change, we resist it.

Things will go back to normal. But the longer this continues, so our new normal will be the normal that we take forward.

Agile organisations will save money on real estate. The more flexible businesses will probably put their staff on rotas working, say, two days at home and three in the office, where they will restructure the environment so people can maintain social distancing and remain safe. Long haul for business will diminish, particularly for vulnerable people who even if they can go into the office will not see the benefits of travelling for meetings that can be done by video conferencing.

This shift could continue for a year or two, until we get a vaccine. But even when that happens, a vaccine may not be suitable for everyone.

Whilst a lot of people are saying they never want to go into the office again, this too will shift. We will move towards more flexible working structures. We won't get rid of offices – but we will need to reinvent them.

Take Compliance and Human Resources as examples. To be really aware of issues, they need to be able to simply walk around the office; to observe and discover. This is how the best investigative work is done. Working remotely would severely hinder them.

In the practice I work in, Capital Markets, it is a different story. We hardly ever do face to face meetings anymore. Everything is done using technology. This is more challenging around client development but we FaceTime weekly and that is proving more than sufficient.

My non-day job deals with diversity. Even though diversity is intrinsically all about bringing people together, lockdown has meant everything had to be shifted to online. The online events actually get a huge response, as good as if not better than the live ones did. They come with advantages; no travel to get to them,

cameras are off so participants can multitask, and geographically they are not limited to a London audience but can attract people from all over the world.

But, the bottom line is people are missing people. And that will make us all go back to the office. And, when the time allows, to live events.

The offices of the future will look different. They will be hybrid cellular offices or cubicles with dividers with break out areas to talk.

This will also allow for other areas to accommodate people with disabilities or neuro diversities and give them the opportunity to find an appropriately suitable place to work. For example, some blind people are light sensitive so cannot work near a window, For me, also, this would be a huge positive as I have ADHD and find it extremely difficult to concentrate in the sort of open plan environment that was the norm pre COVID-19. I have, in the past, had to put headphones on to turn off the noise of the office but the music in itself was a distraction.

Law firms are quite traditional though and it still remains difficult to raise such issues. The pandemic has forced a change to happen that could benefit many going forward.”



HEAD DOWN? OR ABOVE THE PARAPET



Irrespective of which industry people work in, jobs have never felt more unstable. Working from home, furloughing, redundancies, firms closing down, a crashing economy – all these add to the uncertainty. Those who have managed to survive so far and keep their employment are probably keeping their heads down and staying put. Or, are they?

Kevin Sharara is a bright and talented rising star Tech and Media Associate, currently at CMS. He decided to take a risk and change law firms during these uncertain times. A good move? Or a big risk?

Sharara shares his doubts, his worries, his fears and his excitement with us.

“In the midst of this pandemic, I found myself having to weigh up the pros and cons of changing jobs from one law firm to another. With the state of the economy as it is, it was a nerve-racking decision to make – and that is an understatement.

I am currently at CMS, in the Tech and Media team, and I was interviewing for a new position in the London office of the Californian firm, Cooley, when COVID-19 was paralysing China but had not yet reached Europe. By the time I received the job offer, the UK was in lockdown and we were all working from home.

So much went through my mind. I was excited at the prospect of working with Cooley but I was nervous about giving up the security I felt at CMS.

What if the job offer was withdrawn after I resigned? I heard stories of how, after the recession in 2008, a large number of

job offers in the legal profession were withdrawn.

Even if the offer were not withdrawn, I would be on probation in my new job so if they found themselves in a position where they needed to cut back, I would probably be the first to go because I would only be on one month's notice.

In weighing up the pros and cons, I considered the specific sector I work in was an important factor in the decision making: the tech and life sciences practices have not been affected by the pandemic and, if anything, I suspect there will be an upturn.

So, I took a deep breath and resigned.

I think a lot of trainees have equally difficult decisions to make in view of the changing landscape of our profession. Whilst I do not think that overall the profession will contract in the long term, there is no escaping the hard facts that the focus has shifted away from some sectors towards others. If someone was considering their career to be in one of the shrinking sectors, this may be the time to rethink.

The one area I think will be hit the hardest is construction and real estate. A lot of big

construction projects have been put on hold and in the longer term, as we see changes such as office space reduced and investment in real estate downsized, this downward trend will continue.

In M&A there has been a slowdown in the past few months but, going forward, I believe that there will be a lot of increased activity because of all the smaller, struggling businesses that will be absorbed.

Employment lawyers have been busy throughout lockdown dealing with the consequences of mass layoffs and furloughing and, as time goes on and our ways of working change in a more long term way, this work will only increase. Remote working across many sectors and industries will mean employment lawyers are in demand.

Whenever there is massive change in the world, legal advice is required. Which is why I have every confidence our profession will not just survive the pandemic, but actually benefit.

Taking all this into account, I feel this is a great opportunity for me, and a great time to move.”



“I have also had to get used to attending remote court hearings.”

THE NEED FOR MORE HOURS IN THE DAY

Kizzy Augustin specialises in Health and Safety within the Fraud and Criminal Litigation Team of Russell-Cooke LLP and is a solicitor advocate with Higher Rights of Audience.

At least that's her day job. She is also a partner, a mum of two children aged three and ten, a carer for her grandmother who lives with her and a diversity champion for women and BAME.

A lot of balls to juggle in normal times but in these extraordinary times we have been living through, with more challenges being added to the mix, life can sometimes seem like trying to swim through concrete.

“These are unprecedented times and all of us, in the legal profession, have been impacted. We have had to become familiar almost overnight with remote working, video/audio communications instead of face to face ones and helping our clients become used to using them.

I specialise in health and safety law and the sectors my clients work in – mainly construction, retail and manufacturing – have been badly hit and so my services have been much in demand and work has been as busy as ever. Probably more so when you factor in the transitions we have had to deal with, the fact that health and safety has never been more popular with all of my clients needing advice on what their obligations will look like in the new normal – and the pressure of trying to maintain a public profile when we are not in a position to see clients face to face. I have had to spend more time on social media, writing articles, hosting webinars. These are all hugely time consuming but crucial right now in order to keep us at the forefront of people's minds when we have no physical presence.

I have also had to get used to attending remote court hearings. Live hearings are either being postponed or dealt with by virtual

conferencing. Interestingly, some of my cases seem to be dealt with quicker and more efficiently this way. A couple of my matters have been settled out of court where there appears to be no real serious risk posed to relevant persons. Prosecutors have taken the view that there are other, and often better, ways to deal with matters rather than through contested hearings.

When lockdown first began, it took a while for my workload to get back up to its normal speed plus, at that point, there was less pressure to work on my profile as health and safety was already at the forefront of my clients' minds. This allowed me time to spend some quality time with my children, homeschooling and entertaining them. But once work commitments started to really kick in, then there were not enough hours in the day to deal with work, my children and my grandmother as well as all the usual household responsibilities. I found I had to do my day job at night after everyone and everything else had been dealt with. This left me with zero time for any self care.

Ironically, I was counselling clients and friends about the need to look after our mental health and wellbeing in these times, yet did not have the time to do that for myself.

But, we learn to deal with whatever is thrown at us and, as the weeks have passed, I have found my rhythm – and new ways to manage my time.

I believe that whatever the 'new normal' looks like for our profession in the longer term, particularly for working parents and carers, once everything stops shifting so much and we can truly understand it, we will successfully adapt to our new working arrangements.”





THE LOSS OF LIBERTY

One of the most significant impacts of the lockdown which affected not just the legal profession but the whole world was a sense of loss of the freedoms we had previously simply taken for granted.



Simple things like travelling on a tube to get to work, stopping for a coffee en route and just chatting to colleagues were just some of the privileges that were abruptly taken away from us.

But whilst this was a new normal state for most of us, for Natalie Turner, Senior Legal Adviser at the Law Society, it was something she had been getting used to for a number of years.

Turner had suffered from arthritis as a child but a fall in 2014 changed her life. After four months first in hospital and then in a nursing home she went back home too early and unprepared, naively believing she could cope and pick up life where she had left it. She could not have been more wrong.

"I never understood what deprivation of liberty felt like until all this happened to me. I am a professional woman, used to doing what I need and want to do. But suddenly I found myself powerless, unable to perform even the most simple of tasks like boiling the kettle. It was devastating.

I was desperate to get back to work. Work props us up and when that is taken away, it's hard to deal with.

When I was eventually able to return, I was doing a four day week to start with, two days in the office and two days at home. There was no pressure on me to be in the office full time; my colleagues knew I'm not someone who would be sitting at home twiddling my thumbs but rather someone who will just carry on working until I finish. It's an attribute I picked from when I was a pupil and witnessed a barrister slip and fall. Even though she broke her ankle, she went straight back to court and carried on. The show must always go on. Most lawyers have this work ethic. Only a handful manage a nine till five.

I was getting used to my new routine when in September, 2018 I had another catastrophic fall. I was taken back to hospital in an ambulance but somehow they managed to miss several fractures and a ruptured tendon in my already bad knee. I was in agony. In March, last year, I had another operation and after that there was no way I could return to the office so working from home became my life. When lockdown forced everyone to stay at home, for me there was very little change in that respect.

However, the mass working from home has brought in new ways of working and I, like everyone else, have had to become used to wall to wall video conferencing – something I, in common with many others, find much more exhausting than expected.

Being forced to change the way we work will force us to question things which in the past we did habitually but have no real benefit. I cannot see a mass return to a daily commute and everyone being in the office from nine till five every day.

But working from home is not without its challenges.

We are confined and isolated and that brings with it concerns for our wellbeing. It's very easy to become isolated – especially for those who live alone. It's a good idea to touch base with colleagues by phone for



a couple of minutes now and again, not necessarily to discuss work but to give and also receive the mutual support that comes from interacting with colleagues in a supportive way. Good employers will support that.

It's also important to take regular breaks and change posture every now and again. Our eyes, bones and brains will thank us for that in years to come! On taking breaks, it's very easy to slip into the habit of not moving away from your laptop for hours on end – and feeling guilty when you do. It's a trap we need to resist for the sake of our wellbeing.

The novelty of being in our pyjamas all day and working to our own agenda was great in the beginning but after a while it starts to get to you. You feel better if you get up and start work at a regular time, even having routine clothing that you associate with work, helps psychologically. It is important to have something that separates your day job from your home life. In the old world, commuting – as awful as it is – served that purpose, now we need to find something to replace it. Maybe it's having a cup of coffee in the garden or reading a book. But, especially for women, we shouldn't just move from the desk into the kitchen to start cooking the evening meal or we will be going straight from one job to another and we could find that maybe the start of reverting back to the more traditional roles men and women had and undo the advances made in the past two or three decades.

There are ergonomic issues too. We have to be careful about our health when we are sitting to work at tables all day that were simply not designed for that purpose. Being cramped over a laptop for hours on end is just not good for our health. We don't all live in homes where we can have a dedicated work space. We need to consider how we can adapt our homes. These are practical but important issues.

In our profession, confidentiality is also important so we need to have the right equipment and the right space to ensure this.

Working from home may seem, on the face of it, to offer more freedom but when it is enforced it actually can have the opposite effect."



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“MY DARK DAYS MAKE ME STRONG.”

*Or maybe I was already strong,
and they make me prove it.”*

This quotation by Emery Lloyd from “When We Collided” could have been the anthem for the pandemic. Confronted by the most disruptive influence of our lifetimes, so many found the strength, resolve and creativity to adapt and reshape our world.

But such an enormous global disaster cannot leave us unscathed. We are fully aware of the threats COVID-19 made to our physical health, to our economy and to our relationships. But it also affected our psyches, perhaps not in obvious or apparent ways. We have all been cognisant of how lockdown could impact those with mental health issues, those living alone and so cut off from any live human interaction for long periods of time, those in abusive relationships, but, perhaps, we have not been fully aware of how this has seeped into the very essence of each and every one of us.



“Imagine the world in a snow globe and someone shook it so everything is spinning around.”

Sandra Vigon is British born but has lived, trained and worked in California for many years. Currently in practice in Santa Barbara, she has a Masters Degree in Counselling Psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute.

Licensed by the State of California as a Marriage and Family Therapist, Vigon also has six years post graduate training in the Analyst Training Program of the C.G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles. Her private practice spans over three decades and her experience in TelePsychology working with clients around the world means she now runs a wholly online practice with clients in London and other parts of the UK as well as in LA.

Vigon says we should not underestimate the power of the “collective unconscious” and the “tremendous fear and anxiety” that is filtering into us as individuals and the world as a whole.

“I’m seeing more people being flooded with scary dreams, nightmares, images of intrusion, being pursued by animals etc. They are paying more attention to them in this current situation which, in my book, is a good thing. We need to pay attention. What is happening in our world is so profound, so seismic and it is filtering

deeply into our subconscious. Nobody is untouched. We are connected.

Overall, the lockdown has proved to be easier for introverts who are generally more comfortable being alone and internal, enjoying the introspection and just doing stuff at home. They don’t like the pressure of being out and being sociable so this is a release from that burden. Meanwhile, extraverts are climbing the walls because their frame of reference is in the outer world which they are being denied.

It’s like someone has pulled the rug away from where we were standing and, as a result, the whole world has been turned upside down. Imagine the world in a snow globe and someone shook it so everything is spinning around.

Remember also the scene from the Wizard of Oz where everything is swept up by the tornado. Dorothy is lying on her bed watching her whole world outside just spinning around her – that is the state we are in.

What we had in place before, even if it was not perfect, was familiar. Now it has all been pulled apart.



Going forward, we cannot fail to be affected but necessarily so. The societal centre was not holding. The status quo had to change. And for that to happen things have to fall apart. That is how new attitudes, new perspectives and new eras are born. It is the creativity process on a massive scale.

But as with physical birth, this comes with much pain and suffering. We are grieving on many levels. Loss of freedom, company, jobs, a way of life etc. and are going through the various stages of grief in no particular order. Depression is one of those stages and this is both triggering and magnifying individual, existing issues.

How many times have we said to ourselves of any difficult situation or event, ‘I can’t bear this, it’s going to kill me’ but guess what? It doesn’t. We humans are remarkably resilient. For the most part, we can bear things and they don’t kill us. We just need courage.

It is important to have community at such times – which seems a contradiction in lockdown – but we have found creative and remarkable ways to stay connected. Engaging in any creative activity is important too. It reminds us that life is resilient.

It is going to take time to get 'back to the future', to a new normal and many years to process all of this. However, it is a time full of potential for the new collective to form."

Dr Esther Cole is the Clinical Director & Clinical Psychologist at Lifespan Psychology, a private psychological therapy practice based in Mayfair and Wimbledon, which she established. Prior to this, Cole studied at Oxford and Surrey Universities and worked in the NHS for 12 years. Cole is an Author and won the Early Career Award (2020) from the British Psychological Society.

Cole believes that whilst there have been both short and long term negative effects to our mental wellbeing as a result of the pandemic, she also sees a potential for positive outcomes, not least of which is the global interconnectedness that the shared experience of trauma has triggered.

"Before the pandemic, our world was connected because of the freedom of travel."

"Before the pandemic, our world was connected because of the freedom of travel. But, ironically, that led to too much travel, too much flying which, in turn, resulted in damage to our planet and which, also, was one of the reasons the virus spread so rapidly and so far. The pandemic has brought an obvious halt to such travel and restrictions will continue; travel could become more expensive going forward and so turn into one of life's luxuries. But despite not connecting physically, the global trauma we have experienced has forced us to connect in other ways in order to come together and cope with what is happening and how it is affecting our mental states. There has been an increase in the use of online digital technology in social interactions, health and education. But also a sense of community has developed; people helping each other, shopping for each other, getting supplies like food and medicines for those unable to do so themselves. Instead of only thinking about ourselves, the pandemic has made us think not just about ourselves but also about those more vulnerable than us. It has forced us to realise how short life can be and to think about what is important to us and what we value and to make the most of it. It has given us the opportunity to change and adapt.

Of course, isolation has been stressful and depressing. Months of fear and of being worried may lead to OCD developing, panic attacks and an increase in suicide rates. But for some who have not had to worry about

"Living with chronic uncertainty, as we all have had to do, in a constant state of fight or flight, can have huge mental and physical consequences."

food or shelter, there has been the opportunity to spend precious, quality time with their families – time which they would never otherwise have got.

Living with chronic uncertainty, as we all have had to do, in a constant state of fight or flight, can have huge mental and physical consequences but lots of tools are being developed to help us to understand and manage what is going on in our conscious and subconscious, in our minds and in our bodies."

Cole referenced Acceptance and Commitment Therapy as one of the current ways psychological thinking has developed to allow us to deal with the trauma of COVID-19 and how to handle the uncertainty and face our fears.

Dr Russ Harris, one of the world-renowned trainers of Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT), has specifically developed a **FACE COVID** technique which covers;

F = Focus on what you can control
A = Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings
C = Come back into your body
E = Engage in what you're doing

C = Committed action
O = Opening up
V = Values
I = Identify resources
D = Disinfect and Distance

It seems that, as with everything else in life, there are both negatives and positives to the effects the pandemic will have on us, individually and collectively. If we can use whatever tools are available to deal with the trauma, if we can take the opportunity to reassess and reset, if we can use our creativity to adapt, we could rebuild a healthier, more nurturing society.

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Instagram: [@lifespan_psychology](https://www.instagram.com/lifespan_psychology)

Harris, R (2020). FACE COVID: How to respond effectively to the Corona crisis. Retrieved on 24th June 2020 from <https://www.actmindfully.com.au>



WHY IT'S TIME FOR TEA

Unsurprisingly, at the start of lockdown, statistics show an upward turn in alcohol consumption. However, over the past decade, people have increasingly been drinking less and this trend seems set to continue.

More and more people are shunning alcohol and setting a new norm. A recent study shows over a third of young people (under 24) to be completely teetotal.

So, what is replacing the gin and tonic as the fashionable drink of choice? You may be surprised to hear the answer is tea.

Jameel Lalani believes that the best businesses in the food and beverage sector are the ones where they are set up because of a desire to share a passion for their product. He set up the single batch, limited edition tea company, Lalani & Co because of a passion he first developed at the age of four when he and his family were on holiday in North Africa. His parents took him to some silk covered tea rooms and his first tasting of

the strong green tea was an experience he wanted to spend the entire holiday repeating and turned into a passion that would shape his whole life.

Lalani wanted to provide the quality of tea that had previously been rarely available. The best pickings of single batch teas from each tea producing region are normally blended with lesser quality varieties for mass production but Lalani's quest was to take the single batches and sell them as they were without messing with them in any way.

Lalani says the start of his business coincided with several trends that were moving in the direction of a society where fine tea would be considered in a similar way to fine wines, whiskies, chocolate or cigars.

“London had become a foodie hub. People were becoming interested in quality, seasonality and sustainability. For years as a nation we had been drinking commodity grade tea but tea suddenly became a beneficiary of the incoming trends. The convergence of Eastern and Western cultures in food and wine and the rise of flexible drinking and relaxing of the dominance of alcohol all added to this higher profile.”

Lalani says that everything we know about wine and whisky applies to tea as well in terms of terroirs and ageing. This has led top Michelin starred restaurants such as Nobu and The Fat Duck to list Lalani teas on their menus alongside and as alternatives to Chateaufort du Pape or a single malt.

Obviously, once lockdown happened and restaurants were forced to close, Lalani's sales to these establishments came to a standstill.

But, bored in lockdown and starved of the experiences of restaurants, people at home were becoming more adventurous and experimental in their behaviour. And Lalani's e-commerce business grew. They were already on the increase but lockdown accelerated that growth. To help this flourish further, Lalani began doing online tastings whereby a theme is chosen, the relevant teas are bought online, then people just log on and taste over Zoom.

Lalani has found these tastings are proving to be even more successful than the live ones in-store had been pre lockdown because of their entertainment value in difficult times and because they are just so convenient – no having to take time to get to and from venues – all anyone has to do is log on. They are also much more cost effective for the participants as they do not have to pay a fee to attend; they simply buy the products to taste and then obviously still have them after the tasting so making the whole experience much better value for money.

Lalani says these online tastings will very much continue to be the “new normal” as they are a great way of conveying knowledge to the customer and of getting across the story and the details which are really important. He feels they provide a great way to connect with customers particularly those who do not live in London and so they can't easily meet face to face.



“The interest in fine teas among discerning customers of luxury food products is growing. That has continued through the pandemic where there has not even been a blip and we expect that to continue. We are seeing collectors buying cases of single batch tea in a similar way to how people buy cases of fine wine – and they then store them to age. The pandemic has allowed us to spend more time with these private clients. It has been exciting to connect with them.”

As someone who has never liked (actually loathed) tea and only drinks coffee or infusions, it seemed somewhat inappropriate to write this article without sampling some of the Lalani & Co wares. With some trepidation, I prepared the Kyoto Oolong 2017 as per the highly precise directions and tried a sip, fully prepared to throw the rest away.

If I had tasted the golden liquid without knowing what it was, I would never have said tea. A very delicious and complex combination of flavours exploded in my mouth. I tasted apricot and sweetness, it was almost like eating a liquid desert. I finished every last drop and regretted all of these years I stupidly thought tea was no more than Yorkshire builders or Earl Grey, an opinion as naive as thinking wine is all Blue Nun and Mateus Rose. I could easily imagine (and desire) drinking this with wonderful food in a restaurant and decided, there and then, to make this a part of my daily life going forward.



**To participate in the virtual tea tastings
or to order some single batch varieties visit
<https://www.lalaniandco.com>**



IS DRESSING DOWN THE NEW DRESSING UP?

Long before words like social distancing, isolating and lockdown became the fashionable words of the moment, so real life fashion was also changing. Increasingly, both men and women were choosing comfort over formality; it seemed that loungewear was steadily but surely becoming the new way to dress.

During lockdown, pyjamas and leisure wear became the go to clothing. With nowhere to go, what was the point of dressing up?

After a while though, that desire for glamour crept right back in and social media was flooded with women getting all dressed up in evening gowns just to put the rubbish out.

Online sales of comfy clothes has rocketed during the pandemic – but what has become of the upmarket, designer brands?

Net-a-Porter, the online way to shop the most desirable brands was not even working during lockdown. Contrast this with the cheaper, fast fashion, online brands like Boohoo who reported record sales.

Is the age of designer, quality fashion bought on our high streets, history?

Sangita Ebrahim is the founder and CEO of Charli, a range of very beautifully made, high quality casual wear and also two retail shops selling carefully selected designer brands from around the world.

We spoke to her about the impacts of the pandemic to the high street retailer and to the fashion world.

“Although the lockdown has undoubtedly caused some real economic hardship for some, I have tried to draw some positives and used the time to pause, reflect, and reset.

“Lockdown has made us more aware that we crave a personal connection. Zoom cannot replace seeing your friends.”

Retail will be changed forever at the end of this – and it has really made me think about the future of my business.

Charli is not only sold at our two North London stores but also around the world to like minded boutiques. I have had the chance to talk to other business owners in this strange time. What seems to be the consensus is that the way things were going before was not sustainable – especially with regards to retail.

Wellness, sustainability and quality are going to be increasingly important. Rather than having many experiences – people will choose instead a higher quality experience.

Lockdown has made us more aware that we crave a personal connection. Zoom cannot replace seeing your friends. Sitting indoors watching Netflix for hours feels hollow.

From speaking with best friends (some of which are my customers) – I know that entertaining at home is so much more important. They value that hour they meet each other for a walk in the park or a group yoga session. Social connections will never be taken for granted again.

The same is true of retail. Of course there is a place for online. We work with some fantastic online retailers, and have our own online store at Charli.com, but it will never replace the experience of coming in and becoming acquainted with collections you have never heard of. To learn what works, what doesn't, and even spending time just considering something that has been really well made.

Our customers have flocked back since we reopened on June 15th, all eager to support us, comfortable in our environment which is spacious enough to easily allow for social distancing, but small enough to offer a truly personal shopping experience. It may sound cliched, but our customers are our friends. We know them, their lifestyles, what suits them.

Buying clothes is not like ordering boring household products on Amazon Prime. It is an experience – and something we should enjoy the process of. The choices we make are a reflection of one's self.

At Charli, we make a curated edit of what we see from the best new contemporary brands from Italy, France and the US and make it relevant to our clients. This is what we have been doing for over 40 years and will continue to do so.

As a result of the pandemic, our current normal involves less working at the office, more at home, less formal large gatherings like weddings and more small, intimate groups – and so the shift which was already happening of less formal clothes will continue.

I had ordered the winter collections eight months ago and have recently cancelled nearly everything that is too dressy. I believe our customers will be looking for a much more relaxed look now.

Whilst I believe post lockdown, customers feel more comfortable about going to their local high street to shop rather than to use

public transport to go to the bigger and more crowded stores in the centre of town, I think there is a lot that government could do to help the high street retailer and to drive even greater footfall.

Discounts for click-and-collect should be standard practice for retailers. We need to get people back on the high street to discover more product.

There should be no business rates for new businesses. There is great new talent out there that isn't getting a chance. Reduce business rates and make online retailers pay more rates for their warehousing. They are benefiting from an outdated system.

If the big online players are going to pay a fraction of the percentage of tax regular bricks-and-mortar stores like mine do – then fine. But online retailers need to start charging an additional VAT for online transactions. It should be mandatory. Let's level the playing field.

I am optimistic about the future. Fashion will be about quality, about being eco friendly and it will be sold in a personal way. COVID has only accelerated what was already happening.”

**Charli Muswell Hill (own brand and curated selections from designer collections)
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**Charli Hampstead (own brand only)
54 Rosslyn Hill, London, NW3 1ND**

**Shop online at Charli.com
Enquiries at 020 8883 9151**



LIVERY NEWS

A look at what has been happening – and what is coming up.

Master's Word

I don't know about you, but the last six months or so must figure as one of the strangest periods of my life.

But whatever lessons we may learn from the lockdown period, one of the key messages I believe is that living one's life entirely online is really no substitute to meeting with people in person – be it for a business meeting or a social gathering.

After all fellowship lies at the heart of our activities as a Company and the Livery movement as a whole.

So as we look forward to Autumn it is good to see that things are beginning to open up. Livery Halls are due to open their doors again in early October and I hope the Company's normal social programme can resume (subject to Government Guidelines of course). We are also due to open up the Company's offices at College Hill from the beginning of September on a part time basis as we plan for a gradual return to normal working. So what is planned for Autumn?

On 1st October we are due to hold our first in-person Court Meeting at Cutlers' Hall. That meeting is usually followed by a dinner for Court Members, which this year we had hoped to open to all Liverymen, but the change in Government guidelines just as we went to press means this is unlikely. Different food for thought will be provided by our second Ethics Lecture to be held at Bakers Hall at 6.30 pm on 28th October 2020, when Professor Steven Vaughan of UCL and Emily Carroll of Birmingham University debate "The Ethics of Onshoring".

Looking further ahead we are due to hold our Livery Dinner at Goldsmiths' Hall on 1st December 2020 where we are honoured to welcome as our speaker for the evening the new Recorder of London and Chief Coroner of England & Wales, His Honour Mark Lucreft Q.C.

More details of these events will be circulated soon and I do hope you will be able to join us and support these events.

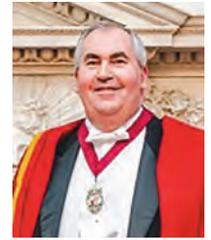
Whilst we look forward to the return of some sort of normality, it is worth looking

back to consider how the Company has coped during the period of lockdown. I appreciate that this period has not been easy. However, we have harnessed the power of technology to continue to connect members as best we can.

Thanks to the foresight of Immediate Past Master, John Wotton, the Court in March passed resolutions to temporarily amend the Company's standing orders to ensure that the affairs of the Company could continue to be undertaken efficiently on line. This has ensured that the usual investiture of the Master, the Wardens and Stewards could go ahead in June as well as permitting the Company's Committees to continue to function.

During the period of the lockdown we have also continued to organise a series of online social and other events. Our online drinks parties have proved popular in bringing members of the Company together, particularly new members. These will continue in the Autumn. We also held a Master's Inaugural Lecture on 14th July at which Sa'ad Hossain QC of One Essex Court gave an excellent talk on the challenges of conducting remote Court hearings during the COVID pandemic. This lecture drew an attentive audience from the Company but also members of the wider Livery.

We also held a very entertaining Virtual Quiz Evening in aid of the Haringey Law



Robert Bell

Centre on 23rd July with participants pitting their wits against each other over seven rounds of general knowledge questions to compete for the much coveted "Quiz Winners Certificate". Congratulations to the exotically named "The Mangoes" for their runaway victory under the watchful eye of excellent Quiz Master, Full Assistant Lee McLernon.

We continue to modernise and update the Company to make it more reflective of a changing profession. This process has continued during the lockdown period. As a Company we have adopted a Values Statement which has been published on our website which reflects our commitment to be a truly inclusive Company, welcoming to new members from all backgrounds. We will also be conducting a Membership & Diversity Survey in the next few months which we will need your assistance in completing. The results of this survey will help us increase the quality and range of our events to meet members' expectations.

May I conclude by thanking the Wardens, Tony King and Sarah De Gay and Stewards, Ginny Cannon and Ed Parker together with Clerk Linzi James, Liz Thomas and Denise Llewellyn at College Hill for their help and continuing support in these unusual times

I look forward to seeing you at our events in the Autumn.

Robert Bell





ALL CHANGE PLEASE FOR A CLEANER AND GREENER LONDON

By Joel Leigh

Redefining the daily commute in the age of COVID-19

Recent Department of Transport figures show a steady rise in the number of vehicles using our roads nationally since the partial relaxation of lockdown, and by 3 August overall weekly traffic had returned to 90% of pre-COVID levels.

Conversely, public transport remains in the post-pandemic doldrums. Following a radical rethink of what constitutes a safe workplace, combined with the reluctance of some employers and staff to return to work until the risk of transmission and/or a second wave is lower, the national rail network suffered a 77% decrease in usage compared to pre-COVID levels. In London, only 27% of regular passengers have continued to use the tube and buses are still running at only 51% capacity.

What we are seeing is a paradigm change in the way people move around our cities. National transport systems which can no longer run at anything like full capacity are in fact running largely empty, whilst the public relies instead on private cars, because on the face of it they appear a more 'COVID-secure' means of transport. The unfortunate consequence of course will be a return to congestion on the roads and a reversal of the significant reductions in air pollution following lockdown.

But major cities both depend on, and are defined by, their transport systems, and the economic success of London and the City was built on the ability of those who live in its boroughs and suburbs to reach their places of work with ease and return home once they've clocked off. So how best to positively direct change post COVID-19?

Londoners have already seen the re-introduction of the congestion charging zone, along with a rise in cost to £15 per day, and the creation and extension of low and ultra-low emission zones is in hand. As for public transport, fares have increased and familiar concessions to children and the over 60's at peak times have been suspended.

Perhaps one of the most positive effects of the pandemic has been a national increase in cycle use, up by 126% since the first week of March, possibly because cycling circumvents fears around social distancing on public transport, but equally because people have 'bought in' to the government campaign highlighting the link between severity of illness from Coronavirus and obesity, and are embracing healthier lifestyles.

In a bid to capitalise on this trend, London Mayor Sadiq Khan recently unveiled one of the biggest



car-free initiatives in the world, whereby transport on the main roads between London Bridge and Shoreditch, Euston and Waterloo, and Old Street and Holborn, will be limited to buses, cyclists, and pedestrians. The next phase will extend the scheme to minor roads in local boroughs.

For those of us who have ventured out of our home offices, or commenced a staged return to work, the evidence of this new initiative is clear; some 15 kilometres of temporary cycle lanes have already sprung up across London, perhaps most prominently along Euston Road and Park Lane. More are already in the pipeline and according to Andy Byford, the new commissioner of TfL, 'most if not all' will become permanent.

Central government has also made financial support available to councils across the country, in the form of a £250 million active travel fund, representing the first phase of a planned £2 billion investment in walking and cycling.

In a yet further bid to encourage healthier lifestyles and improve air quality, consultations are also underway on 'micro-mobility' including urgent legislation to allow trials of rental e-scooters, alongside the now familiar 'Boris Bikes' and other brightly coloured e-bikes, which have become an increasingly common sight on our roads. Whilst there will inevitably be questions about their safety, e-skateboards have also already been demonstrated and sold in London.

The government measures embrace cleaner methods of travel which ease the burden on the transport network and allow for social distancing, and go some way beyond current EU regulations by considering motors for both e-scooters and e-bikes with a capacity of up to 500W; in Europe the limit has long been set at 250W.

However, these plans are not without their issues; e-scooter riders will need a full or provisional driving license and hire companies will have to provide insurance for customers. Conversely and as matters stand, there is no requirement on individual owners of either e-scooters or e-bikes to take out their own policy, leaving the question of whom if anyone would be responsible for a crash with another road user unanswered. Likewise, should users be subject to road tax and MOT's, and to what extent would this degree of regulation impact take-up?

A recent poll by #BikelsBest – a collaborative national campaign to spread the word about the benefits of more people cycling – suggested that 77% of us support investment to make all cities more walking and cycling friendly. People want, post COVID-19, to see a truly green recovery that builds on the achievements of recent months in terms of cleaner air, greater accessibility and a healthier populous. Happily, it appears that government policy is well aligned with public mood on this one.

Joel Leigh is the motoring correspondent of City Solicitor and a Partner at Howard Kennedy LLP.



ONE LAST WORD DID YOU KNOW?



**“After sharp showers,’ said Peace, ‘the sun shines brightest;
No weather is warmer than after watery clouds;
Nor any love dearer, or more loving friends,
Than after war and woe, when Love and Peace are masters.
There was never war in this world, or wickedness so keen,
That love, if he liked, could not turn to laughter,
And Peace, through patience, put an end to all perils.”**

– From The Vision of Piers Plowman by William Langland (c. 1332–1400)

In June 1348, a seaman arrived at Weymouth in Dorset. He had travelled from Gascony and, along with a cargo of fine wines, brought with him the bubonic plague. This was the first known case in England of what would later be called the Black Death. Within a year, the sickness had spread across the whole country before dying down in the winter of 1349.

The impact was cataclysmic. Historians now broadly accept a mortality rate of between 40 and 60 percent of the population. Devastation was not uniformly distributed – some villages were wiped out completely whilst others were miraculously spared.

As we ponder what our world will look like after COVID-19, it is worth looking at what emerged as the new normal in the aftermath of this apocalyptic plague. It can provide some comfort that life finds a way of continuing whilst also heralding profound shifts in economic, social and political life.

The majority of people living in England at the time of the Black Death were peasants. Many of them were serfs, tied to the land

and as much the property of the landlord as the scythes and horses they used in the fields. With grain rotting in the fields for want of labour, peasants could press for higher wages. They also began the process of limiting service obligations that pressed on their time and ability to make their own livings. The Black Death was the trauma that liberated a new peasantry from which sprang the stock of yeomen farmers.

Some women were the beneficiaries of new freedoms. Dowagers held property and, in some cases, carried on the trades of their deceased husbands. In poorer households, the lack of labour meant women had to take a more prominent role in production. By the mid-1450s, beer and ale brewing had largely become the preserve of women.

Not everything was positive. The Black Death left profound psychological scars on

the survivors. The Dance Macabre became a favoured motif of late Middle Ages art – vivid images of the skeletons of kings and emperors dancing with labourers and peasants to remind people of the fragility of life and the vanity of earthly pursuits. The Black Death was not, for the people of the time, a matter of statistics, but of “a shock of pain and appalling fear felt by many millions of people”.

Cities found their populations replenished as people flocked from the countryside. Not all were welcome, with criminals, beggars and prostitutes amongst the masses seeking a new life.

But, amidst all the turbulent changes, many things stayed constant. Rather than usher in a crisis of faith, the Black Death seemed to inspire greater piety, especially amongst nobles who rushed to endow chantries, colleges and chapels. Civic society and the rule of law were tested in England, but did not breakdown. The economy was certainly smaller, but trade and commerce did not collapse.

What was left was a new normal, and a question for historians to ponder thereafter – did England’s most devastating natural disaster initiate new processes or merely accelerate changes which were already under way?

This article was provided courtesy of Ian Chapman-Curry, Principal Associate at Gowling WLG and host of the Almost History podcast.

www.almosthistorypodcast.com



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