

September 2021



## Welcome to the IT Club Newsheet!

So, where did summer go? In fact, where did the whole year go?

This month the newsheet is a bit different.

Normally we are very positive about technology but in this newsheet is the story of a holiday in Greece during the Covid pandemic and what can go wrong and how stressful travel can be at the moment.

It was going to be quite short but grew and grew - quite cathartic actually!

### News from Age Concern Epsom & Ewell:

Charity Golf Day - Event Cancelled

Due to issues outside of our control, we are sad to announce this our first Charity Golf Day scheduled for the 26th October 2021 has been cancelled.

### Sunday Tea Volunteers Needed

We are seeking dedicated volunteers to assist us once a month at our Sunday Tea event in various vital roles. This event is held to allow those who feel isolated and/or lonely within our older community, to join together and enjoy afternoon tea and either entertainment or a topical talk. Sunday Tea runs on the 2nd Sunday of each month at Stoneleigh Methodist Church. To register your interest in being a volunteer, please email our Volunteer Coordinator Dawn at [dawn.collier@ageconcernepsom.org.uk](mailto:dawn.collier@ageconcernepsom.org.uk)

### Fundraise with Amazon and The Giving Machine:

Did you know that there are a variety of ways for supporters to fundraise for Age Concern Epsom & Ewell? Check out the ACEE website [here](#) for 3 easy ways to help raise vital funds, with minimal effort!

### Virgin Money Giving:

Virgin Money Giving was created 12 years ago when Virgin Money began its sponsorship of the London Marathon. This year the sponsorship comes to an end. As a result VMG will stop operating on **30 November 2021** following the race in October.

Age Concern Epsom & Ewell will therefore be closing our VMG platform by the end of October 2021 and are currently in the process of setting up a brand new and exciting fundraising platform, which we hope will be ready for launch just in time for our Christmas campaign. We will keep you updated.

There is quite a lot of information here, if you want more detail on any topic, or would like a new topic covered, just let me know at [steven.p.dow@me.com](mailto:steven.p.dow@me.com).

We have requests to send this newsheet to other people so you can either send their email address to me or you can simply email them this pdf.

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## Information

Our website is here : <https://ageconcernepsom.org.uk>

The coronavirus update is here: <https://ageconcernepsom.org.uk/coronavirus-update/>

If you have IT problems you can still get telephone help by ringing our office on **01372 732456** between the hours of 9.30 – 1.00, Monday to Friday. An IT volunteer will then ring you back and hopefully solve your problem.

To keep up to date with Age Concern Epsom & Ewell's news and events please sign up to our charity newsletter. <https://ageconcernepsom.us11.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=72744b5e62d99b468ae2072a4&id=9b7e38510d>

All the previous new sheets have been put on the Epsom and Ewell Age Concern website and can be accessed here:

<https://ageconcernepsom.org.uk/about-us/newsletters/it-newsletters/>

## Useful Links

Government advice: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Age UK: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/coronavirus/>

The NHS has lots of information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

111 phone line website: <https://111.nhs.uk>

Livi information: <https://www.livi.co.uk>

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## Holiday Technology Tales

We have just returned from a much postponed cruise around the Greek Islands which proved to be an interesting but often stressful experience, mainly due to technology. Here is what happened.

### Getting out of the country

We were flying with British Airways to Athens so we needed proof of vaccinations and a Greek locator form.

-Proof of vaccinations: You need the NHS app (not the NHS covid app) on your phone or tablet. Downloading the app is easy but registering it and proving who are does involve some work. Get the NHS app as soon as you can. As well as your vaccination record it has other useful information. When you have it installed and you are registered, then you can download a pdf file (like this newsheet) which can then be printed.

-Greek locator form. At the moment most countries seem to require a form before entry and Greece has created one, probably one afternoon, which is quite woeful. I started the form and first question was about travel and I entered "Cruise" and carried on through the badly designed form, saved and submitted it. Then I realised the first question should have been "Flight" so went back to edit it, **but I could not change it!** The form was clearly wrong and it was highly likely we would be turned away from check-in at Heathrow.

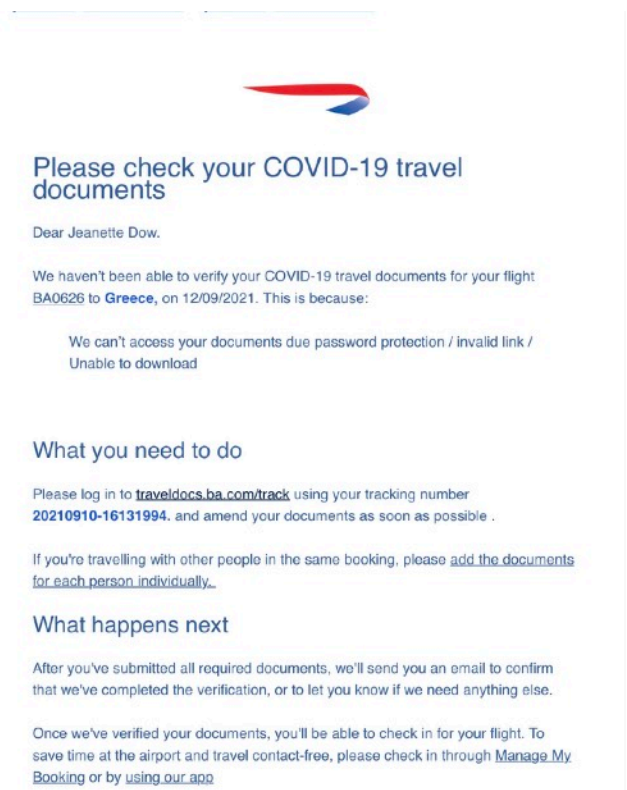
I could not even delete it and start again. I tried a new form but it would not let me save it because there was already a form (the incorrect one). There was no helpline number and this was on a Saturday, the day before we flew. I could see the much-looked-forward-to holiday disappearing. We knew of people who had been turned away at the airport and missed the flight. Furthermore, being on a cruise it would have been difficult to catch up.

This was the most stressful part of this holiday and in fact of any holiday we had been on,

However a friend who was travelling searched the internet and found that if I created a whole new account, with a **different email address**, I could create a new form. So this is what I did (I have a 2nd email address) and it worked. It was a nightmare.

British airways required us to upload the proof of vaccination and the Greek form before going to check-in. So we uploaded following their instructions and thought we had completed the pre-checkin but 2 hours later back they came with no guidance on why they could not accept them - were they the wrong forms or incorrectly completed?

We had no idea. We tried again and again and back they came except for one of our group who had his accepted.



The screenshot shows an email from British Airways. At the top is the BA logo. The subject line is "Please check your COVID-19 travel documents". The email is addressed to "Dear Jeanette Dow." The main body of the email states: "We haven't been able to verify your COVID-19 travel documents for your flight BA0626 to Greece, on 12/09/2021. This is because: We can't access your documents due password protection / invalid link / Unable to download". Below this, there is a section titled "What you need to do" which says: "Please log in to [traveldocs.ba.com/track](\"http://traveldocs.ba.com/track\") using your tracking number 20210910-16131994, and amend your documents as soon as possible." It also includes a note: "If you're travelling with other people in the same booking, please [add the documents for each person individually](\"#\")." Another section titled "What happens next" says: "After you've submitted all required documents, we'll send you an email to confirm that we've completed the verification, or to let you know if we need anything else." The final paragraph states: "Once we've verified your documents, you'll be able to check in for your flight. To save time at the airport and travel contact-free, please check in through [Manage My Booking](\"#\") or by using [our app](\"#\")."

So we thought we finally had all the forms we needed printed:

- Cruise documents
- Vaccination proof documents
- Greek locator form
- Covid test registration form for Athens.
- Test registration form for 2 day test on return.
- And passports of course.

### **At Heathrow**

At check-in a nice lady explained that the upload problem was random. Very annoying because it does cause stress.

However she also announced everything was in order, which was a huge relief, and we were at last heading to Greece.



The flight was nearly four hours but went quickly because we were on holiday!

### **Getting into Greece**

The Greek locator form had caused us a huge amount of grief so we were keen to show it to the officials at border control. It was a huge disappointment when a fireman in a corridor simply asked if we had it, had a brief look which took about 2 seconds and waved us on our way. This was not what we wanted so we tried to show the passport official our sheaf of documents but all they wanted was our passports.

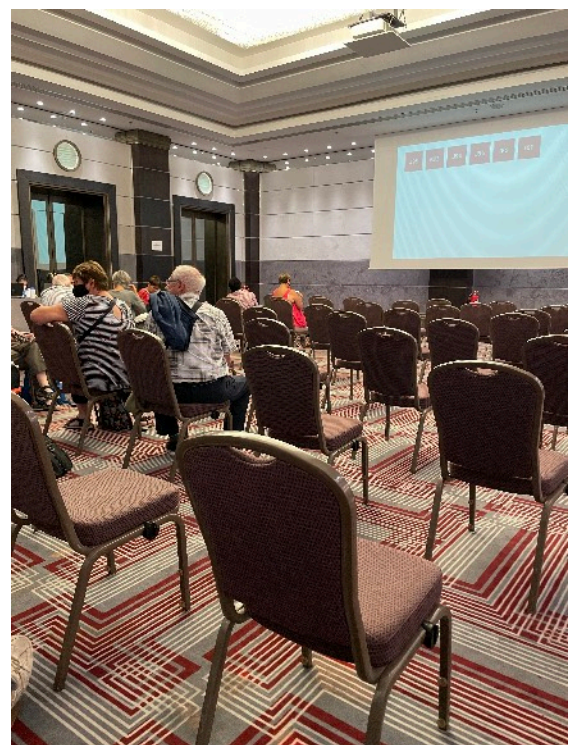
### **In Greece**

In Athens we were taken to a hotel where we presented our pre-registered forms. In return we were given a number and a phial for our test.

Medical staff then took the phial, rummaged around quite gently with a swab in our noses. We were then directed to a large room where we waited for our number to come up.

It would be a shame to come all this way to have a positive test and then suffer 2 weeks in a quarantine hotel (although we had taken tests at home just before we left as a precaution and were negative). The waiting was still a bit stressful for some.

Our numbers came up, we were negative so we received our green bands to wear on our wrists and we were finally clear to get on the boat.



But there were more IT woes to come.

## Phone and internet problems

We landed in Greece and I had noticed my phone did not work, it was telling me that it could not connect to data. Everyone else had a working phone. We had planned on using my phone as the main access to the internet because I have a huge data allowance and in Greece it is the same cost as in the UK (this will end soon, because of Brexit). My wife's phone does not have a large data allowance so we could not use hers, and anyway she was nearly at her limit.

Whatever I tried I just could not get it to work, I tracked the problem to O2 so I will be speaking to them. We needed internet access, not least because we had forms to fill in and documents to scan for our return to the UK, so I bought 75 minutes of wifi internet access on the boat for £65. Yes, £65. To use this precious internet access you have to use the ships app (downloaded from the app store) which is flakey to say the least. I managed a facetime call and some other necessary internet access which took about 15 minutes and closed the connection. Or at least I thought I did, it wasn't clear and the last 60 minutes were lost doing nothing. So 15 minutes of internet cost £65. Aargh!

So when we needed internet access we connected my iPad to my wife's phone which was used as a "hotspot". A hotspot is usually a phone which makes itself available to other devices to use as wifi internet access. This can be useful if you are anywhere where there is no wifi access and you want to use your tablet or iPad.

To do this:

1. On the phone, in settings, set to "hotspot"
  2. On your tablet go to settings, wifi and the phone will appear and can be connected to.
- Be aware that you will be using your phone's data allowance very quickly.

\*(When I returned to the UK I investigated the problem and it was found to be my foreign travel bundle which had disappeared, probably when my allowance was changed. So when going abroad always check with your phone operator)

## Getting back to the UK

We had a fantastic week on the ship and then it was time to think about getting home. The ship organised covid tests for all 1300 passengers. At our allotted time we turned up, were processed, given a test then left. The results would be sent to us. Which they did except for one of our group of four.

When he asked where his test result was, at first they could not find it on the system and then when they did find it, it couldn't be opened. No test means no flight home. He finally received it as we left the ship. More stress.

Before filling in the UK passenger locator form we had to have proof of a PCR test 2 days after we landed. So using my wife's phone as a hotspot we booked a test from Boots for £68 each and more importantly it gave us a code we could enter in the UK passenger locator form which we had to complete before we got to the airport.

Remembering the stress of the Greek form, I started UK passenger locator with some trepidation.

The first question asked if I wanted to create an account which could be used in the future? I answered yes, because hopefully we will travel abroad again. So I entered my details, email, name, phone number and saved. And as happens so often they want to confirm you are you so they sent a validation code to my phone. **But my phone doesn't work here!**



Luckily I remember seeing that I didn't need an account - I could just fill in the form as a one-off, so that's what I did. I had to enter test results, vaccination status and the 2 day test code we had received from Boots. All went well except scanning the QR code which was tricky. Two of our group could not manage it at all but that was done at the airport.

We could not print anything on the boat so we had to rely on our phones and iPads when we got to check-in at the airport. I made sure we had multiple copies of any important documents on our devices in case they ran out of power or, knowing my luck, just stopped working!

### At Athens airport

At the airport check-in queue it was chaotic. The check-in staff had just about reached the end of their tether.

One young couple had not taken a test, had to find somewhere in the airport to get it done. They went back to check-in but they had not received the result so had to go away again. Another person had their iPad out on the check-in desk finishing their UK passenger locator form. We saw the young couple later racing through the terminal, then racing back to the x-ray machine where they had left a bag!

We, thankfully, sailed through.

### Flight home

The flight home was uneventful apart from Jacob Rees Mogg, his wife and Sixtus sitting in the row in front of us.

We sailed through passport control using the automated gates (which subsequently broke down creating 4 hour queues) and returned home in a record time.

### 2 Day PCR tests

On the following day we did our 2 day PCR tests and sent them to Boots. We had to log on to their website and enter the codes on the phials which contained our nasal dna. More complications but we were used to it by now.

Finally all was packaged and taken to a priority Royal Mail post box. I was not aware there were priority mail boxes but there are, in fact, many in the area and you can find them here:

<https://www.royalmail.com/services-near-you#/>

Two days later the results were returned and we were both, thankfully, negative.

All over?

## Passenger Locator Form

**STATUS: AMBER**

**VACCINE STATUS: VERIFIED FULL/EXEMPT**



The code contains personal information. By sharing the code, you will be sharing your passenger locator form data.

### Summary

Name	Steven Paul Dow
Passport number	[REDACTED]
Which company are you travelling with?	British Airways plc
What is the flight number, train number or ship name that you will arrive on?	BA0637
Reference	UKVI_5ZAA014954172
Status	AMB
What are your travel plans?	Stay in the UK
Are you required to self-isolate when you arrive in the UK?	I meet the vaccine eligibility criteria
Are you required to book a COVID-19 test package for when you arrive in the UK?	Yes
Your test package booking reference	BOOTS3862973
Arrival location	London Heathrow Airport (LHR)
Date of arrival	19 September 2021 18:30 British Summer Time (BST)
Date of submission	18 September 2021 10:28 British Summer Time (BST)

No!

### Test and Trace

Four days after we returned we were contacted by NHS test and trace. It related to our flight and we blame Jacob Rees Mogg!

Reading the email it suggested we had to self isolate for 10 days which would be inconvenient to say the least.

However we clicked on link and after some personal questions it announced we did NOT have to self isolate because we were fully vaccinated.

It suggested we might like to take a PCR test but because we had already done one we did not feel we needed to do another. The only gremlin in an otherwise good technology experience was that there was no place to record our Boots test results.

And that, fingers crossed, is that!

An important message from NHS Test and Trace



**PLEASE RESPOND to the NHS Test and Trace service to protect yourself, your community, and the NHS from coronavirus**

Dear Steven Paul,

NHS Test and Trace has identified you as a contact of someone who has recently tested positive for COVID-19. You must now stay at home and self-isolate for 10 days from the date of your last contact with them, unless you are exempt. You should now visit your NHS Test and Trace account to provide personal details. You should do this even if you think you are exempt from self-isolation. This helps us to advise you on what you need to do as a contact and give you advice on how to protect your family, friends and local community.

Your account ID is z7a504c9. Please make a note of this ID and use it to sign in to NHS Test and Trace at [https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk/invitation/accept?invitation\\_token=RZZ8CdxVs64exdZToxYa](https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk/invitation/accept?invitation_token=RZZ8CdxVs64exdZToxYa).

If you cannot complete this online, a member of the Test and Trace team will call you soon (from [0300 013 5000](tel:03000135000)).

Thank you for doing this quickly. You will be helping to protect yourself, your community, and the NHS.

Any information you give us will be held in line with the Test and Trace privacy policy. If you have any questions about this email or our NHS Test and Trace service, please visit <https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk/>.

Kind regards,  
NHS Test and Trace service

For further guidance, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

View the privacy policy at <https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk/help/privacy-notice>

It was great to get away after the last 18 months and well worth the many annoying and stressful issues we had.

Has anyone had similar experiences?





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## Internet Memes

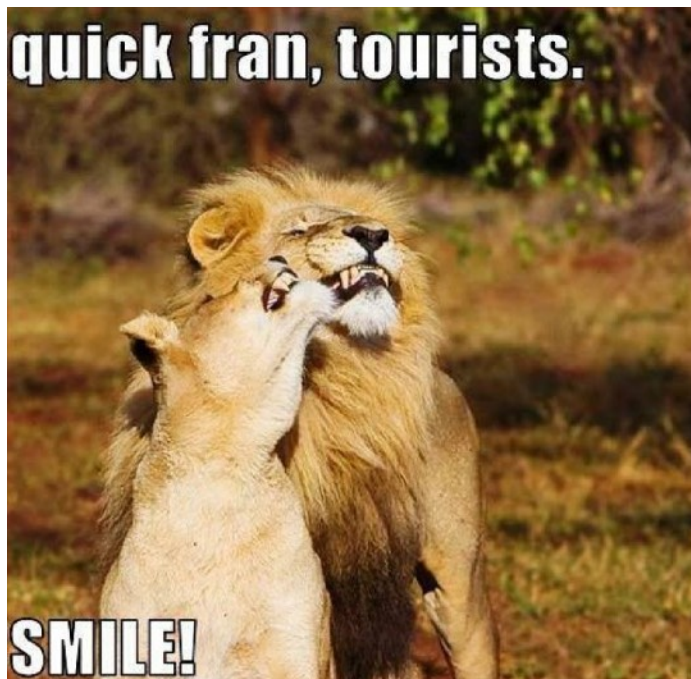
To lighten up this newsheet, have you heard of the word “meme”?

I thought it was a recent word created by some of the strange people who inhabit the dark recesses of the internet.

In fact its an idea, concept or style which is passed from person to person on the internet.

The term *meme* is a shortening of *mimeme*, which comes from Ancient Greek *mīmēma* meaning 'imitated thing' and was probably created by Richard Dawkins in his book “The selfish gene”. More details here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet\\_meme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_meme)

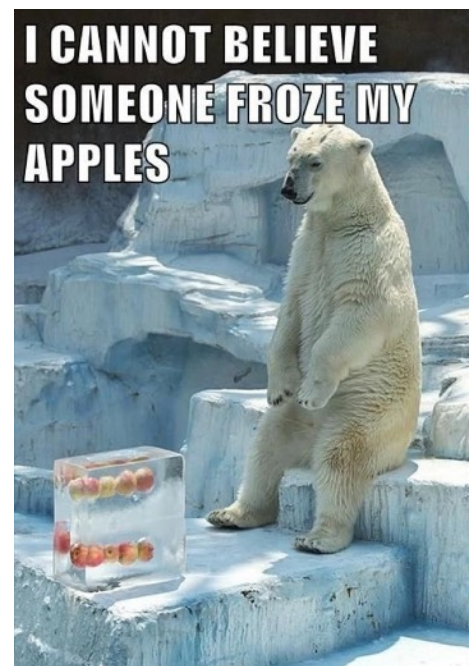
It's often associated with humorous pictures on the internet and here are a few:



**WHAT I THOUGHT BEING A MOM  
OF BOYS WOULD LOOK LIKE.**



**WHAT IT'S ACTUALLY LIKE.**





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Finally



"How shall I torture you today?  
Put you on the rack? Boil you in oil?  
Make you call a technical support line?"

If you have any ideas, comments, suggestions please email them to me at [steven.p.dow@me.com](mailto:steven.p.dow@me.com)

See you next month!