

How was life before? It was merely only a few weeks but it seems so alien now. Not long ago I was getting my head down at school, my biggest worry being my upcoming exams looming ahead. I'd venture out into Newcastle to meet with my drama company at northern stage as a creative escape from my fast paced life. I had plans to fill my summer with unforgettable parties and music festivals again. In my down time me and my pals would play pool in our local pub and laugh ourselves silly into the late hours of the night. Now I'm envious of my past self, looking back I don't know if I knew how safe, happy and engaged I was in my life. The pictures I've seen of the streets of my beloved city are as dead as a ghost town. Maybe this was meant to be, to make us all reflect and appreciate the truly meaningful things we may have overlooked before.



My summer 2019



Today's empty streets of Newcastle

My last day of school was beyond strange. With just two days notice we were told our A-level exams and prom were cancelled and to say our goodbyes. Just like that. All those years of tireless effort seems pointless. It goes without saying Friday was filled with tears, frantically taking pictures with our favourite classes, saying goodbye to our teachers, who after five years, of course we were close with. School, although, stressful, was where I had the most fun, creating sets, lighting and sound in my performing arts classes was what led me to figure out what I want to do in life. Our time was cut short but there's nothing we could've done.

Lockdown was a fun new concept to begin with. But as the novelty wore off, times have got harder. I'm having more down days as time goes on so I turn to music to stay strong. On days where I feel particularly frustrated, I find comfort in the fact we are all one day closer. One day closer to that hug you've been needing. One day closer to a new normality - although daunting we can be sure it is one with more thoughtfulness. Not only personally, but the virus outbreak has made us reflect as a country I feel. I hope everyone values the NHS more now, just imagine this nightmare without it. The solidarity and kindness I have seen is so reassuring and reminds me that none of us are alone.

Try not to put too much pressure on being productive. This is a hard time for all of us and it is bound to strain us mentally. But when I do need a new escape I find walking in the sun on a route I've never taken before is so healing. It gives me that sense of adventure and a change in headspace to properly process life again. Sitting in the same house all day doing the constant same tasks can obviously numb your mind - I think I've made about four banana breads so far.

You can't help but be filled with fear watching the news though, the death tolls and the speed in which they increase is enough to make anyone worry for our future, family and friends. And to still see people ignoring lockdown regulations and social distancing? How selfish can we get? Maybe they're naive and in denial like I was myself a few weeks ago. But this is serious now. Even our Prime Minister is infected - despite your political beliefs surely this is a reality check.

From saxophone playing, to bleaching my hair, puzzles, baking, playing pool and lots of Disney+ I'm just hoping I don't run out of things to do!

