

The



Buzz

26th January 2021

SPRING IS SPRUNG (SORT OF!)

THERE'S a lot resting on the slender shoulders of our spring bulbs – signalling as they do the end of these particularly dark winter months. Snowdrops came out in time for the snow and these cheery daffs were gracing the gates of the Churchyard in January. Gill Adams is the creative force behind the flower arrangements for the gates. 'Fortunately the flowers survived the gales,' says Gill. 'Learning what looks – and stays good – has been a steep learning curve - like a lot of things since last March!'



STUMPED!

JEAN Chatelain made our masthead bee at a WI workshop, using a technique called stumpwork, where the embroidered figures are raised from the surface of the cloth. 'I think it's more like a hornet, but they still buzz, don't they?' she says. If you have a bee (or hornet) for The Buzz, drop us a line!



Ace baker Mandy Slater (right...it's hard to tell behind the masks!) was the first on the Cafe's latest rota of cake-makers delivering elevenses to the hard-working staff of Avening School. Just a small way of saying 'thank you' to head teacher Jane Rushton (left) for everything she and her team have done for the village's children (and their parents!) during Lockdown.

Charity choice has never been harder

THANK YOU to everyone who voted for the Cafe's charity for 2021 on Facebook and email. 'It was not easy to choose a charity,' says Committee Chairman Jennie South. 'All charities are having a particularly difficult time as a result of the pandemic. They are facing the twin challenges of a lack of fund-raising opportunities as well as an even greater need for the support they offer.'

It is clear from the votes that the work of each of those on the short list is greatly valued locally. The Cafe

Committee has decided that in 2021, reflecting the views of the cafe community, money in the café charity 'pot' will be distributed as follows: The Mark Townsend Trust will receive 50%; and Longfield Hospice Care and The Door 25% each.

Donations in a 'normal' year come from ad-hoc events and one-off donations made at the Cafe. In Lockdowns, funds are also raised from the plant stall, cake bakes, recipe books and garden coffee mornings.

Diary

Noah's Ark Walks

Pairs of walkers have been out and about in the village on Tuesday morning. Elizabeth Buchanan and Karen Bowen (pictured) are just two. The Cafe can help you find a muddy buddy to join your Tuesday exercise. Contact Wendy Jennings on wendyjennings2010@gmail.com



February 14th

Valentine's Day Cake Boxes. Say it with cookies! Contact ccbebbbs@gmail.com to order

All month

Roadside Library for readers of all ages, outside 6 Old Hill. A special shout-out this month to Pam Taylor who brought two boxes of great reads in near-pristine condition

Jigsaw Puzzle Library, run by Beverley Rymer. Call 832100 to lend or borrow.

The new trees for the Community Orchard will most likely be planted before Lockdown fully ends. However, we hope that we will be able to hold a pruning workshop in May. In the meantime, keep in touch with progress via the Avening Community Orchard Facebook page.



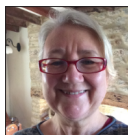
The Buzz is published online twice a month by Avening Community Cafe.

Editor: Clare Bebbington 07403006106 ccbebbbs@gmail.com

Contributing editor: Ellie Sanders

The Buzz is distributed online via the Cafe's Facebook page and the Avening village website. Hard copies are available on request

Caught by The Buzz



Jean Chatelain

I confess to a degree of self-interest in asking you about the Avening archives – we're tracing the history of our own house. What sort of things could we find in the collection?

All sorts – both official documents, such as the Census and the Parish records going back to 1557, have been transcribed. There are maps and documents on buildings, village events, the school, the Church... It's a really useful resource.

There must be some gems

Oh yes! My favourite is a photograph from 1911 of Avening school children picking flowers in the school garden which were then sent by train to a school in the East End of London.

How lovely! How did it evolve into such a rich collection?

It was largely the work of Fred Vening – he catalogued and transcribed most of the documents and Ann Brick transcribed the Parish records. There's still quite a bit of work to do, though. For example, I'm keen to transcribe the school log books.

How did you get involved?

I was doing a bit of research on the Church Institute – which stood

opposite the Matilda before it was demolished to make way for the wider road. Fred asked me to take the archive on – I was only too happy to help even though I'm just an amateur...

Amateur? Surely all history – whether amateur or professional – is about evidence and curiosity?

It's detective work. I think my degree in biology means I approach things scientifically and my background in IT makes me look at things logically. At least I hope so!

Are there pitfalls though?

Yes – even in a place like Avening street names have changed, house numbers are missing and people's surnames can be confusing, or incorrectly transcribed. It's so easy to spend hours with these documents – and it's so rewarding.

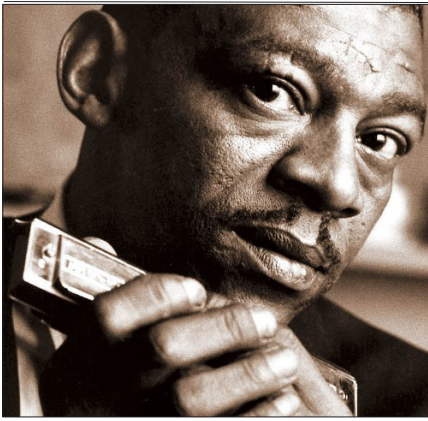
Every tangent is interesting....every tangent has a story attached to it.

How can I explore the archive?

Many documents are on the village website - and the official documents are also on websites such as Ancestry and FindMyPast. The documents themselves are in the Memorial Hall. Anyone interested can get in touch with me and I will do my best to help.



Avening schoolchildren with flowers for Betts Street School in London's East End.



Juke by Little Walter, who learned to play the harmonica at the age of eight and left home at twelve, to earn a living in music, is Brian Jones's choice.



It's Kylie all the way for Mel Young. 'Proper feel-good, dance-around the lounge music,' she says, picking her latest, Disco, as her Lockdown top tune.

THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC!

IT'S BEEN a bitter-sweet ten months for Avening's musicians and music fans. On the one hand, we've missed the joy (and, for performers, the income) of live performances. On the other, music has been there for us during Lockdown, offering solace, inspiration, or the private insanity of 15 liberating, cathartic minutes of air guitar.

For Gill Adams, music's been even more than that: 'It'll be hard to forget everyone singing *We Are the Champions* at the end of the Cafe's Zoom concert last May,' she says. 'It expressed how we were feeling: sometimes alone, but all together in spirit'. *Walking in the Air* sung by Aled Jones is another song that Gill will remember when Lockdown has passed: 'It's almost spiritual, evoking the range of emotions we are all going through.'



Avening's favourite trombone player Jim Hill picks Dixieland Jazz for his Lockdown Desert Island.

Emotional companionship is a common theme for those picking their Corona-tracks. Ellie Sanders' top tune, *Northern Sky* by Nick Drake, takes her to a 'prettier place'. Pete Barton goes for a subtler sound than his usual 'all the way up to 11' heavy metal - for him, folk-rockers Pentangle is just the ticket. It's all about Motown and *Dancing in the Street* by Martha and the Vandellas for Cas Boddam-Whetham.

Discovering online music has been a feature for many looking to scratch their musical itches. 'We've enjoyed the live online concerts by folk duo Megson,' says Adrian Haiselden. 'They've put on some entertaining evenings from their home in Cambridgeshire, along with their daughter and two dogs. We hope to see them live once things return to normal.'

The Avening Angels have mastered the knack of practising on Zoom; singing carols together was a highlight for Mandy Slater. Nor should we forget the Serendipity, which gave us a fleeting weekend of live music in the summer. And no sooner was Glastonbury cancelled than rumours of a village 'Garage-bury' emerged. Now *that's* something to look forward to!

People

Labradoodle's dandy

Pete Barton pays tribute to a four-legged friend - a guide dog, owned by a friend of his, which lost its confidence during the first lockdown - and had to be retired. But that is not the end of this shaggy-dog story: the dog is now a walking companion for several people and has become a kind of therapy dog to get them through the pandemic. Says Pete: 'It seems that if guide dogs aren't working regularly they can lose the ability to guide reliably. He is a big handsome Labradoodle and I really don't think I would be coping so well if it wasn't for him and the lovely spaniel which we borrow two days a week.'

Snow news is good news



Thanks to Wendy Jennings for sharing 'random snow pictures' just as we were finishing this edition. Random snow, with a random Bob Jennings, at Cherington Lake.

Gilian spots talent

A lovely note arrived this week from Gilian Bulmer-Davison about The Buzz: 'It's amazing that we have so many talented people in the Village and the Buzz is bringing them to our notice, whereas before Lockdown we did not even know they existed!' Thank you for writing and reminding us that even these clouds have silver linings, Gilian.

YOU'RE DOING THE BEST YOU CAN, SAYS ELLIE

WITH SO much going on in the world, it's no wonder many of us are on an emotional rollercoaster at the moment. Lockdown can be tough; the days are long, dark and cold, but we have some light at the end of the tunnel; a sign of hope that better times lie ahead. It's normal to feel positive about things one minute and then down the next; uncertainty and the unknown are never easy to deal with. Embracing and acknowledging every feeling, even the tricky ones, is important for our wellbeing. A message for the week ahead – 'be gentle with yourself, you're doing the best you can'

mind.org.uk has lots of information on wellbeing and how to look after ourselves when things get tough.



Pip and Robert Morrison weren't going to let Lockdown stop them celebrating Burns' Night this year. Traditional fare of shortbread biscuits and, er, tins of G 'n' T were just some of the 'prizes' found on their Burns Night treasure hunt organised by neighbours Andrea and Jonny Glover. Anyone spot Pip and the kilt-wearing Robert around the village in the sub-zero temperatures last weekend? Scotland the brave indeed...

Buzz Food

Marilyn's Sweet potato & mushroom polenta with tomatoes

To round off Veganuary we asked Marilyn Filis, who has been a vegetarian for over 25 years, for her top bake - we didn't just get one, we got a whole book! Marilyn had been given *The Green Roasting Tin* by Rukmini Iyer the Christmas before last and loves the recipes in it. This is just one of many favourites: 'I've just loved all of the recipes and it's such a hard choice to pick just one from this book,' she says. And as a nod to meat-eaters, she says it's also great with bacon!

Ingredients

Serves two

150g polenta

400ml vegetable stock

3 tbspn olive oil

300g sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 5mm chunks

300g mini portobello or chestnut mushrooms, sliced

150g cherry tomatoes

2 cloves garlic

1 tspn sea salt

Black pepper

Dressing

15g fresh flat-leaved parsley

Juice of one lemon

2 tbspn olive oil

0.5 tspn chilli flakes

Method

Pre-heat oven to 200C/180C (fan)/Gas 6.

Line a roasting tin with baking paper, then tip in the polenta, stock, two tablespoons of olive oil and the sweet potatoes. Stir, season well with black pepper and transfer to the oven.

Cook, uncovered, for 40 minutes.

Stir the mushrooms, tomatoes, garlic, salt, pepper and another tablespoon of oil together and set aside.

Once the polenta has had 40 minutes, take tin out of oven and give it a good stir.

Top with the mushroom and tomato mixture and return to the oven for a further 15 minutes, after which the mushrooms should be soft and the polenta crisp.

For the dressing: Meanwhile, mix together the parsley, lemon juice, olive oil and chilli flakes.

Serve the baked polenta and vegetables with the dressing alongside and a green salad.