

THE Traditional T^oring C^lub

NEWSLETTER

LOCKDOWN JANUARY/ FEBRUARY ISSUE 2021

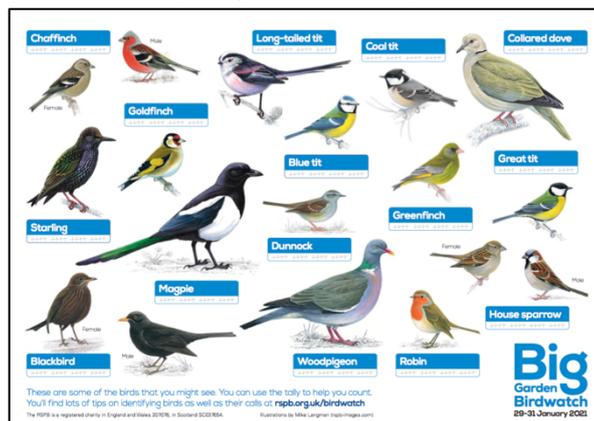
Hello everyone, this is a slightly different newsletter than the previous ones as you are well aware there have been no walks or cycles to report on. Some weeks ago Sue sent out an email to members asking for their stories, photos of crafts etc. for the newsletter. We have some really talented members and you are in for a treat with the stories and photos of crafts in this edition. Thank you to all you 'budding talented stars' for your contributions.

I have been doing a lot of walking and not enough cycling over the last few weeks; I don't believe I have seen so much water in the fields and parks. The rain has been relentless this winter causing roads and paths to flood, making walking a bit treacherous in rural areas. Therefore I have had to choose my walking areas carefully. It seems we have missed the snow, shame I was looking forward to a change of scenery, snow always makes everything look so lovely.

Have you been watching 'Winter Watch' on the television with Chris Packham and his step daughter Megan? If not watch it on catch up, it has been one of the best programs on television this last couple of weeks. I even did the 'Big Garden Bird Watch' last Saturday and it rained all day, consequently the birds like us all kept undercover, all I saw was 6 Great tits, 2 Magpies, 1 Wood pigeon, 1 Robin and 1 Crow over an hour. By the way I was in my conservatory and not out in the



garden in the rain.



I hear that many of you have had your vaccinations, some have had their second dose. The vaccine program seems to be moving along swiftly and efficiently which is great considering that we have had some bad press about the handling of this pandemic; at least we have got this right. Let's hope, with this protection, we can meet up with family, friends and get away on a holiday. Our trip to Minehead may happen yet, I do hope so.



Spring is on its way, in my opinion the best season of the year, snow drops are out, daffodils are budding and soon we can get in the garden to do all the awaiting jobs. We'll all be down the allotment digging and planting soon; the next edition will have an update on the allotment, it's a great place to be definitely 'The Good Life'. Bet you can't wait.

It's hopeful that we may be able to meet up for walks and cycles in March. Throughout this lockdown most of you have been out walking or cycling; consider putting these on for the club in the future when we are up and going. Also we need your contributions for the next newsletter, I know we have more members out there who are talented. Don't hesitate send your stories, poems, photos etc to Sue or me. Without you there won't be a newsletter, I personally think they are brilliant: A big thank you to Sue for her time and effort in producing this every month.

Stay safe, keep fit and stay positive.

Sally Meredith (President)

😞 Sod that for a game of soldiers... I thought it was supposed to be a mouth and nasal swab 😞



Back to my youth. After arriving at Liverpool Street we would make our way to a variety of stations including Kings Cross, St Pancras, Euston, Marylebone, Paddington, Waterloo and Clapham Junction. At that time St Pancras looked very neglected and forlorn and was threatened with demolition. Thank goodness the poet Sir John Betjeman and others decided to fight for its survival so that today it is in my view the most attractive of all London Stations and of course the gateway for Eurostar trains into Europe. Inside St Pancras is a Lifesize statue of the great man. Another fantastic transformation in line with the Olympic Park. I very much enjoy the poems and films of John Betjeman and have visited his simple grave at the lovely church of Saint Enodoc in Cornwall overlooking the Camel Estuary. In fact Gabrielle and I had a great trip there a few years ago when we cycled the Camel Trail from Bodmin to Padstow via



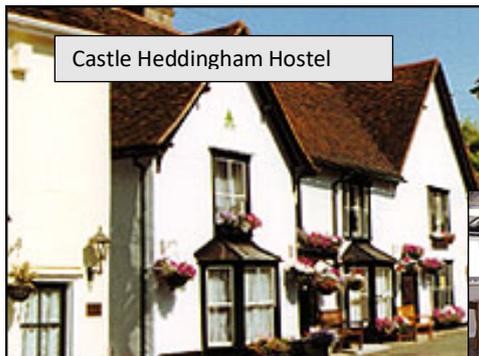
Wadebridge before catching the ferry to Rock and then walking beside the golf course to St Enodoc. Thoroughly recommended. As many will be aware Betjeman also had a fondness for Southend which was recognised when one of the Pier trains was named in his honour.

In the late nineteen fifties the railway regions all had their individual identities and the variety of steam locomotives was extensive. For example



the Great Western Railway (known to many as God's Wonderful Railway) had bestowed names to all of its principal locomotives that hauled passenger trains. These engines covered various classes including Kings, Halls, Castles, Granges, Manors and Counties. The nameplates themselves were attractive works of art and during the sixties could be purchased from British Railways for about £25 after the engines were scrapped. Today they reach many thousands at auction.

To supplement our occasional trips to London for train spotting we decided to venture further afield which involved upgrading my bike (at that time a Trent Tourist made by Raleigh which I had got as a present for passing my 11 plus) to a Dawes racing bike. At the same time we joined the Youth Hostel Association so that we had somewhere to stay on our adventures. In those days one had to travel on foot or by bike to gain access to the hostel. One also had to carry a type of sleeping bag made up of two sheets sewn together, be prepared to perform a variety of domestic tasks such as peeling potatoes and all at a cost of two and sixpence a night. Meals were extra. Each hostel also had its own identity date stamp which was inserted into the individuals YHA type passport on departure. This served as a handy log when looking back at our travels. Unfortunately I lost mine many



Castle Heddingham Hostel



years ago on moving house, a great disappointment. In the early days the UK had a huge number of YHA hostels of all shapes and sizes. For example in Essex there were hostels at Saffron Walden, Hockley, High Roding, Castle Heddingham, Colchester and Maldon. Accommodation could be fairly basic involving sleeping in dormitories and today the nearest Hostel in East Anglia is at Blaxhall near Snape

from Norwich to the hostel at miles. Much of the internal mill workings were still in place which made it very quaint. We then toured the Midlands area before returning home. Shortly afterwards we planned a far more adventurous trip from Norwich to Cornwall and Devon returning via Exmoor, Bath and Cambridge all during the summer school holidays.

Brent, Graham and I were joined by 5 other friends (who were taking 2 weeks off work) so we three started out before the others. Our route to the West Country was via Castle Heddingham, London and Guildford. In London Brent had arranged for us to stay overnight at his uncle's house in Enfield. Little did I know that just one street away lived a young girl called Gabrielle Carleton, who was busy doing her homework that night, whilst I was eating my supper. Some nine years later I asked Miss Carleton for a dance at the Gresham Ballroom (An Irish dancehall in Upper Holloway) and we are now sharing our third lockdown and approaching 50 years of marriage. It's a small world.

which the TTC has used on a number of occasions. A few years ago I was on the TTC farewell weekend trip to the Castle Heddingham hostel which was to be sold off. A great shame as it was a great location for touring Essex and Suffolk. Back to my youth and my first long cycle trip saw us pedalling Houghton Mill near Huntingdon, a journey of just over 100

Back to my youth and my first long cycle trip saw us pedalling Houghton Mill near Huntingdon, a journey of just over 100



Houghton Mill Hostel

All was going well on our trip westwards until we reached Tintagel on the Cornish coast. As we left the hostel the spring on my derailleur gears broke and the whole mechanism crashed into my rear wheel shattering several spokes. As I was contemplating this disaster a kind gentleman stopped in his car and offered to take me to the nearest town and cycle shop. There the rear wheel was repaired but not the gears so I was stuck in just one gear for the return journey including the long slog across Exmoor and the Mendips. The next disaster struck at Bath when two of the group succumbed to sickness and diarrhoea. They were in no fit state to continue so the six of us continued onwards. At the next hostel near Goring on Thames two more caught the bug. For complex reasons I and another friend decided to take our bikes on the train to Paddington, cycle across London to Liverpool Street and then back by train to Norwich. So by the time I arrived home, 2 were still in Bath, 2 near Goring and 2 at Cambridge. Some trip.! For our last major cycle adventure Brent, Graham and I decided to experience continental youth hostels by travelling to Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. On our travels we visited Amsterdam, crossed the ZuiderZee dam, ventured into Germany near Arnhem, then down the Ruhr valley before heading across the Eifel mountains and then finishing back at the Hook of Holland.



Train spotting, cycling and youth hostelling all took a back seat until we joined the TTC back in 2003. Our first cycling trip with this unique club was a tour around Hungary followed by trips across Slovenia (twice), Netherlands, Belgium and France. We have enjoyed cycling on former rail tracks in the UK such as the Camel Trail, the Granite Way, Tarka Trail, Mawddach Trail in Wales, Tissington, High Peak and Monsal Trails in Derbyshire. We have also enjoyed reacquainting Youth Hostels such as Blaxall and Hartington Hall. So really a full circle for me as I still entice Gabrielle to travel to various Heritage railway lines across the UK. In fact to honour my retirement, on 28 April 2006, she and my daughters arranged for me to spend a day driving and firing a large steam locomotive on the North Norfolk Railway between Sheringham and Holt. A great experience.

I finish these ramblings on a did you know session.

1. The UK leads the world for our number of heritage railway lines and preserved steam engines.
2. That enthusiasts are currently building several full size new steam engines.
3. That one of these engines, Tornado, reached 100 mph in May 2017 between Darlington & York
4. That the nameplate "Compton Castle" fetched £8600 at auction in July 2020
5. That the nameplate. "Woolacombe" fetched £9200 in November 2020.



I finish with mention of Woolacombe because we enjoyed a great TTC holiday there in May 2019 with excellent weather and superb cycling along the Tarka Trail (former rail track) skirting the Torridge and Taw estuaries. *Stuart Budds*

It's MAGIC!

Think of a whole number between 2 and 9

Multiply it by 9.

You'll now have a two digit number. Add these digits.

Subtract 5 from the answer.

Think of the corresponding letter in the alphabet e.g. if you have 2, the letter will be B; 5 will be E, etc.

Think of a European country beginning with this letter (the country's name must be in English).

Take the second letter of the country's name and think of an animal beginning with this letter.

The Country you chose is DENMARK the animal is an ELEPHANT

Pat O'shea

Christine's European Cycle

Look at this photo and what do you see. Unused ladders and paints,



abandoned beach shoe just waiting for summer, bike carrier waiting to be used again but the most important thing my bike. My lovely nephew loaned me a bike stand during the first lockdown. This has proved to be a saviour especially during this lockdown though I must admit I am getting more to be a fair weather cyclist so not sure I would have been out in this icy weather. If Richard knocks to take it back I won't answer the door to him.

You see when I am doing my workout from my app I don't see the ladders shoes paint I transport myself to all the places I have cycled with the club. I see us all gathering by the Dutch

barge ready to cycle the canals. (After a very windy ride I remember being so relieved that the bikes had been nicked overnight from the barge but they were soon replaced) the windmills and tulip fields. I remember cycling from Harwich along the coast to The Hague. I am cycling along the banks of Lake Balaton in Hungary treating local children to an ice cream each 5 for 25p we were so generous. A German named Hans joined us and he certainly lived up to his name when he helped the women up the hills. I am cycling around Lake Bled in Slovenia then along the road where the hills next to us is renowned for bears. We cycled pretty speedily. Another time the guide was so impressed that we had cycled in the pouring rain refusing to take cover. He did comment that the Italians in all their fancy gear wouldn't have carried on. We earned ourselves a schnapps. Such a beautiful country. I am cycling the Loire Valley stopping at the chateaus. I am crossing the channel to go to Pat and Marion's favourite French restaurant for lunch then back home on the same day. I am cycling the northern French canal. I am cycling around the war memorials in northern France then down to La Rochelle after circumnavigating Paris a few times looking for a way out I am cycling around Belgium visiting Ghent Antwerp Ostend and Bruges who

could forget that place we stayed where Eddy was eaten alive. I am a passenger on the most hair raising cycle of them all the Indian rickshaw. Dodging the traffic cows dogs and tuk-tuks has damaged me. These are places we have cycled abroad lots of laughs so much fun. Of course there are so many places in the UK that we have been. Northern Ireland, Wales, Devon, Dorset, Suffolk, Norfolk, London. The list goes on and that's besides the holidays and days out we have had where along with cycling walking has been the main activity

So you see we have been so lucky to have had all these experiences and shared them with such great company and of course so lucky to be around to remember them. The good times will come back and if this awful virus has taught us anything it is to appreciate all the things we will be able to do when it's over because that's where our memories are. At a time like this those memories are that much more important I've travelled all those miles during lockdown without one coffee/beer stop

By the way the photo was taken in my living room. No unkind comments please.

Chris Blowers

The Adventures of Bluebell and Bertie

My name is Bluebell, I live in a big car showroom at Frinton with a lot of other motor cars, because I am a little Fiat 500 some of them make fun and bully me, it's not very nice, I am so unhappy.

Suddenly, one day through the big glass doors came a beautiful lady, she looked straight at me, my headlights lit up and beamed with delight, was she going to save me, I knew it was love at first sight.



I now live at Leigh-on-sea, it is very posh and nice, I have my own little house next to mistress Diane's big house, she is the lady who saved me from the bully boys. I now feel safe and secure, and I am so happy.

When Diane takes me out for a drive, we go whiz whiz whizzing all around the country lanes, over the hills and far away, my little wheels spinning spinning, round and round, oh what fun.

Sometimes when we go out Diane takes her bicycle; his name is Bertie and he

shares my little house. I get on very well with Bertie, he is very kind and gentle. When our mistress goes out cycling, she carries him on a special rack fitted to my chassis, I take good care of him and make sure he does not fall off.

My name is Bertie, Diane doesn't drive fast when she is carrying me on the back of Bluebell and she tries to avoid all the rotten pot holes. I love it when she takes me out for a cycle ride, it's great fun, Diane can make me go ever so fast, spinning the pedals like a merry-go-round, and when it comes to the hills, she flies up and over the top like a bird on the wing. It's the porridge she has for breakfast that keeps her fit for a lady of her age.

Sometimes when Diane takes me out for a cycle ride, some of the other club members come as well which makes it much more fun, these are called club runs and are usually led by a leader, most often it is Uncle Stuart, he keeps us all in order and does not stand for any messing about. We usually meet at the Compass pub at Little Green near Felstead, it is one of Uncle Stuart's favourite areas and he knows some really lovely country lanes, he always seems to find new ones every time he takes us out.

I really enjoy these group runs because I can look at all the different bikes, they are all shapes and sizes, big ones, little ones, clean ones, mucky ones, scruffy

ones, some with mudguards, naughty ones with no mudguards. Oh so interesting!

There is one little bloke in the club, his name is Ken, some years ago, he was struggling to keep up with the younger members

especially up the hills, so he decided it was time to invest in one of the new-fangled electric bikes which were coming on to the market, he said it changed his life, he was able to keep up with everybody and climbed up the hills like a mountain goat and get back to the pub for lunch feeling as fresh as a daisy.

Some of the very elderly members were quietly impressed when they saw Ken's super dooper electric bike and now there are six of us using them, giving us a lot more pleasure in the twilight years of our lives, cycling the country lanes of our beautiful county, Essex.

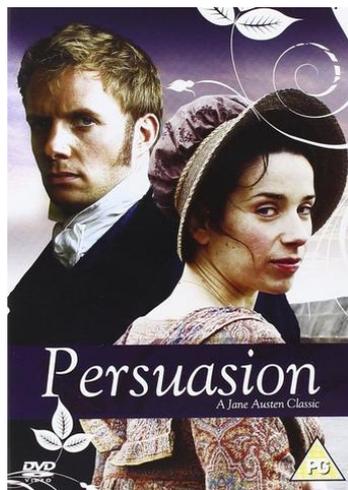
When it is time to go home, Diane puts me on the back of Bluebell and straps me on tight. On the way home, I tell Bluebell what an exciting day I have had cycling with my friends and the places we have been, in the fields we saw cows and sheep and sometimes deers, Bluebell said, she wished she could have come.

Ken Plowman

Book Club

Persuasion by Jane Austen – Average score 6 points

Comments and scores from TTC book club during Lockdown 3 (!!) **Kevin's choice - January 2021**



I really enjoyed this book. In fact I had to limit my reading time to an hour a day. I didn't want to finish the book too quickly. Like a classic romcom film you know what is going to happen from the very beginning. In fact that is part of the attraction really. I would like to see one of the film versions now. There are at least two. **Why did I pick this book?** In the summer I decided that for my next book I would pick one that was related to Lyme Regis. I stayed in Lyme Regis once about a decade ago. I also visited the town for the day in 2019 on my birthday. On that occasion I travelled by train and bus. I visited the harbour although the weather was pretty bleak. The two Lyme Regis books that I am aware of are *The French Lieutenant's Women* and *Persuasion*. I enjoyed the film of the former, however in the film the

end is clear cut and my understanding is that in the book it is a lot more ambivalent. With this thought in mind I picked Persuasion. Before I read the book I was not aware of the full story. However I was aware of the Lyme Regis accident and the romance that follows between Captain Benwick and Louisa Musgrove –so I suspect that many decades ago I saw part of a TV adaptation. Yes, I will have to read more of Jane Austen's books. With reference to Bath - Jane Austen had a difficult relationship with the city. Her family moved around a lot whilst they were living there. Her dad was unwell so their income fell. So the Austens were going down the social ladder. I found some of the language difficult. There were some sentences I had to reread a couple of times. **My score is 9 points.**

I hadn't read this book before so I didn't know the story. It's told from Anne Elliot's point of view so we only see the other characters through her eyes. She seems to have had quite a lonely and sad life until we meet her in the book. She is overlooked by her family and dismissed as 'only Anne'. This changes when she meets the Musgrove family and reunites with an old 'lover'! Although it's all heaving bosoms and nothing being said, I quite enjoyed the book. It's an easy read and enough happening to keep your attention. We all knew Anne and Mr. Wentworth would finally get back together but it wasn't spoilt for all that. Nice and easy. **My score is 7 points.**

Generally speaking I like classics, despite the somewhat strangulated language at times, but I did find this one a bit of a struggle. I think there were possibly too many characters – a mix of siblings, cousins and a myriad of other characters. I found I had to reread some parts of the text to remind myself who Mrs Clay was or Mrs Croft or the Hayters, the Harvilles etc. Also, of authors contemporary to Jane Austen, I think I prefer the Bronte sisters – their books seem a little bit more gritty/edgy. Persuasion seemed a bit like an early 19th century Mills and Boon. I am glad though that Anne Elliot got her man in the end – and that she wasn't again 'persuaded' against marrying him. **My score is 6.5 points.**

Trying to read this book over a depressing Christmas period was very difficult for me but I did get through it. I really found the attitudes in the book depressing and maybe if our lives had been more cheerful I would have enjoyed the book more. **My score is 4 points.**

An apparently well-loved classic – I found wanting. I found the story line long-winded and boring (likely due to the dated prose and style of the time.) The characters were so snobby and small-minded (apart from Anne of course). However, I slogged my way through it and was grateful that Anne got her man in the end. **My score is 4 points.**

Being Jane Austen's last novel I did not find it as entertaining to read as her other well-known books. A funny part of the book was Sir Walter's thoughts on the plain looking women of Bath - saying he had many frights with so many ugly women. Chapter 21 went on and on and on with Anne and Mrs Smith discussing Mr. Elliot as a suitable husband for Anne. Sorry but I got fed up with the ongoing dialogue. Anne finally gets her man Captain Wentworth. I think it was a book of her day with young privileged ladies looking to marry well. Over this lockdown I have watched a couple of Catherine Cookson dramas. They made me think of how the other half had to live while reading Persuasion. I found the book had too many words - saying not much. **My score is 5 points**

Hmmm - I begrudgingly give a five. Up the revolution I say!! Poor Ann - he wasn't rich enough for her when they were younger. Come on women's lib - fly the flag! Too sickly sweet for me - no meaty bits. Anyway I read it, dear reader! When can I get my O level mark?? **My score is 5 points.**

I found this really difficult because I had to keep re-reading passages. In fact I then had to skim read to the end. **My score is 5 points**

I enjoyed reading Persuasion, especially the first half. However I found the second half, based in Bath, a bit confusing. I have been a fan of Jane Austen ever since studying Pride and Prejudice for O level GCSE back in the day but I haven't read Persuasion before. Persuasion was Jane Austen's last full novel - it was completed in 1816 before she died in 1817 at the remarkably young age of 41. I found myself savouring Jane's witty reflections and I didn't want to rush the novel. Quotes that I noted that made me smile - and think - were

'The public is rather apt to be unreasonably discontented when a woman does marry again but Sir Walter's continuing in singleness requires explanation'

Admiral Baldwin's face was 'the colour of mahogany' and looked 60 when he was only 40

'A lady without a family was the very best preserver of furniture in the world'

'She was deep in the happiness of such misery or the misery of such happiness instantly'

‘It was a mixture of those who had never met before and those who met too often, a commonplace business, too numerous for intimacy, too small for variety’

‘[Women] do not forget [men] as soon as [men] forget [women]. It is our fate rather than our merit. We cannot help ourselves. We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey on us... You always have a profession, pursuits, business of some sort or other, to take you back into the world immediately ...’.

‘Men have every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands’
The story itself is a predictably romantic novel – an early Georgian Mills and Boon - but I rather like that. What I didn’t like was the confusing cast of characters - particularly so many Charles’s - I counted five! I read somewhere that the fact that Jane was ill for two years prior to her death could explain why this novel did not have the rigorous editing by her that her other books had - so maybe she would have edited out some of the more confusing language and sub plot lines if she had been well. So, although I didn’t enjoy this quite as much as other novels by Jane Austen, I did appreciate flashes of her wit and social comment and found it a worthwhile read. **My score is 8.5 points.**

Firstly, I have to confess I watched ‘Persuasion’ on a DVD. Then went on to read it, to be truthful I skimmed through the book as I found it very long winded, flowery and difficult to concentrate while reading it, so I am actually glad I saw it rather than reading it. It was ok to start with, Walter Elliot, a widower, with three daughters Elizabeth, Ann and Mary. He has to move out of Kellynch Hall and the property is then rented to Captain Wentworth’s sister. What a coincidence!! He went to live in Bath with Elizabeth and Ann was left, with the staff, to sort out Kellynch Hall - like Cinderella left at home while they all went to the ball. After this the characters were just plain and I felt they were just a filler, nothing really happened much except people travelling and gossiping. Mary, her sister, was awful and selfish as were all except for Ann who differed from the others (probably a reflection of Jane Austen herself) she was beautiful, intelligent, kind and respectful. It’s about true love and having a second chance. After eight years separation Captain Wentworth and Ann marry and live happily ever after. I didn’t really get to know him throughout the book as he flitted in and out, I did think it would have been nice to read more about him in the book, as we did Mr Darcy in Pride and Prejudice. However, I’m glad I read the book and saw the film, but I won’t be reading the book again. **My score is 6 points.**

I watched the DVD and I have read Jane Austen novels in the past. **My score is 7 points.**

The Lockdown CRAFTY SHOWCASE

What have we been doing during the Lockdown? Wow! What amazing work, patience and precision.

Derek’s Airship

Knowing my lifetime addiction to "make do and mend, and solving puzzles my daughter gave me a model kit of an airship for Christmas to keep me occupied and out of trouble in isolation.

Fit for 14 year olds and over I was ideally suited with 74 years extra experience in hand so the challenge was on.

Armed with tweezers magnifying glass a vice and ample emergency adhesive I

began by pressing out the many laser cut sections.

With trembling fingers and much patience perspiration and sheer persistence gradually it took shape as per very minuscule illustrations.

After a fortnight's struggle and to my great relief and astonishment it stands upright by itself unaided,

It also stands as much chance of getting airborne as Led Zeppelin but it has pride of place among my few lifetime achievements

Hope you are all coping as well as me.

I forgot to mention the complexity involved as there were 176 separate numbered, slender pieces meant to click together but often snapped and required sticking in



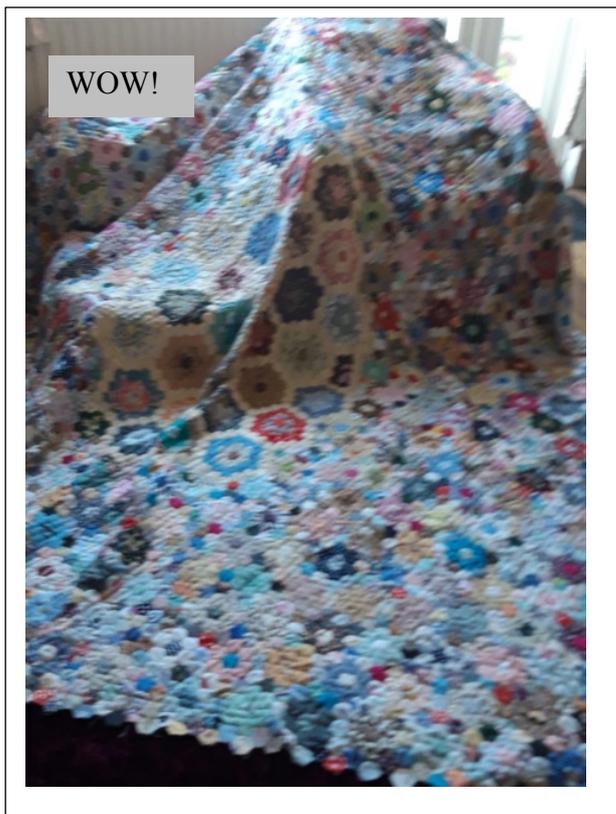
place. The adhesive probably cost more than the kit!!!

But I was stuck indoors and glued to my lounge table for hours but I did it, by gum!.

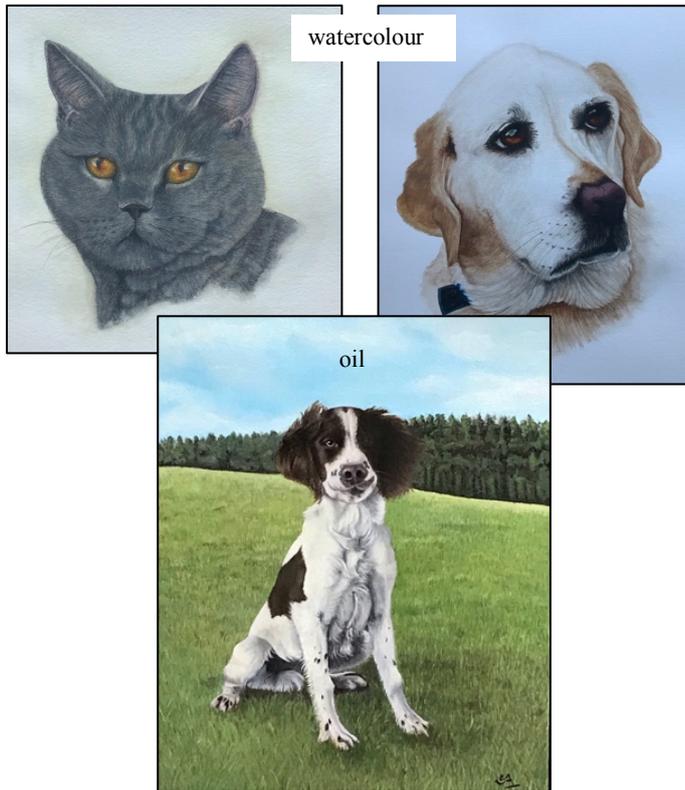
Derek Murray



Pat Rae's Amazing Patchwork



Sue's Artwork



Sally's fantastic Lego engineering and Tapestries



AMAZING!

This Month's Fabulous Recipe - David's Chicken, Sage & Onion & Cranberry Pie

Ingredients

180g cooked chicken
42.5g sage & onion stuffing mix (half a small packet)
Seasoning
2 heaped tea spoons cranberry sauce
50g lard
187g plain flour
62ml cold water
1 egg lightly beaten



Method

Heat oven to 180c/160fan/Gas mark 4
Line base of 12cm x 5cm deep sprung pie tin with circle of grease proof paper
Make stuffing per packet and leave to cool

Cut chicken in to 1cm cubes
Mix chicken & stuffing together
Add seasoning

On a scale place, empty sauce pan and add water until 62g registered
Cut lard into small pieces and add to water
Place over a very low heat to melt lard

Meanwhile add flour to mixing bowl

Once lard has melted turn heat to high until just boiling, immediately add mix to flour, stirring well.
Knead "crumbs" together to become dough wipe dough around saucepan for last drops of water and melted lard
Roll out (no need for flour) to £1 coin thickness (keep the dough warm and you find it very easy to work and join)
Cut out large circle which will line base and mould up sides of tin, Ensure any overlaps are moulded out
Cut smaller circle for lid

Put filling into pastry case and press down to remove any gaps Spread cranberry sauce on top,
Put pastry lid on, folding in outer edges and pinching together, Pierce hole for steam out let
Brush with beaten egg

Place in oven for 30 minutes
Increase heat to 200c/180fan/Gas mark 6
Remove pie from tin (leave on base)
Brush sides and top with more beaten egg

Return to oven for a further 30 minutes or until the sides are set and pie is golden brown
Remove from oven & allow to cool.

David Large

FREE

Size Small sweatshirt, hardly worn.

Kindly donated by Rita.

If you are interested contact Sally.

First come first served!



FINALLY

Apathy Wins The Day

From an article in Waitrose paper dated 13th November 2020 by Eddie Mair

Did you see that story from Norway the other day? 'Get up and go' starts to fail at the age of 54, as that's when we lose our motivation to get off the couch and try new things. As someone born in 1965 this was of great interest to me. The author and psychologist Hermundur Sigmundsson, of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, polled people aged 14-77 to determine how the relationship between passion, grit and positive mindset changes as we age.

He noted that a positive mindset enables people to believe that they will get good at what they are passionate about. But that this correlation fades as we get older. He says "The correlation remains pretty similar from age 14 to 53. But as soon as you get up in your fifties, a shift happens. The connection between passion and grit becomes almost non-existent. In theory, it takes a lot more for us to actually do something".

I cannot begin to describe how angry all that made me. I was 54 when I read the article, nearly 55 and took personally the findings that motivation drops off after 53. Ageism! I'm sure Hermundur is a fine man and an upstanding psychologist, but I felt denigrated, vilified and furious. I determined to write him a very angry letter.

But in the end I couldn't be bothered.

I don't think this applies to Ron and probably many of us in the TTC however I did retire early from work in my late fifties because I lacked the passion and patience of which I previously had: maybe there is some truth in this.

Sally