

The



Buzz

23rd February 2021

Big-hearted bakes bring out the smiles

FEBRUARY 14th may have dawned cold and miserable but there were a lot of warm and friendly greetings waiting for the handful of volunteers delivering nearly 50 boxes of Valentine's Day treats. 'It was the highlight of my day,' said Michele Wheatley who, with fellow bakers Amanda Sanders, Clare Bebbington and Sandra Hetterley, baked over 200 cakes and biscuits, raising nearly £100 for the Café's charities: The Mark Townsend Trust, The Door and Longfield Hospice Care



Laryssa Hart shared this picture of her children Lille and Jake snuggled up warm with a Valentine's Day treat.

Just bee-eautiful!

DOREEN Pierce has created one of our most beautiful bees for this edition's masthead - perfect for our special edition celebrating the natural world. Inspiring!



Go wild in the country: Scarlett Barley holds a common lizard, just one of the many species regularly spotted around the village. See pages 3-6 for our Buzz Wildlife Special

TIME FOR A SPRING FLING!

THE COMMUNITY Café, Church and Avening WI are championing a blooming brilliant idea to bring a bit of cheer to the village. They are urging everyone to have a bit of a 'spring fling' and to put up bunting, hang a garland on a front door, display a painting in a window, or decorate a tree....anything that can be seen from the street and raise a smile.

'It'll add a bit of cheer for our walks around the village,' says Beverley Rymer, who is one of the Café customers behind the idea - and people all over the village are

already getting ready to say it with flowers on gates, walls, trees and doors.

Avening's Flower Power week begins on the weekend of 13/14th March. Anyone joining in is encouraged to leave their displays up until the following weekend, which is the vernal equinox - the official first day of spring.

'It's a work in progress,' says Jennie South. 'But people are already coming up with wonderful ideas. It's struck a chord - I think we could all do with a bit of colour in our lives right now!'

Diary

Noah's Ark Walks

Pairs of walkers have been out and about in the village on Tuesday mornings. The Cafe can help you find a muddy buddy to join your Tuesday exercise. Contact Wendy Jennings on wendyjennings2010@gmail.com

All month

Roadside Library for readers of all ages, outside 6 Old Hill.

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.

Watch this space for details of a spring litter-pick



And start saving your seeds for the re-opening of the 'stall on the wall' outside 14 High Street.

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

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Caught by The Buzz

Alex Adcock

It's a grey Lockdown Day...what better way of spending an hour than talking about books!

Absolutely! Although I wasn't always a reader. My parents and sister were HUGE readers when I was growing up, and I simply wasn't. The turning point was Wuthering Heights – as a young teenager I loved the passion of it all, and it changed everything for me in terms of reading. Mind you, I just get frustrated with Cathy nowadays...

So do you think that books change depending on our state of mind?

Yes - Lockdown has really proved that to me. I really need books to give me the right thing at the moment. I used to persevere with a 'difficult' book, but now I don't. I'm reading *The Dig* by John Preston, which is perfect. Light novels, written well...that's what I need!

Do you think it's the same with children? Do they need different things from their reading in Lockdown?

I'm not sure. My own kids love me reading to them. My sister who is a teacher says that as long as there's reading going on somehow, it's a good thing.

You look after the school library – has its role changed over

Lockdown?

If there was ever a need for libraries it's now. When I go into the school I can hear and see that the library is being used - it's great to know that!

The School is also big on World Book Day, which is in March. Must be tough this year...

We're working on it! We've had some wonderful Book Days in the past, more than just 'dress up as your favourite character' exercises. We haven't quite got our heads round what to do this year – perhaps happiness will be a theme...books that make us happy.

So what books make you happy?

I love working in the Yellow-Lighted Bookshop, but I think the expectation is that if you work in a bookshop you'll have a high-brow answer to that question. That's simply not true, even though I still feel the pressure to say something other than 'Sophie Kinsella' when asked for recommendations! I read *The Enchanted April* by Elizabeth Von Arnim recently. That definitely made me happy. Is there a better place to be than Tuscany in April?
Tell you what, when it's April here let's have a Prosecco and keep talking...
You're on!



Alex reading to children at the Cafe in 2019



THE BUZZ

Wildlife

SPECIAL



OUR VILLAGE is rich in wildlife. Last year's Big Avening Wildlife Watch identified around 200 species of animals and plants spotted by residents over just one weekend in May. These results included nine birds that are 'Red-listed' birds of conservation concern such as the skylark and corn bunting, and 13 Amber-listed birds, including the swift, kingfisher and dipper.

It's rich not just because we have healthy populations of common species, but because we have less common species seen regularly: nuthatches, pyramidal orchids, house martins, slow worms and common lizards, for example. Even more extraordinary are the occasional sightings of some of our

many protected species - horseshoe bats, otters and the dingy skipper butterfly, all of which were spotted somewhere in the village last year.

As spring arrives, we can expect to hear a louder dawn chorus as birds prepare for the mating season. Frogs and common toads are also mating; queen bumbles are looking for new nest sites and reptiles and hedgehogs will start to emerge from hibernation as the weather warms. Swallows will arrive in mid-April along with the swifts who will fill the skies with their excited screeches - and so summer begins.

Sadly, it's not all good news. Litter is an increasing problem; we have lost many of our ash trees; well-intentioned but poorly executed tree

planting will have an impact on hitherto little disturbed and valuable areas; the sound of chainsaws cutting and clearing during bird-nesting seasons is disheartening and the unnecessary loss of many of our village trees is always sad. And last summer the stream dried out as a result of the building of dams and other water extraction projects upstream, which had a big impact on our riparian environment.

But if the pandemic has taught us anything, it's to treasure what is on our doorstep. Talking to anyone during the Lockdowns means a conversation that turns to how lucky we are to live somewhere so beautiful. Lockdowns will end, but long may our gratitude continue.

A Wildlife Map of Avening



Elephant hawk moth and caterpillar



Pyramidal orchid



Meadow Brown Butterfly



nuthatch back on the bird feeders

Nuthatch Star Lane



Honey bee



Frogs



Sainfoin



Grey heron



Field grasshopper



Teasel



Common lizard



Green woodpeckers



Sparrowhawk



Sheltering oak Roundabout Lane



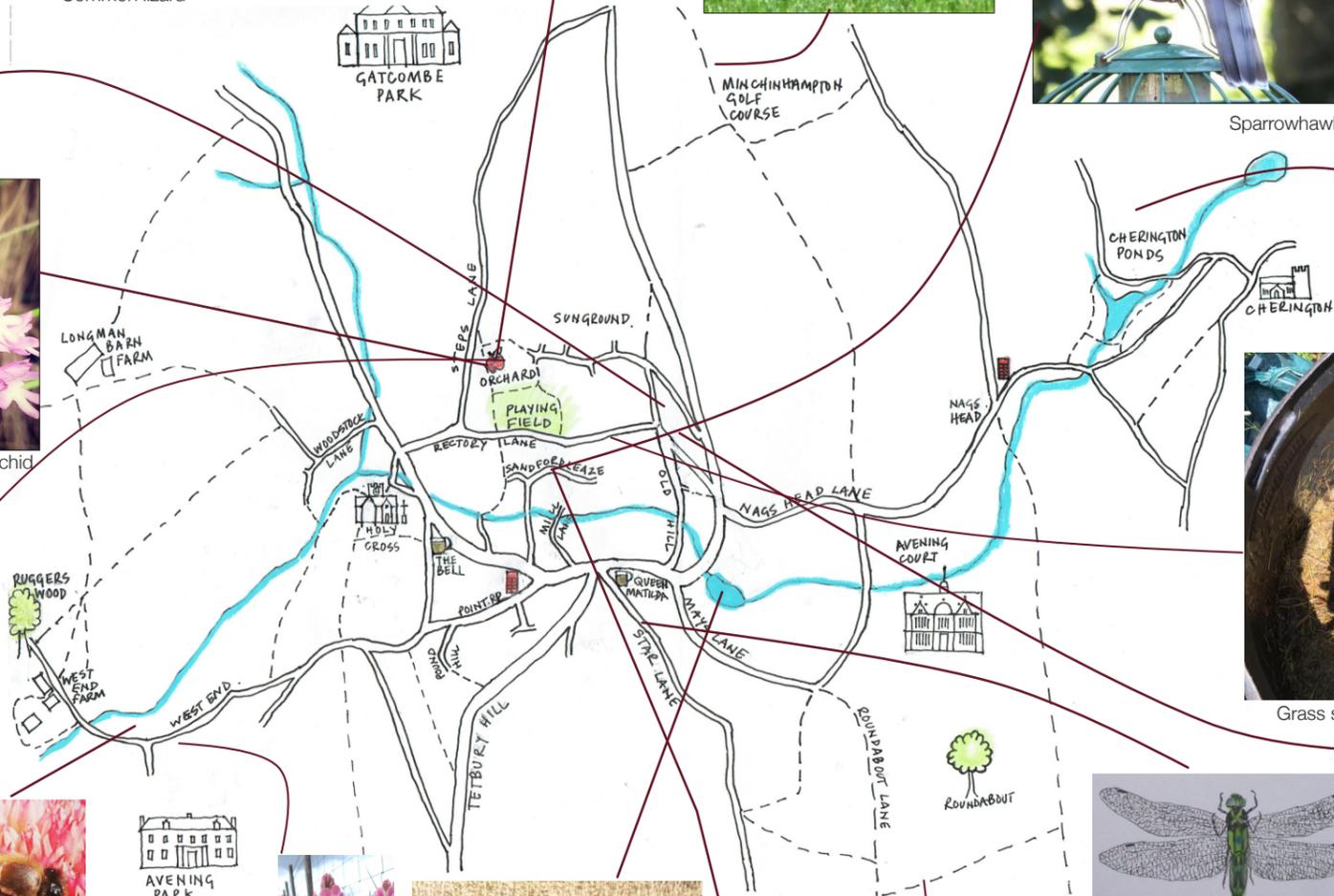
Hare Hazel Wood



Grass snake and slow worms



Muntjac



AVENING DADE

Marbled White Butterfly Rodborough Common



Southern hawker dragonfly



Wild carrot



Toad



Heart and dart moth



What have you spotted around the village? Share your photos and drawings on the Wild About Avening Facebook or with The Buzz via ccbebbbs@gmail.com. We may even turn it into a poster!

Credits
 Map: Pip Morris
 Illustrations: Gilian Bulmer-Davison (hare); Louise Watson (nuthatch, dragonfly); Sheltering oak (Wendy Rhodes)
 Photographs: Phoebe Carter, Andrew English, Richard King, Jane Beardsell, David Laycock, Norman Garrett.
 Previous Page: White plume moth by Peter Marciniak, heron by Louise Watson



Hedgehog and fox by Phoebe Carter. Otter and heron by Mel and Richard Young. Badger and rat (or 'big mouse' as we prefer) by Richard King

WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING

THINK THERE'S not much night-life in Avening? Think again. This is one lively village in the wee small hours.

Night vision cameras disclose a whole different world, if you're patient and reasonably tech-savvy. Foxes, hedgehogs, badgers, mice, voles and rats are regular stars of our smaller screens. And there have been the occasional super-stars: one of the most exciting night time spots was the otter in the river at

Sandford Leaze. And as dawn breaks, birds return for some really magical moments; the heron captured by Mel and Richard Young was caught at first light.

'It's worth setting up the camera to take some wide shots of the garden first,' says Richard King. Then you can begin to focus on where the hedgehogs come in, or a wall full of mice, or even a rat hole.'

Over time you can identify regular visitors and track their habits. Hedgehogs are especially rewarding - competing, mating and foraging.

It's not just sights, but sounds too. The noise of foxes mating is a raise-the-dead racket; the calls of tawny and barn owls can be heard on many evenings.

Night vision cameras are available from Wildlife World at Chavenage (01666505333).



The snowdrops are a real treat this year, especially those blanketing the slopes by Cherington Lake, pictured above.



Ellie speaks from the heart about eating disorders

THIS EDITION'S piece is a little different to previous ones. It touches a matter incredibly close to my heart and the reason I feel so passionately about promoting conversation around well-being and mental health. This piece discusses eating disorders.

From 1st to 7th March, it is National Eating Disorder Awareness Week. In the UK, over 1 million people have an eating disorder and several years ago, I faced disordered eating myself, developing an unhealthy relationship with food and exercise. The statistics clearly show the scale of the problem, with anorexia having the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric disorder.

Lockdown has been tough for everyone, but it has been especially hard for those who struggle with their mental health. Facilities that people rely on - sports clubs, art

groups and community services, like our lovely café - have had to shut, leaving many feeling isolated and lonely.

Beat is a charity offering vital support to those with eating disorders. Over the pandemic they have seen a huge increase in demand, which is extremely worrying. They need help and donations more than ever...

On Saturday 6th March, I will be holding a 1½ hour Zoom dance fitness session from 10am to 11.30am. There will be a small £2 sign-up fee and all money raised will go to Beat. (You don't have to take part in the full session - we simply ask that all participants join for 10am to prevent tech issues). If you wish to join us, please email elliehsanders@gmail.com. I will send you the link to the justgiving page to donate your £2.



People

In touch with his feminine side

Tony Slater was channelling his inner Jackie Weaver at the recent Parish Council meeting. How do we know this? Because he changed his Zoom name to that of the formidable meeting clerk from the Cheshire Association of Local Councils. And before you ask, yes he has read the standing orders. Don't mess with Chairman Tony!

Helen's a school baking star

It was Helen Haiselden's turn to bake for the Avening School teachers' elevenses this week. Lemon drizzle muffins, we hear. Look at these beauties!



David discovers *Dulcima*

Let's face it, after nearly a year of Lockdowns, those of us lucky to have online streaming services have scoured them for pretty much anything...ANYTHING... that is vaguely watchable. David Oliver found a particular gem (I think 'gem' is the right word) in the deep, dark outer limits of Netflix: *Dulcima*, a 1970s adaptation of an HE Bates novel which was filmed in and around Minchinhampton. He even spotted his own house in it. For a more lyrical glimpse of the village in times past, we suggest a Laurie Lee-scripted film for the West of England, free on BFI Player



Giving them the old razzle-dazzle: Megan Wheatley, who is studying musical theatre at Trinity Laban University in Greenwich, turned her garage into a 'blinging dance studio' to run nine (yes, nine) Zoom musical dance classes for local dance studio Dazzle at half term. Over 80 children joined the morning sessions and 25 adults strutted their stuff in the evening sessions. 'It was good fun and I hope to do more for Dazzle,' says Megan. 'We aimed to offer accessible, fun and positive dance classes with achievable routines and Megan has done just that,' says organiser Sian Davis-Berry, who runs an extensive programme of online dance classes (www.dazzleworkshops.co.uk).

BABY BABY!

WE'RE DELIGHTED to share the lovely news of some very special Lockdown arrivals in the village!.

Loyal Cafe customer Tracy Allen and her partner Tris welcomed Luke into their lives in February. 'We're over the moon,' says Tracy.

John and Hannah Fitzgerald moved into Avening last summer, and Monty Atwood Fitzgerald was born in September.

'One of the benefits of having Monty and moving into a new house during Lockdown is that it's kept us busy!' says John. 'Although I think like everyone we're looking forward to a little more freedom in the coming months.'

Here's wishing Luke, Monty and all the other Avening Lockdown babies - as well as their proud parents - good health and much happiness from all of us at the Cafe!

Buzz Food

Umida's baklava

NOT ALL of the Cafe's fans live in the village. Some are thousands of miles away: family members who have left the UK and friends (and friends of friends) who have heard about the Cafe one way or another. One of them is Umida Yuldosheva, who lives in Uzbekistan, and we thought we'd ask her for a traditional recipe for baklava - a delicious pastry from the region, enjoyed all year round but especially at Novruz, a traditional holiday in March celebrating the new year and the arrival of spring. This recipe originally comes from the Azerbaijani grandmother of a friend of hers. And the secret? It's all about how you toast the walnuts.....and a bit of trial and error!

Ingredients

- 1 glass of milk
- 1 teaspoon dried yeast
- 1 spoon sugar
- 1 kg plain flour
- 100g butter, melted
- 1 egg, lightly beaten

- 1 kilo walnuts
- 1 kilo sugar
- 3 tspns cardamom (seeds only, crushed)
- Vanilla
- Butter, saffron and honey to taste

Method

Warm milk and add yeast and a spoon of sugar. When it has activated add to flour with melted butter and egg.

Knead to make a soft dough and leave for around an hour to rise.

Toast walnuts lightly, crush and combine with sugar, cardamom and vanilla.

Roll out dough VERY thinly. This recipe requires eight layers. Butter each layer and sprinkle with walnut filling

Butter the last layer and score into diamond shapes.

Bake for 10 minutes, take it out and pour over melted butter mixed with a pinch of saffron to taste.

Bake for a further 5-7 minutes then pour over a syrup made from honey and a little water.