



Community Connections

North Berwick Coastal

February 2021

Love in a Cold Climate! By Deborah Ritchie

The evenings are getting lighter and the green shoots of the spring bulbs are emerging daily. So with the signs of hope for springtime I think I can hang in there for a wee bit longer during this winter lockdown. I think from conversations with friends and family lockdown does feel more difficult this time around and I have noticed people with heads down trudging along the beach. I suspect we are all a little jaded! But soon we shall be back with a spring in our step I am sure.

February has long been celebrated as the month of love. St Valentine's Day was a feast day in the middle of February to 'Christianise' the pagan celebration of Lupercalia. Lupercalia was a Roman fertility festival that celebrated the beginning of spring and the pairing off of women with men by lottery. The festival was outlawed at the initial rise of Christianity as it was considered unchristian.

But Pope Gelasius 1 replaced Lupercalia with St Valentine's Day at the end of the 5th Century. It came to be celebrated as a day of romance from about the 14th century.

I think for many people a celebration of love can be a painful time and the over commercialisation of Valentine's Day can make it particularly difficult. I often wonder if it would be more helpful for us to consider and celebrate all the different types of love we will have encountered in our lives? It can be helpful to remember the love of family and friends and the compassion shown to us by strangers. Some of the most nourishing aspects of these strange times have been the love and care from friends and the compassion and care shown by our community. One of the meditative exercises I have started doing this year is to make a note or just think about one thing I am grateful for each day. I have found

this a very supportive exercise to do, particularly during these stressful times. Gratitude can be uplifting and healing. I love this quote by Voltaire who said, "*Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.*" And I also like this humble Vietnamese proverb "*When eating fruit remember those who planted the tree.*"

For people who are bereaved whether recently or many years ago Valentine's Day can pose many challenges and bring to the fore the loss of a beloved partner. Special days can trigger powerful emotions and Valentine's Day can be cruel because it stresses our loss of love and romance. I worked as a volunteer for CRUSE Bereavement care and there were a number of suggestions that people found useful. (See below)

So as we move in to spring and leave the dark days of this COVID 19 winter behind us we can look forward to things getting better and being together very soon.



Violet and Primrose are the birth flower of February.



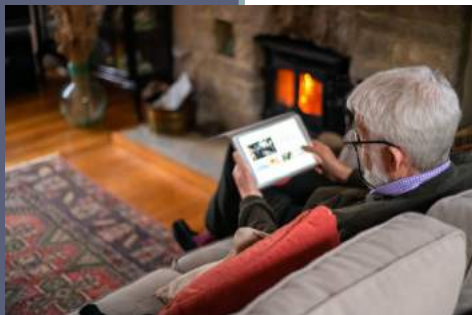
To any of our members and volunteers having a birthday this month, we wish you a very

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

North Berwick Community Connections is a registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) (SC 050505)

- * You may find it useful to make a special time to remember the good loving memories of your relationship with your loved one. Those memories that bring a smile to your face.
- * Go to a favorite place and spend time with your memories.
- * Light a candle to honour your loved one or write them a love letter.
- * You could post their photo on Facebook, asking friends to share their memories.
- * The important thing is to be kind to YOU and to be gentle with yourself. There is no right way to grieve and you will find your own ritual that works for you.

SCONEntine's Day Celebration



Credit: photographer Peter Kindersley and licence [Centre of Aging Better](#)

Virtual Coffee with Community Connections Monday, 15 February 13:00 – 14:00

Have you got the hang of chatting on video calls over this past year? Care to brighten up the winter days by seeing the faces of some other Community Connections members? Take some first steps to rebuilding your social life (without even leaving home).

While we would all love to meet up at Scone

Café, later in the year (with a bit of luck)! We think it's time for an alternative celebration to look forward to in February.

If we have your email address or smartphone number, we will send you a Zoom link to click on the day. It's pretty easy, honest. But talk to your befriender if you are unsure and want to talk it over first.

If you have not told us your email address, please let Carol (or your befriender) know and we

will add you to the list.

You will need a smartphone or tablet or laptop; and a Wi-Fi connection.

If you would like to get involved but feel you do not have what you need please get in touch with Carol.

We look forward to seeing you there - get your coffee cup and cake stand ready.

Warm wishes, Carol



More than a box of chocolates

The Bass Rock Community Group were delighted that the homemade box, chocolates and Christmas cards delivered back in December, were so well received. This was a wonderful community effort to lift spirits and bring some joy before Christmas.

"The box I received from Bass Rock Community Group is a very nice attractive box. It's a pleasure to look at and hold; in fact it's one of the nicest things I got this Christmas. It's covered inside and out and I particularly like the red colour on the box. I am now using the box to store little things in."

"Just to say thank you very much for the adorable Christmas card and cookies. I loved the words in the card and the reindeer were so cute!"

"The truffles did not make it to under the tree!. I have kept my little box as a memento."

"It was so lovely to be remembered like this. The card was beautiful, the box was so pretty and the treats were absolutely delicious."

The Christmas cards were made by P7 and P6 pupils from Law Primary school. Lottie Mac-Robert-Ross promoted this idea and with support from Sally Penman, Depute Head Teacher and class teacher, Marie-Louise Santini, produced beautiful cards. (Image: P7s Law Primary School)

Learning origami skills, The Bass Rock Community Group made beautiful gift boxes and bows to contain homemade truffles, sweets and shortbread.

Working alongside Community Connections, Carol Stobie and her volunteers delivered 95 boxes of yummy treats with the Christmas cards. In addition, a further 35 boxes have been delivered to the North Berwick Day Centre for distribution to their members.



North Berwick in Bloom by Libby Morris

The NBIB volunteers didn't anticipate another lockdown so soon into the new year but luckily, we had so many of us out working in November and December we had completed most of the tidying, weeding and clearing up leaves that we needed to do by the end of the year. This meant that the first few weeks of January could be taken as holiday and we could relax, put out food for the birds and browse through the seed catalogues to choose flowers and vegetables to plant for the summer.

This is also a good time to appreciate house plants – the photo below is of my *Schlumbergera gaertneri*, better known as the Christmas cactus. This plant used to belong to my Mum and she always took great pride in it flowering in time for Christmas. I inherited it over 10 years ago and could never get it to flower at all. I persevered though, and last year it was outside all summer in a shady border and brought indoors in October. I am delighted that this seems to have finally done the trick and I will be doing the same again this year.

It's definitely worth it for the spectacular Christmas display!

You can follow North Berwick in Bloom on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/NorthBerwickinBloom/> or visit their website <https://www.facebook.com/NorthBerwickinBloom/>



From Selling Compost to Dirleton Village Markets on the Green By Anne Orr

Sometimes good ideas for community projects grow organically from small beginnings. During the Spring Lockdown, keen Dirleton gardeners were ready to nurture seeds and plug plants when garden centers closed and compost was not to be had. Our minister, David Graham suggested a solution. Turnbells in North Berwick was also forced to suddenly close and had a yard full of bags of compost and no customers. So it all came up in a lorry to my outside shed, and residents came up by car to purchase – all suitably distanced and paid for by bank transfers! Dirleton Good Neighbours then spread our wings and we went on to get some bulk supplies of bread flour, plug plants and even honey-based local hand creams, and enjoyed playing shops.

Sadly Dirleton was unable to hold its 2020 Fete and Games, and 2021 looked doubtful. But Haddington Farmers Market has been able to take place regularly since last summer. It has proved a good model to work out a plan, with East Lothian Council, to support holding community markets during a pandemic on our lovely village Green. We have also been delighted to receive a grant from *Scotland Loves Local* towards the cost of market stall structures.

It was great to be able to hold a small trial Christmas market in the garden of the Castle Inn. It was at very

short notice, involved careful Covid precautions and it rained very hard – but everyone – stallholders and visitors - had a great time.

We are planning on the basis of this success to have further markets as soon as the pandemic allows. It seems a great way of supporting local businesses and community groups and fun for residents.

Anne Orr, Coordinator,
Dirleton Good Neighbours



Bertie and Maddie and Flo by By Elaine Sutherland, NBCCC Secretary



came Bertie a very cute 8 week old wire haired dachshund. It can be noted Bertie also responds to Bertrum, Berticus, Bertie Boo or Bertie Boy depending on who is talking to him, even the vet at his check-up called him Flirty Bertie! We were all quickly transported back to the full on demands of having a puppy; toilet training, command training, teething, late nights, early mornings, I will be honest at points we all thought what have we done!

However as Bertie has grown in size his personality is shining through, he is a character, full of fun, very inquisitive, pretty smart but overall just super friendly, his waggy tail greeting has now escalated to a full body wiggle and bounce, he wants to be everyone's friend and he brings a smile to anyone he meets. My teenagers are in exams years, and as with all their peers facing lots of stress and anxiety over how everything will work out during these strange times, when Bertie sees them he bounds over and you can see the worries melt away even if it is for a short time. What Bertie and our other dogs give is 100% unconditional love, and that is exactly what they need.

I read recently that pets have the 'cuddle chemical' as oxytocin is released when they are interacting with their family or greeting a new friend, this in turn increases feelings of relaxation, trust and empathy. Dogs in particular can be such good companions easing loneliness and encouraging you to get out the house to feel the benefits of fresh air and exercise. Almost all walks with either, two or all three dogs I stop numerous times to have a chat, the ice being broken by comments on the dogs, the Scotties in particular being so rarely seen nowadays, it's amazing how a couple of generations ago so many had them as family pets, and of course the puppy being so cute.

Once Bertie is 1 year old I am planning to look into him training to be a Therapet, he has so much love to give, and I know that many would love the interaction once every couple of weeks, but can't due to circumstances take on the full time commitment of a pet.

If you see us out on one of our walks, we are always happy to stop for a wee natter!

Elaine

If you had said at the beginning of 2020 that I would have 3 dogs by the end of the year I would have responded with 'you have got to be kidding'. With an already busy household including 2 Scottish Terriers Maddie and Flo, who are fabulous but anyone who knows Scotties they are loving but quite determined, single minded dogs, so another was out of the question much to the disappointment of my teenage daughter!

Well fast forward to October last year and like everything else turned upside down in 2020, I had caved and along

Regrets I've had a few by Carol Stobie

Regrets, I've had a few, but then again, too few to mention - My Way, by Paul Anka

If a thing's worth doing, it's worth doing badly. - G.K. Chesterton

What's been your biggest mistake? Or are there too many to count - like me?

Perhaps life is really a series of mistakes and their consequences - yours too? We love sitcoms with characters so hapless their lives seem chaotic, even catastrophic (from Miranda to Fleabag). I was raised in a perfectionist family – always strive to do your very best, be careful, and make sensible choices. But I made loads of mistakes.

Regrets are futile. But I still cringe over the Californian love affair that blew my savings for a man

who'd already changed his mind before I landed, condemning me to a not-fun stay at the YMCA. Or the 'dream job' that uprooted my family, dragging us into a situation I found filled with dark secrets and hostile staff members I dreaded tackling, ending up in a breakdown and an expensive move home.

Risks don't always pay off. But some do, and I wouldn't have the wonderful partner and child, or a home in North Berwick, had it not been for some other risks I took (they might have turned out very differently), and for persisting beyond many disappointments. What's your story? Tell us!

So risks can be worth taking, if not too damaging to self or others. Mistakes enrich us greatly, and endear us to others – who wants a too-perfect friend? Mine are loveably flawed, like me (I hope). So I carry on attempting to draw, playing the ukulele (so badly!), awkwardly striking up conversations with new folk (sometimes ending up with severe embarrassment), and bringing people together where I can (with sometimes magical, sometimes disastrous results). Here's to mistakes.

Carol Stobie, Project Officer, NBCCC

North Berwick Group Practice Update

North Berwick Group practice are so delighted to have completed our first session of Covid vaccinations, on Saturday 16th January for the over 80s. The day went very smoothly and not a drop was wasted. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you to everyone for making the effort to come in for their jab, some of you who haven't crossed your door in nearly 12 months.

We will be in touch with more over 80s in the coming weeks as we receive more of the vaccine. The supply is not as abundant as we had hoped but rest assured as soon as we receive further supplies we'll be in touch with the re-

maining over 80s.

We ask patients to continue to adhere to the Covid 19 rules, regardless of whether you've been vaccinated or not.

Please do not phone the surgery regarding the vaccine. We will get in touch with you. In the meantime please see www.inform.scot

for further information.

Eithne Weddell

Stay at Home

The First Minister's key message on 4th January was that the single best way of staying safe is for people to stay at home. As a result it is only permissible to leave home for a purpose such as work which cannot be done from home, caring responsibilities, essential shopping, exercise and being part of an extended household.

Another key change is that only a maximum of two people from up to two households will be able to meet outdoors. Children aged 11 and under will not be counted in that limit.

For more information visit:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/scotland-in-lockdown/>

Armchair Chats



An online event series by Compassionate Community North Berwick Group Project

As a lead up to a creative and new North Berwick Fringe by the Sea, to be held in the Lodge Grounds (August 2021) we are going to host online 'Armchair Chats'.

The online chats will be a series of relevant topics, linked to the North Berwick Compassionate Community initiative. These will take place from February to June 2021. The events will be available to book via Eventbrite and will be shown on Zoom. Once you book to attend, you will receive a reminder of the event nearer the time.

Tuesday February 23rd 7pm:

1. Update by Compassionate Community Team
2. Music by local singer Harley Loudon
3. Poetry by Hannah Laverty
4. St Columbas Hospice on the 'Compassionate Neighbours Project' due to be piloted
5. Update on the Truacanta Project, who helped our team in community action to support people managing death, dying, loss and care.

Book now to register for the first event by visiting the North Berwick Coastal Health and Wellbeing Association website:

<http://northberwickhealthandwellbeing.co.uk/event/armchair-chat-feb-23-2021>

Future events:

Tuesday March 30th 7pm
 Tuesday April 27th 7pm
 Tuesday May 25th 7pm
 Tuesday June 22nd 7pm

For more information please visit <http://northberwickhealthandwellbeing.co.uk/>



Zumba Gold by Ruth Hunter- Pepper

Come and join Zumba Gold classes online. The 40 minute Zoom classes consist of fun, low impact, easy to follow dance to Latin based music. There are 5 classes a week.

The monthly subscription means you can take an unlimited number of classes at the click of a link on your daily email.

Try a session or two free before you commit and see if you like it. Exercise at your own pace and dance like no one's watching!

For further information contact Ruth at figaroroo@yahoo.co.uk or 07785 707683



Ageing Well have a wide range of activities available for anyone of all abilities.

Including Pilates, Yoga, Zumba, Singing and Tai Chi, for anyone over 50.

During lockdown most of these activities are online, however with guidelines changing often this will

change and we will resume in person as soon as allowed. For the full list of online classes and to find out what might suit your interests please visit Ageing Well website or Facebook page or you can talk to Parvine Jazayeri, Ageing Well Coordinator on pjazayeri@eastlothian.gov.uk or call 07718 117585



Scottish Disability Sport

Scottish Disability Sport Be Active Be Well: Activity and Seminar

Register today and start 2021 by getting or staying active.

Please follow this link to find out more about this award winning programme – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQFyKGGKhL0s>

Be Active Sessions - There are many activity sessions running each week from January through to March via Zoom for you to enjoy, both in the morning and evening.

Please check the [SDS website](#) for the timetable.

Carers of East Lothian

Celebrate Shove Tuesday on 16th February with a pancake and your favourite topping:

Ingredients:

- ◆ 100g plain flour
- ◆ 2 large eggs
- ◆ 300ml milk
- ◆ 1tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil, plus a little extra for frying
- ◆ Lemon wedges to serve (optional)
- ◆ Caster sugar to serve (optional)

Method

STEP 1 - Put 100g plain flour, 2 large eggs, 300ml milk, 1 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil and a pinch of salt into a bowl or large jug, then whisk to a smooth batter.

STEP 2 - Set aside for 30 mins to rest if you have time, or start cooking straight away.

STEP 3 - Set a medium frying pan or crepe pan over a medium heat and carefully wipe it with some oiled kitchen paper.

STEP 4 - When hot, cook your pancakes for 1 min on each side until golden, keeping them warm in a low oven as you go.

STEP 5 - Serve with lemon wedges and caster sugar, or your favourite filling. www.bbcgoodfood.com



East Lothian Libraries Open for

Click 
& Collect 

Service Available from Dunbar, Haddington, Musselburgh and North Berwick Libraries

Hearing aid batteries can be collected from these buildings

Appointments essential

Please telephone 01620 827827 and ask for the relevant library

Or check our website for guidance:

<https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/libraries>

Chocolate Mug Cake by pARTcapate_nb

Ingredients:

- 4 tbsp self-raising flour
- 4 tbsp caster sugar
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 medium egg
- 3 tbsp milk
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil or sunflower oil
- a few drops of vanilla essence
- 2 tbsp chocolate chips, nuts, or raisins
- 1 tbsp of nutella (optional)



Method

STEP 1 - Add 4 tbsp self-raising flour, 4 tbsp caster sugar and 2 tbsp cocoa powder to the largest mug you have (to stop it overflowing in the microwave) and mix with a fork.

STEP 2 - Add 1 medium egg and mix in as much as you can, but don't worry if there's still dry mix left.

STEP 3 - Add the 3 tbsp milk, 3 tbsp vegetable or sunflower oil and a few drops of vanilla essence and mix again, before adding 2 tbsp chocolate chips, nuts, or raisins, if using, and mix again. Once mixed, if using, add 1 tbsp of nutella to the top of the mix and sprinkle a few more chocolate chips.

STEP 4 - Centre your mug in the middle of the microwave oven and cook on High for 1½ - 2 mins, or until it has stopped rising and is firm to the touch. For added indulgence, add a scoop of ice cream or some double cream.

Developing our Community Connections Newsletter

We would like this newsletter to help connect all of our members, volunteers and friends of the project with the wider North Berwick Coastal Community (see map below).

We would welcome your contributions. Please share with us your stories, ideas, hobbies or news and events that are taking place across North Berwick and the Coastal Villages.

Contact Emma Papakyriakou at newsletter@nbc-communityconnections.org or speak to your befriender or Carol if you need some help emailing in.



North Berwick Coastal Community Connections

Please get in touch with Carol if you would like to build more conversations and connections into your weekly routine. Over February we will continue to offer:

- Befriending calls
- Buddy Walks
- Monthly Newsletter
- *Coffee Connections (*Available only if Scottish Government states East Lothian is in Covid level 1-3)

For more information please contact:

Phone: 07940 203380

Email: carol@nbc-communityconnections.org

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