



# Newsletter

No 26

01/04/2021

Dear Students,

Although this winter has seemed long, Spring is suddenly upon us. Like many of us I love the season of Spring. Time to look forward to lighter evenings, better weather, summer around the corner and a time for renewal and optimism. This Spring seems almost more special as we have spent the last year living with all the difficulties of Covid waiting for better times to arrive. For me, personally, the vaccination programme is a true sign of that renewal and hope. Our lives will soon open up again and the Recovery in Mind team are very much looking forward to seeing many of you over the summer term whether at the allotment or at a face-to-face course. Have a look at the website for more information.

It was lovely to see so many of you at Shaw House for our Easter celebration. I've really missed getting together in person. It reminded me, once again, that our recovery is an ongoing journey, and having company makes any journey not only more bearable, but even enjoyable.

All of us at Recovery in Mind wish you a relaxing Easter.

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## Billy Monger - An Inspirational Story of Recovery

We were having a discussion on the topic 'What Inspires Us' in one of our recent 'Coffee Catch-up' sessions, and considering people whom we find inspiring, both those known to us personally, and well-known figures. One name that came up in our discussion was that of Billy Monger, the 21-year-old British racing driver who raced in British Formula 1 in 2016 and 2017, and was then critically injured in April 2017 after being involved in a collision. This resulted in the amputation of both his legs, one below knee and one above. Billy returned to racing in 2018 after appealing to motorsport's international governing body, the FIA, to change its regulations restricting disabled drivers. He won the Euroformula series Pau Grand Prix in 2019.

In February of this year, Billy Monger completed a triathlon in aid of Comic Relief by walking, cycling and kayaking a distance of 140 miles (225 km) over four days, a journey he described as the "toughest physical challenge I've ever had to take in my life".

I happened to hear Billy being interviewed on the radio a couple of weeks ago (Radio 2, 'Good Morning Sunday' on 14<sup>th</sup> March), and was struck by a comment he made about his recovery after his accident. He reported that he had had great support from the people around him, and significantly from his doctor, who had focussed on the things that he *would* be able to do, rather than the things he wouldn't. He stated that "little switch" in his mind made all the difference, and he realized that his life would carry on, it would just "look a bit different". I found this so powerful, and it reminded me that whatever the nature of a person's recovery - whether as a result of physical illness, disability or accident, or a mental health challenge - that decision to focus on what we *can* do instead of what we can't, of what *is* possible and achievable, is so, so important. Our lives may well look different following whatever we've experienced, but they can still be full of potential and fulfilment.

I'll close with a statement Billy made about his recent challenge, which I also found hugely thought-provoking and inspiring:

"The main thing I learnt from my Comic Relief challenge...It's quite scary when you have to push yourself to new levels. To try new things. But...once you let yourself go there the only thing scary about it is realizing how much higher you can go than you ever thought."

Source: BBC News 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021

Cath



## Some Tips for Mental Health Spring Cleaning

In springtime we think about giving our home a deep cleaning to spruce it up and get it ready for the coming year. Have you ever thought of doing the same for your mind? Decluttering your brain is just as important as organizing your home. Here are some tips for mental health spring cleaning.



1. **Start Journaling.** Keep a journal of your thoughts, worries, fears, and upsets. This helps release them from your mind and allows you to see them in black and white on paper so gives you more perspective on them. Alternatively, you can use the journal for capturing any internal monologue and include the positive thoughts too. When you look back at what you have written, you can invariably gain perspective and understand yourself better.

2. **Drop a Bad Habit.** Pick an area of your life that has an impact on your mental health. For many of us, this might be diet or exercise. Make an effort to drop the bad habit and replace it with a healthier option. Instead of lazy Sundays where nothing gets achieved for example, maybe switch to lazy Sunday afternoons after a run and a healthy snack.



3. **Get out and about.** Dust off your walking boots or 'borrow' a friend's dog for a few hours and get outside for some fresh air and to 'blow the cobwebs of winter' away. Nothing refreshes the mind as well as some moderate activity outdoors in the spring sunshine.

4. **Tackle Projects You've Been Putting Off.** We all have a mental list of projects we really need to tackle. Start your "mental health spring cleaning" by writing down all the things that you've been putting off, like repairs to your home or going to the doctor and making the necessary appointments to get everything sorted. Lists are a very useful way of 'holding ideas' for you rather than cluttering your mind with them (or forgetting them).

5. **Build Positive Relationships.** We all have people in our lives who we care for, but with whom we don't have the healthiest or most enjoyable relationships. Instead of spending time prioritizing those people who are more 'hard work', consider dedicating your time to positive friendships/people instead.

6. **Make Gratitude a Priority.** One great way to promote a healthy mind is to take some time to consider everything that you are grateful for. You can do this in several ways. If you'd like to make a daily list, for example, then set aside some time to do the activity every day. You can also take a few moments every day and mentally check off all your blessings.

7. **Kick Negative Thoughts into the 'long grass'.** Chances are good you have enough on your mind without negative thoughts bouncing around. Consciously push those thoughts out and refocus on something positive instead. How about using the mantra 'I can do it!' ICIDI

8. **Start a New Hobby.** Consider starting a new hobby or pass-time, to help spend your time constructively. A mind occupied with an interesting activity is a happier one. Be inventive and think out of the box.... or just pick up a jigsaw!



9. **Change Your Perspective.** Accept that you're not perfect and neither is the world around you. Instead of focusing on negativity, look to the moments of progress and joy instead.

10. **Polish up your self-compassion.** For those of you who have attended the RiM self-compassion course, remind yourself of the various issues by re-reading the notes you have. For those who have not done the course, why don't you look online to see what information you can find and take care of yourself by making some time each day for self-care and to meet your own needs as a priority.

Now's a good time to get started on your Mental Health Spring Cleaning! Good luck with it all!

## Allotment Sessions

We are very pleased to welcome students who have completed the Welcome to Recovery course to our latest venture - the Newbury allotment sessions. 'Sport in Mind' have invited us to use part of their allotment (off Craven Road, Newbury) on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for RiM sessions. The area is very quiet and calm and has 2 large polytunnels so even if it is poor weather we have somewhere to shelter (with appropriate ventilation). It is easy to get there from Newbury town centre and we suggest you wear clothes appropriate for being outdoors. It's probably easier to bring your own refreshments and mug but we plan to have hot water available and tea and coffee as it may be thirsty work! Initially we will need to set up our growing projects together, but we will also have the option of doing other activities on the site (using the chairs and tables in the polytunnels or during the better weather, outdoors).



### Allotment 'Open day' visits (for students who have completed Welcome to Recovery)

In order to introduce you to the facilities and show you around, we would like to invite interested students to sign up for a '1 hour slot' visit on either Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> April or Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup> April (between 9.30 and 10.30 or 11 to 12) and join us at the allotment. We intend to remain socially distanced and keep the attendance numbers within the allowed 'norms' for the time. This should give students a taster to see if they wish to get more involved with sessions on the allotment in the future. We'd love to hear your ideas too! Please book via the website (free courses, step 3).

### Allotment workshop sessions (for students who have completed Welcome to Recovery)

Initially, after our 'Open Day' visits, the following Tuesday or Thursday allotment sessions will be open for interested students to sign up to one morning each. Depending on take-up of these sessions we may be able to offer further mornings to individuals as the weeks progress. We are very aware that the CV19 restrictions will change, as will individual student's needs and abilities so we want to remain as flexible as possible to take all of this in to account. We are ever hopeful that sessions on the allotment will allow small numbers of people to safely meet up (at 2m distance) and start various positive projects together, which in turn moves their recovery journeys forward.



# 'Planting' Your Imaginary RiM Spring Garden or Allotment!

For the Growing of Your Daily Life.....(adapted from the internet!)

## **Plant Three Rows of Peas**

- Peace of Mind
- Peace in your Heart
- Peace and tranquility outdoors on the allotment

## **Plant Four Rows of Squash**

- Squash Isolation and feeling cut off from others
- Squash Indifference
- Squash Grumbling
- Squash Selfishness

## **Plant Four Rows of Lettuce**

- Lettuce be Thoughtful
- Lettuce be Kind
- Lettuce be Patient
- Lettuce really Care about One Another



## **No Garden is Complete Without Turnips**

- Turnip for Recovery in Mind sessions!
- Turnip to Help One Another
- Turnip to become involved with things again

## **To Conclude Our Allotment, We Must Have Thyme**

- Thyme for Each Other
- Thyme for Family
- Thyme for Friends (and other students at RiM)
- Thyme to nurture yourself

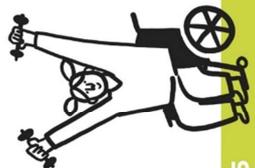
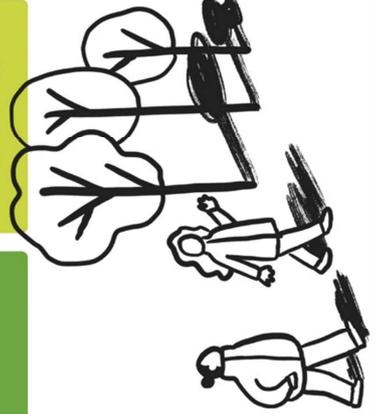


Water Freely with Patience and Cultivate with Love.

There is Much Produce in Your Garden Because You Reap What You Sow.

# Active April 2021



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p><b>5</b> Eat healthy and natural food today and drink lots of water</p> 	<p><b>6</b> Turn a regular activity into a playful game today</p> 	<p><b>7</b> Do a body-scan meditation and really notice how your body feels</p> 	<p><b>1</b> Commit to being more active this month, starting today</p> 	<p><b>2</b> Listen to your body and be grateful for what it can do</p>	<p><b>3</b> Spend as much time as possible outdoors today</p>	<p><b>4</b> Have a day free from TV or screens and get moving instead</p> 
<p><b>12</b> Set yourself an exercise goal or sign up to an activity challenge</p>	<p><b>13</b> Move as much as possible, even if you're stuck inside</p>	<p><b>14</b> Make sleep a priority and go to bed in good time</p>	<p><b>15</b> Relax your body &amp; mind with yoga, tai chi or meditation</p>	<p><b>16</b> Get active by singing today (even if you think you can't sing!)</p>	<p><b>17</b> Go exploring around your local area and notice new things</p>	<p><b>18</b> Make time to run, swim, dance, cycle or stretch today</p> 
<p><b>19</b> Have a 'no screens' night and take time to recharge yourself</p>	<p><b>20</b> Spend less time sitting today. Get up and move more often</p>	<p><b>21</b> Focus on 'eating a rainbow' of multi-coloured vegetables today</p>	<p><b>22</b> Regularly pause to stretch and breathe during the day</p>	<p><b>23</b> Enjoy moving to your favourite music. Really go for it</p>	<p><b>24</b> Go out and do an errand for a loved one or neighbour</p>	<p><b>25</b> Get active in nature. Feed the birds or go wildlife-spotting</p> 
<p><b>26</b> Try a new online exercise, activity or dance class</p>	<p><b>27</b> Take an extra break in your day and walk outside for 15 minutes</p>	<p><b>28</b> Find a fun exercise to do while waiting for the kettle to boil</p>	<p><b>29</b> Meet a friend outside for a walk and a chat</p>	<p><b>30</b> Become an activist for a cause you really believe in</p> 		

**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS**

**Happier · Kinder · Together**

# The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame

## Chapter One - The River Bank

The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home. First with brooms, then with dusters; then on ladders and steps and chairs, with a brush and a pail of whitewash all over his black fur, and an aching back and weary arms. Spring was moving in the air above and in the earth below and around him, penetrating even his dark and lowly little house with its spirit of divine discontent and longing. It was small wonder, then, that he suddenly flung down his brush on the floor, said 'Bother!' and 'O blow!' and also 'Hang spring-cleaning!' and bolted out of the house without even waiting to put on his coat. Something up above was calling him imperiously, and he made for the steep little tunnel which answered in his case to the gravelled carriage-drive owned by animals whose residences are nearer to the sun and air. So, he scraped and scratched and scrabbled and scrooged and then he scrooged again and scrabbled and scratched and scraped, working busily with his little paws and muttering to himself, 'Up we go! Up we go!' till at last, pop! His snout came out into the sunlight, and he found himself rolling in the warm grass of a great meadow.



'This is fine!' he said to himself. 'This is better than whitewashing!' The sunshine struck hot on his fur, soft breezes caressed his heated brow, and after the seclusion of the cellarage he had lived in so long the carol of happy birds fell on his dulled hearing almost like a shout. Jumping off all his four legs at once, in the joy of living and the delight of spring without its cleaning, he pursued his way across the meadow till he reached the hedge on the further side.

It all seemed too good to be true. Hither and thither through the meadows he rambled busily, along the hedgerows, across the copses, finding everywhere birds building, flowers budding, leaves thrusting - everything happy, and progressive, and occupied. And instead of having an uneasy conscience pricking him and whispering 'whitewash!' he somehow could only feel how jolly it was to be the only idle dog among all these busy citizens. After all, the best part of a holiday is perhaps not so much to be resting yourself, as to see all the other fellows busy working.

He thought his happiness as complete when, as he meandered aimlessly along, suddenly he stood by the edge of a full-fed river. Never in his life had he seen a river before - this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver - glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated. By the side of a man who holds one spell-bound by exciting stories; and when tired at last, he sat on the bank, while the river still chattered to him, a babbling procession of the best stories in the world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at least to the insatiable sea.



## *An appreciation of Chapter one of The Wind in the Willows*

*I first read 'The Wind in the Willows' when I was 11, in the first year at secondary school. I thought it was a silly, childish book about animals. I read the first chapter again recently and viewed it completely differently. The first few paragraphs describe how Mole emerges from his house in the early spring, after a long winter and is excited and delighted by what he finds above ground.*

*I could identify with how Mole felt. We have been in lockdown since January 6<sup>th</sup> with very slight easing on March 29<sup>th</sup>. During that time, I followed the rules and stayed home and stayed local. To me staying local meant taking my daily exercise walking from the house in the town. The weather was cold and wet, we had snow, frost, fog, wind and occasionally the sun shone. I began to feel like Mole tucked away in his house. Then the last week in February we drove 5 miles to a local village to go for a walk. The sun shone and the sky was blue. I felt just like Mole, excited and exhilarated by seeing green fields, buds emerging, sheep and horses.*

*Maybe I will read 'The Wind in the Willows' again and look at it differently, not with the eyes of a cynical 11-year-old.*

*Gillian*

### **SPRING**

**Arthur Hugh Clough**

This aged earth that each new spring  
Comes forth so young, so ravishing  
In summer robes for all to see,  
Of flower, and leaf, and bloomy tree,  
For all her scarlet, gold and green,  
Fails not to keep within unseen  
That inner purpose and that force  
Which on the untiring orbit's course  
Around the sun, amidst the spheres  
Still bears her thro' the eternal years.

# April Fools' Day Origins



Seeing as this newsletter has come out on April 1<sup>st</sup>, it seemed appropriate to look at the history of the day. Here is an article taken from history.com.

**April Fools' Day**—celebrated on April 1 each year—has been celebrated for several centuries by different cultures, though its exact origins remain a mystery. April Fools' Day traditions include playing hoaxes or practical jokes on others, often yelling "April Fools!" at the end to clue in the subject of the April Fools' Day prank. While its exact history is shrouded in mystery, the embrace of April Fools' Day jokes by the media and major brands has ensured the unofficial holiday's long life.

**April Fools** - Some historians speculate that April Fools' Day dates back to 1582, when France switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar, as called for by the Council of Trent in 1563. In the Julian Calendar, as in the Hindu calendar, the new year began with the spring equinox around April 1. People who were slow to get the news or failed to recognize that the start of the new year had moved to January 1 and continued to celebrate it during the last week of March through April 1 became the butt of jokes and hoaxes and were called "April fools." These pranks included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April fish), said to symbolize a young, easily caught fish and a gullible person.

**Hilaria** - Historians have also linked April Fools' Day to festivals such as Hilaria (Latin for joyful), which was celebrated in ancient Rome at the end of March by followers of the cult of Cybele. It involved people dressing up in disguises and mocking fellow citizens and even magistrates and was said to be inspired by the Egyptian legend of Isis, Osiris and Seth.

**Vernal Equinox** - There's also speculation that April Fools' Day was tied to the vernal equinox, or first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, when Mother Nature fooled people with changing, unpredictable weather.

**History of April Fools' Day** - April Fools' Day spread throughout Britain during the 18th century. In Scotland, the tradition became a two-day event, starting with "hunting the gowk," in which people were sent on phony errands (gowk is a word for cuckoo bird, a symbol for fool) and followed by Tailie Day, which involved pranks played on people's derrieres, such as pinning fake tails or "kick me" signs on them.

**April Fools' Day Pranks** - In modern times, people have gone to great lengths to create elaborate April Fools' Day hoaxes. Newspapers, radio and TV stations and websites have participated in the April 1 tradition of reporting outrageous fictional claims that have fooled their audiences.

In 1957, the BBC reported that Swiss farmers were experiencing a record spaghetti crop and showed footage of people harvesting noodles from trees.





# 7 Things You Didn't Know About Chocolate

(from the Belgian Chocolate House website)

## White chocolate is not really chocolate

Yes, we've all been lied to. In order to be classified as real chocolate, a product has to contain cocoa solids or cocoa liquor. White "chocolate" contains cocoa butter instead.



## Milk and dark chocolate are actually vegetables (well... kind of)

Milk and dark chocolate are made from cacao beans, that grow on the cacao tree (*Theobroma cacao*), an evergreen from the Malvaceae family (other members of the family include okra and cotton). Chocolate is therefore mostly made of a bean - and beans are legumes (plants that produce a pod with seeds inside it) so... Close enough to vegetables for us!

## Chocolate was once used as money

In ancient Mayan times, the cocoa bean was used as currency as it was considered to be worth more than gold dust. They even restricted the cultivation of the beans, so the value of cocoa beans as money would not go down.

## The world's largest chocolate bar was created by Thorntons

The largest chocolate bar ever documented weighed 5,792.50 kg (12,770 lb 4.48 oz) and was created by Thorntons plc (UK) in Alfreton, Derbyshire, UK on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The chocolate bar measured 4.0 m (13 ft 1.48 in) by 4.0 m (13 ft 1.48 in) by 0.35 m (1 ft 1.78 in). The ingredients were sugar, dried whole milk powder, cocoa butter, cocoa mass, butter oil, and emulsifier. One chocolate bar to go, please!

## Chocolate is healthy

Cocoa contains anti-oxidants, more specifically polyphenols, that protect your body against free radicals. The most important sources of polyphenols are fruit, vegetables, cereals, olives and... chocolate. They can also be found in coffee, tea and wine. Cocoa is also rich in flavonoids, of which the anti-inflammatory and anti-infective effects are well known. The presence of lecithin in chocolate has a positive effect on the cholesterol levels in your blood. Lastly, cocoa has a vasodilating effect: it lowers your blood pressure, with positive consequences for your heart and blood vessels. A chocolate bar a day keeps the doctor away! Right?

## Soldiers in the Revolutionary War were sometimes paid in chocolate

During the Revolutionary War, some soldiers were fighting for freedom in exchange for chocolate. According to research done by the chocolate and candy company Mars, since chocolate didn't spoil, it was used as a ration during the war. Who wouldn't like to be paid in chocolate, right?

**"THERE IS NOTHING BETTER THAN A FRIEND, UNLESS IT IS A FRIEND WITH CHOCOLATE." - CHARLES DICKENS**

## Brussels Airport is the biggest chocolate seller in the world

The airport's website reports that they are the biggest seller of chocolate around the globe. Today, with more than 856 tons of chocolate sold each year in Zaventem, The Belgian Chocolate House is the largest sales point of chocolate worldwide: 1.633 kg per minute, 24/7.

## How to make a papier-mâché chick / decorated egg



You will need the following: balloons, newspaper and other craft paper, PVA glue, a bowl for the glue, a brush, and a little cooking oil. You will also need later: coloured card, white card, strong glue, some ribbon.

First blow up a balloon and brush a little cooking oil on the half that you will cover with paper first. (The oil makes it easier to release the balloon later on – but only use a tiny amount!).



Then begin gluing on the newspaper. It is a bit easier – and less messy – if you cover half the balloon and then let it dry before covering the other half. Put it to dry somewhere warm – in an airing cupboard (on some plastic) – on a windowsill – or above a radiator on a shelf.



Continue adding layers of paper. These ones took six layers. It is easier to cover a layer of newspaper with a plain colour, so that you can see what you have done. On these ones the other colour was orange, so that when it was completed it would not need painting.



After six layers it looks like this. Of the two eggs one was to be made to open sideways, and the other was to have an opening top. The dotted line from top to bottom was to follow when cutting. It is useful to draw a line or two to help match the halves up when they have been cut – that's what the three lines are for.



Cutting the egg in half is best done with a bread knife, so be careful. Saw rather than squash and hold the egg steady. The balloon will pop whilst you cut, it doesn't go bang!

When you open up the halves you can remove what's left of the balloon – it should come out easily.



The hinges need to be put on now. It's worth supporting the egg halves in a bigger bowl for this – as you may well run out of arms to hold things!

The bits of ribbon – about 15cm each – are glued across the egg halves with strong glue. When that glue is dry, cover the ribbon with matching paper.



Opposite side to the hinges is where the bow ribbons go, to tie the egg halves closed. Glue the ribbons on – each ribbon needs to be about 30cm long – whilst the egg halves are again supported in a bowl. Cover the stuck ends of ribbon with matching paper.

Next open up the egg and all around the cut edges stick matching paper to tidy up any jagged edges or frayed areas.



When it's all dry you can decorate your egg shape however you like. With some bits of card these were made into a pair of chicks, but there are endless possibilities...

Inside the egg shapes some tissue paper was glued to cover up the newspaper.

Some chocolate eggs made this chick an Easter gift.



# 'Easter' Wordsearch

S	T	N	U	H	G	G	E	R	E	T	S	A	E	P	G	B	G	O
U	E	V	I	L	A	M	B	S	A	R	E	B	O	R	N	A	N	U
S	G	R	E	E	N	B	U	D	S	S	C	L	Y	S	I	N	I	T
E	T	S	K	S	H	O	P	E	Y	L	H	O	A	P	N	K	M	O
J	U	L	A	U	L	N	N	R	A	I	O	S	D	R	A	H	O	F
F	L	B	C	N	A	E	O	E	D	D	C	S	I	I	E	O	O	H
O	I	I	L	S	W	W	I	J	I	O	O	O	R	N	L	L	L	I
N	P	R	E	H	E	L	S	O	L	F	L	M	F	G	C	I	B	B
O	Y	D	N	I	N	I	S	I	O	F	A	R	D	T	G	D	S	E
I	N	S	M	N	E	F	A	C	H	A	T	A	O	I	N	A	R	R
T	N	C	I	E	R	E	P	E	Y	D	E	W	O	M	I	Y	E	N
C	U	H	S	N	O	I	T	I	D	A	R	T	G	E	R	S	W	A
E	B	I	K	D	E	N	A	M	E	S	H	T	E	G	P	V	O	T
R	R	R	C	O	S	B	L	U	B	G	N	I	R	P	S	T	L	I
R	E	P	I	F	G	N	I	T	S	E	N	S	D	R	I	B	F	O
U	T	I	H	L	G	S	N	U	B	S	S	O	R	C	T	O	H	N
S	S	N	C	E	E	S	T	E	N	N	O	B	R	E	T	S	A	E
E	A	G	J	N	D	E	C	O	R	A	T	I	N	G	E	G	G	S
R	E	M	I	T	R	E	M	M	U	S	H	S	I	T	I	R	B	T

Easter egg hunts  
 Out of hibernation  
 Flowers blooming  
 Easter bonnets  
 Birds chirping  
 Lambs are born  
 Resurrection of Jesus  
 End of lent  
 Spring bulbs  
 Traditions  
 Sunshine  
 Good Friday  
 Blossom  
 Chocolate  
 Renewal

Passion  
 Rejoice  
 Alive  
 Warm  
 British summertime  
 Nest  
 Bank holidays  
 Decorating eggs  
 Spring cleaning  
 Hot cross buns  
 Easter bunny  
 Chicks  
 Springtime  
 Birds nesting  
 Gethsemane

Simnel cake  
 Green buds  
 Daffodils  
 Holidays  
 New life  
 Tulip  
 Hope  
 Eggs



# Easy Easter Bread Pudding

(from left-over hot cross buns)

**4 servings**

It's not an exact science, so don't worry if you're short of an egg or a little low on milk here.

**PREP TIME** 10 minutes

**COOK TIME** 35 minutes

**TOTAL TIME** 45 minutes

## Ingredients:

- 4 to 6 hot cross buns (don't worry, they'll be fine if they're stale or past their sell-by!)
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted (microwave for 10+ seconds)
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups milk
- 2 tbs sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 

## Method:

First, pre-heat your oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Then, break the buns into small pieces into a medium sized baking dish.

Drizzle melted butter over them.

In a medium mixing bowl, combine eggs, milk, sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla.

Beat until well mixed. Pour over the buns, and lightly push down with a

fork until bread is covered and soaking up the egg mixture. (You can leave it soaking for a while?)



Bake in the preheated oven for 35 minutes, or until the top is golden brown and springs back when lightly tapped.

Serve this delightful dish warm with a scoop of ice cream

Great comfort food for challenging times!

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## Something to think about.....

I was listening to a phone-in on the radio this week. The subject was "What has changed for you in the last year that you would like to keep?" Good question I thought!

My answer was - to continue to walk daily in a mindful way observing nature.

What would your answer be?

# Cath's Spring Photo Montage



## Students' Corner

John's love of birds is evident when you speak to him so I cheekily asked if he would write a piece for the newsletter about bird migrations and who is arriving on our shores at this time of the year. Thanks John, it may inspire others to get outside and see who they can 'spot'!

### Bird Migrations

Spring is the time of year to be amazed at how the natural world bounces back after the rigours of a dark and cold winter. The colour of those pale green leaves which burst forth brings me joy every year. Those fresh colours last only a few weeks but I think they are worth waiting for each year. We await too the return of "our" birds who departed the British landscape to avoid the rigours of winter. They have spent several months living in different habitats many miles further south, but with competition rising for food resources on their wintering grounds they have evolved to take on the challenge of migration and head north to breed. It is a high-risk strategy but for many insectivorous birds a necessity.

Gilbert White wrote in his *Natural History of Selbourne* (1789) how each year these arrivals occur at distinct times for each species. The study of these natural rhythms is called Phrenology. As a bird watcher each year I am aware of these arrivals and you can look out for them too. March used to be "the" month but increasingly with a warming climate birds are now noted arriving in February on warm southerly winds.

The first arrivals are those species that wintered not so very far south in southern Spain and North Africa. The Chiffchaff, a small warbler, is one of the first back. There are always a few "early birds" but when the main arrival occurs from mid-March these pioneers are joined by literally hundreds and thousands arriving overnight and they can be heard singing from almost every copse in southern England. They are easily located by their cheerful if monotonous chiff chaff chiff chaff song. Listen out for them - they are everywhere!



*Chiffchaff*

Other birds that have wintered in sub-saharan Africa then begin to arrive. Wheatears like Chiffchaff are nocturnal migrants and they can be found at coastal locations favouring habitats with short grass (ie golf courses) before they continue north to the UK's uplands to breed. Other migrants such as the Sand Martin are day-time migrants, and as they make their way north they will often make stops to feed on flying insects over small lakes, so this is a good place to look for them. As they are daytime migrants they may also roost overnight in adjacent reed beds.



*Cuckoo*

As the season progresses these reed beds begin to echo to the scratchy tunes of first Sedge Warbler and then Reed Warbler. If you are really lucky the eponymous Cuckoo can be heard during April and May along our local Kennet Valley. Several Cuckoos have been fitted with satellite trackers and you can see where they are right now by going to <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/cuckoo-tracking-project>. Swallows which have wintered at the southern tip of Africa have made a 3000-mile trip back averaging 200 miles per day. On arrival they start looking for access to our sheds and also favour places with cattle and horses as these animals attract the larger insects that they feed on. Then the air overhead is full of screaming Swifts as they mop up the tinier insect life carried upwards on air currents. Swifts breed quickly and head south after only a few weeks and the process is already in reverse by the end of August.

It is worth remembering that there is a continual flux of passerines (perching birds), ducks, wading birds, herons and egrets etc throughout the year. The UK, situated on the edge of the European landmass, is located at a migration cross-roads and every day of the year there will be something to notice and marvel at.

John

## Hopeful new 'spring starts'

Attaining and maintaining a state of joy or even simple contentment can be challenging, especially in these most difficult of CV19 times. Data from a course pioneered at the University of Bristol has suggested that taking time to study happiness may be a good way of achieving it. How's that for an idea? Here is the recent article explaining it:

[https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/24/bristol-university-happiness-course-students-found-to-be-more-upbeat?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/mar/24/bristol-university-happiness-course-students-found-to-be-more-upbeat?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

Here at RiM we find some of the self-compassion course elements also help with this area of life. If you've done the course in the past, try to remind yourself of those aspects and re-read your notes. Humans often need repetition to really take on board new ideas. That probably goes for all the RiM handouts from courses you've completed in the past. They are always there as a reminder or refresher and we'll have new courses and sessions available as soon as we are able. Keep an eye on the website for more details.

## External Links

**Looking after your diet.** Despite the necessity of **chocolate eating** at this time of year, here is the link for a very interesting article on: How diet can affect your mental wellbeing.

[How to eat to boost your mental health](#)



## Further Help and Support

If you are struggling with your mental health and feel that you need further help & support here are some contact numbers for you:

**West Berkshire Community Mental Health Team**- 01635 292020

**CRHTT (Crisis Response and Home Treatment Team)**- 0300 365 9999

**Samaritans** - 116 123

**NHS** - 111 (number to call should you feel you are physically unwell with Coronavirus or indeed any other physical health condition which is deteriorating.

**West Berkshire Community Hub** is where you can find out information and support locally for a variety of matters relating to Coronavirus - look at their website (cut and paste this into your internet browser) <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/coronavirus-communityhub>

**The Age UK Berkshire Befriending and Buddying scheme** is now open for referrals. Enquiries should be made directly to Age UK Berkshire by emailing [info@ageukberkshire.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukberkshire.org.uk) or calling 0118 959 4242

999 is for **EMERGENCY** calls only.