

Friends Matter- July 2021

The regular newsletter from The Friends of Brixham Library



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For more details ask in the library.



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Forward

Lockdown, socially distancing and other new phrases have entered our language this last year. Whilst we all wonder how the summer will pan out as the Corona virus continues to be at the back of our minds, we hope that this month's newsletter will send your thoughts in other more positive directions. We have news of the annual shanties & sea songs down on Brixham Harbour and much, much more. We also have an insight into one of our members who suffered a stroke and his return to our Monday Health Walk.

AGM

FOBL will hold its AGM in August. As I write the date cannot be determined, nor whether the AGM will be in person at the library, or by Zoom. It all depends on the next government lockdown easing announcements. We shall send an email just as soon as we can make arrangements that know what the government's guidelines are going to require.

I urge you to attend the AGM since it will be your opportunity to vote in a new committee. All members of the committee of Friends of Brixham Library are resigning, with effect from the August 2021 AGM. We regret taking this action but are proud to look back upon a series of successes in fundraising and in bringing together the local community at social events ranging from monthly coffee mornings to afternoon talks to evening events at the Guardhouse Café. All events and library fundraising activities during our term in office were made possible by a dedicated group of fellow volunteers and the involvement of our enthusiastic members.

Welcome to New Members

We welcome five new members to FoBL. I was reminded recently that joining any new society or organisation can be a bit daunting if you've just moved into the area. However, we hope that long established members will welcome anyone joining, making them feel comfortable being a part of FoBL.

Rogers Story

Introduction

Walking for Health has played an important part of my life since I returned to Brixham just over eleven years ago now. On our return to the town, it gave us an opportunity to meet new people and on reflection many of the activities Sue and I are now involved in have come about as a result of one thing leading to another. In 2015, I undertook major keyhole surgery for cancer and looking back my regular Monday walk was a huge help in my recovery plan not just in the physical sense but also mentally, helping me adjust to a slightly different way of living.

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Roger's Story

However, the core of our Monday walk is to help people back into health after a setback in life, an operation or illness. This leads me to tell what I consider to be a powerful story that conveys why walking for health continues to be so important. It all started back in November 2019 when my close friend and singing pal didn't appear at the start of the Monday walk. Not overly concerned, we began our walk and, in our banter, as we traversed the coastal path to Berry Head, I began to worry that it was unlike Roger to say he was going away for a few days or that he had another appointment that Monday morning. Thus, following our regular coffee break at the Berry Head Hotel, as concern was becoming ever greater, attempts were made to reach him on the phone and then the decision to see whether he was ok by visiting him his home.

We will never know how long he had lain on the floor, but Roger had had a severe stroke. It is at times like this that one takes one's hat off to the emergency services. Roger was immediately taken to Torbay Hospital and then for further recuperation to Newton Abbot. He made good progress there and was able to return home for Christmas with help during his first few weeks with after care. His good health, strength of character and motivation allowed gradual improvement and whilst reliant on a wheelchair he was fortunate in retaining his speech and clarity of thinking.

As someone who had always been used to his own company being alone at home didn't seem to faze him. Friends were on hand to help where they could, as he was no longer in a position to drive. Gradually, opportunities came to get out of the house with shopping visits to Sainsburys and joining walkers for coffee at the end of their walk on a Monday. Then the pandemic hit us all and, in many ways, life wasn't so different for Roger.

The weeks and months of our Covid experience have gone by and with the restart of the Monday walks in May we have been heartened as people have embraced this regular meet and despite anxiousness moments for some about mingling etc. our return numbers each week have been excellent. The wonderful surprise for all of us has been that Roger has been joining us too. Admittedly, friends have made arrangements to take him to the start of the walk along with the wheelchair. However, each week since May, he has walked for the most part from the start of the walk at Centry Road to the lighthouse on Berry Head itself. This has not only been good for him in terms of exercise but also in self-belief, in that he can do these things with a bit of help. The social side of walking and talking with different people and a feeling of normality as well as enjoying being out in the open and a completely different scene from home has all been for the good. Thus, in telling this story it is a reminder that it is very easy for us all to take such everyday pleasures and daily life for granted. Our Monday Health walk ticks all the boxes in terms of life balance, mindfulness, health and welfare and over the years many people like Roger have benefitted from coming along in their varied and different ways. Roger's stroke has meant a very different life for him to lead these last few years. Never one to complain, at times recovery seems slow and frustrating for him. Just as the walk is helping so has his participation in a weekly zoom quiz where high scores and often in the winning position, he continues to be an example to us all.



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Why is life so much better by the water?

Need a recharge?

Ever feel like you're running on empty, especially in these challenging times? When the daily grind is getting you down, there are lots of things you can do to look after your wellbeing. One of these is spending time by water.

Feel happier and healthier

Research shows that spending time by water can help you feel happier and healthier. Our seaside is the perfect place to boost your mood and improve your physical and mental health. Even down by the harbourside, it provides special spaces where you can relax, recharge, and get your body moving.

Here for you

Spending time by water is great for your mind and body. Our coastline is always open and is always free to access. No matter how busy life gets, you can enjoy its benefits any time you like. Our harbour, beaches and coastline are here for you, now more than ever. And, they're right on your doorstep.

Post Boxes

We've all grown up with those familiar red pillar boxes at the end of our street. As a child the regular delivery of post early in the morning and a second post-delivery at lunch time were just part of our regular pattern of life. I even remember receiving post very late in the evening on Christmas Eve as none of the posties went home until everything was cleared and the last letter and parcel delivered. A story that came to my notice a while ago about local post services painted a very different picture to our mobile and e-mail communication we use today. The story involves a gentleman living in Brixham who at the time was working in Ivybridge. As he was never sure what time he would get home each day, he would write a postcard to his wife each morning popping it into the post box before lunch time, advising her which train he would be travelling home on later in the day. His wife would receive the postcard during the afternoon and thus have his supper prepared and ready when he arrived home that evening. One can't but wonder at the organisation behind such a service to make this happen!! Times have changed with the Post Office being part of a very competitive world amongst the plethora of 'white van men' delivering to our doors.

In last month's newsletter we featured the changing use of red telephone boxes. Post boxes or pillar boxes continue to feature in our urban landscape and wandering around Brixham I have been quite taken with the variety of boxes to be found. So, here are a few of the post boxes to be found in Brixham and there are many more in further varying designs and age. In addition, I also spotted a box from foreign parts in private use.



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Quay Concerts 2021

Missin' Tackle Shanty Crew will once again be performing down under the Old Fish Market, Brixham Harbour to help raise funds for local charities. Starting on Tuesday 27 July and on Tuesday evenings 3, 10 & 17th August, they will be singing shanties and songs of the sea between 20.00 - 21.00pm. They hope that you will want to come and support them, so please do tell your family friends and neighbours and encourage any holiday makers to come along. Whilst being a free event, voluntary donations will be taken. For a more comfortable evening do bring your own chairs with you and we hope with good summer evening weather we will get you tapping your feet and singing along too.



Library News

In the last few weeks, the library has been busy putting the library back to 'normal'. We now have our seating back and the shelving is being put back in its original place and the floor tape is up! Libraries Unlimited have said that the public have to take responsibly to keep a distance from each other.

We are looking at making bird baths from flowerpots in the summer. If you have any spare that you could donate to us, she would really appreciate them, delivering to the library during library opening hours.

See you all soon and don't forget the sunscreen!!!! 🌞🕶️, Emma Aydemir



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Photo courtesy of Chloe, Fishcombe Café

Million Mile Clean

This year Surfers Against Sewage instigated a new campaign entitled the 'Million Mile Clean' to encourage 100,000 volunteers walking 10 miles whilst cleaning the places they love. After more than a year of isolation, social distancing and reduced physical activity, the Million Mile Clean reconnects communities with the environment, whilst promoting the benefits of volunteering for both mental health and physical wellbeing. Join us for the biggest, most active beach clean campaign ever!

Some of the Monday walkers decided to take on the challenge on fine Tuesday morning, covering the area between the Old Fish Market in Brixham and Broadsands beach. With bags gloves and some pickers provided by Surfers against Sewage and a number of high quality pickers borrowed from SWISCO the litter pickers have done a grand job.



Male Trail 2021

This year's Male Trail to raise funds for Rowcroft Hospice was again supported by a group of Monday Health Walkers and friends walking under the banner of 'The Rambling FoBL's'. Unlike previous years there was not predetermined official route around Torquay. So, instead the lads walked from Kingswear back to Brixham via the backroads and

footpaths of the two parishes finishing at Brixham Rugby Club for their well-earned pint of Bays ales. A supreme effort by all involved raising cash for another local good cause.

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Rowcroft Hospice said:

A huge well done and thank you to 'The Rambling FoBL's' for completing this year's Male Trail Your Way! We hope that you had a really great time and enjoyed your Devon Dumpling courtesy of Bays Brewery. This year we had 107 of you taking part and so far have raised an amazing £6,271! It has been such a challenging year for everyone, and we really do appreciate you all still thinking of the hospice and supporting us during these difficult times. You can put your feet up now knowing that your fundraising efforts will go towards ensuring that patients and their loved ones can be supported while going through some of the most difficult times imaginable. Thank you again for your support, it takes a community to make a hospice and we are so glad that you are part of ours.

Best wishes and congratulations, Alexia and the team at Rowcroft Hospice

And Finally....



That's it for another issue of Friends Matter. If you've any questions or comments about this issue, please email friends.matter@btinternet.com

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