



CHESTERFIELD & NORTH DERBYSHIRE

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Wellbeing Magazine

November—December 2023

Edited by Audrey Carlin



Robin by Sarah Richards

Meetings and Contents – November/December 2023

Meetings and Other Information

Zoom Meeting – Christmas Special - 14th December 2023 at 11am **“Move it or Lose it” to Christmas Carols and Music**

Arnhem – My Holiday Scrapbook from 1985 by Joanne Gordon

“Weeds” - Poem by Joanne Gordon

The Diary of Anne Frank by Audrey Carlin

“Winston Churchill” – Poem by Tony Huzzard

The Early Life of Winston Churchill – Extracts from the Sunday Telegraph

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“Arrows of Fire” – Poem by Muriel Lascelles

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Reflections of the Second World War by Audrey Carlin

“Autumn” – Poem by Shirley Carlin

Christmas in the 1940s and 50s by Audrey Carlin

“The Little Fir Tree” – Poem by Joanne Gordon (nee Carlin aged 12 years)

The Magic of Christmas – Shared by Hayley Harding

Take a Musical Journey for Christmas by Joanne Gordon

National Poetry Day – 2023

Sarah Walters explains.....how her poem evolved

“Fieldfare” – Poem by Sarah Walters

“Elwood” – Poem by Sarah Richards

“Joie de Vivre” – Poem by Judy Tomlinson

“Christmas” by Merle Taylor

Enjoy a Warm Almond Chai Milk Drink with Jack the Bear

Fundraising Round-up

Skipping Challenge

Festival of Trees – Chesterfield Crooked Spire

Sustainable Christmas Trees for Hire

Arnhem – My Holiday Scrapbook from 1985

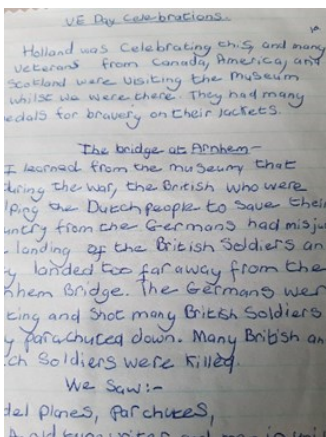
By Joanne Gordon



On the morning of my 11th birthday, on the 2nd May 1985, we were on holiday in Holland and I made a scrapbook of the holiday with a daily diary of what we did. On my birthday I wrote: "After breakfast we travelled to Arnhem. Our first stop

was at Airborne Museum where we saw a slide show, narrated in English, about the war. Because it is the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II, Holland was celebrating this and many veterans from Canada, America and Scotland were visiting the museum whilst we were there. They had many medals for bravery on their jackets.

The Bridge at Arnhem



I learned from the museum that during the war, the British who were helping the Dutch people to save their country from the Germans, had misjudged the landing of the British soldiers and they landed too far away from the Arnhem Bridge. The Germans were waiting and shot many British soldiers as they parachuted down. Many British and Dutch soldiers died. On the Monday before we arrived, Britain had flown food parcels to

Holland and dropped them down to the Dutch people. A repeat of an operation which had taken place 40 years ago. [Page from my scrapbook]

The Cemetery



Then we visited the cemetery where 1,700 soldiers had been buried during the war. The bombing of the bridge at Arnhem was one of the worst atrocities of the war. Then we signed the visitors' book.

Afterwards we spent a few hours in the city of Arnhem. It has a beautiful cathedral with a tall spire. I noticed that all the churches I saw

had tall spires. The people of Holland are so friendly and almost everybody speaks English. We walked up narrow cobbled streets, of which there were many. As we left Arnhem over the "new" bridge, we looked back at the beautiful city with its towering spires and the sun was shining over the city.

We arrived back at our motel at 6pm, showered and had evening meal at 7.30pm. We had a lovely dinner with a huge ice-cream sundae for sweet. Then all our coach party sang "happy birthday" to me and I blew out the candles on the candelabra."

Weeds by Joanne Gordon

The city now a pile of rubble
A sign of all the worn-torn trouble
Where there has been destruction
Amongst all the corruption
Weeds for me a sign of life
An end to all the trouble and strife



The next part of our journey took us to the hiding place of Anne Frank and her family during WW2 and we took a boat trip on the River Amstel. Photo of me with my brother, Glenn, Mum and Dad.



The Diary of Anne Frank by Audrey Carlin

When I was 15, I bought the paperback version of The Diary of Anne Frank but during the annals of time it went missing. However, this summer, one of our members brought along a hard-back version called *"The Diary of a young Girl, Anne Frank, edited by Otto H Frank and Miriam Pressler - includes previously unpublished material - The Definitive Edition"*. On the front and back inside covers of the book are four hand-written diary entries by Anne to her diary "friend" whom she called Kitty.



I have always considered Anne a most inspirational girl/young lady. How she coped with living in the cramped 'hiding place' in the Annexe (a small attic room at the top of a 4-storey warehouse, owned by her father) is recorded in her diary. Anne's story, written in her own words in her diary, from the age of 13 to 15 years, is undeniably inspirational.



*263 Prinsengracht, Amsterdam, rear view.
The Secret Annexe (top two floors and attic)
as seen from the courtyard garden.*

[Rear view photo of the secret annexe (top two floors and attic) as seen from the courtyard garden - from the book]

Here Anne describes their hiding place, written on 9 July 1942:

“The hiding place was located in Father’s office building. The large warehouse on the ground floor is used as a

workroom and storeroom and is divided into several different sections, such as the stockroom and the milling room, where cinnamon, cloves and a pepper substitute are ground.”

[Internet image of their hiding place describing the levels of the building – taken from the courtyard at the back of the property]

In the period of over two years that Anne Frank spent in hiding in the Secret Annexe, nature and her longing for freedom played an ever-greater role. Through a window in the attic that was not blacked out, Anne could see the sky, birds and the chestnut tree.



Originally Anne’s diary which she kept from 12 June 1942 to 1st August 1944, was strictly for herself. “Then, one day in 1944, a member of the Dutch government in exile, announced in a radio broadcast from London that after the war he hoped to collect eyewitness accounts of the suffering of the Dutch people under

the German occupation, which could be made available to the public. As an example, he specifically mentioned letters and diaries.”

Impressed by this speech, Anne decided that when the war was over, she would publish a book based on her diary. Her diary captures what life was like in a language far beyond her years and was saved by her father, Otto (the only member of their family to survive) as a history of that time.

On the 26 July 1943 Anne wrote about the warning sirens wailing that morning while they were at breakfast. Later that afternoon they went off again, followed by the guns booming so loudly. The house shook and the bombs kept falling. “I was clutching my ‘escape bag’, more because I wanted something to hold on to than because I wanted to run away. I know we can’t leave here, but if we had to, being seen on the streets would be just as dangerous as getting caught in an air raid.” [Photo from the book of the front of the building where they hid for two years]



Christmas 1943

As it was impossible to buy gifts, Anne came up with an idea of writing a poem for each person. Eight people were living in the Annexe, four of whom were Anne, her parents, Otto and Edith Frank and her older sister, Margot and Peter van Pels and his parents, Hermann and Auguste (to whom Anne gave the pseudonym Van Daan in her diary), as well as Friedrich “Fitz” Pfeffer who was a German dentist and Jewish refugee.

Peter (aged 15) and his parents arrived at the hiding place on 13 July 1942, one week after the Frank family. His parents allowed him to bring Mouschi, his tomcat, to the Annexe.

Anne had decorated a laundry basket with cutouts and bows made of pink and blue carbon paper, on top of which was a large piece of brown wrapping paper with a note attached.

On 6 December 1943 Anne wrote:

“Everyone was rather amazed at the sheer size of the gift. I removed the note and read it out loud.”

*Once again St Nicholas' Day
Has even come to our hideaway;
It won't be quite as fun, I fear,
As the happy day we had last year.
Then we were hopeful, no reason to doubt
That optimism would win the bout,
And by the time this year came round,
We'd all be free, and safe and sound.
Still let's not forget its St. Nicholas' Day
Though we've nothing left to give away,
We'll have to find something else to do
So, everyone please look in their shoe!*

As everyone took their own shoe out of the basket there was a roar of laughter. Inside each shoe was a little paper parcel addressed to its owner.

On 3rd January 1944, Anne addressed her diary entry to Dear Kitty, writing –

“Invasion fever is mounting daily throughout the country.... The papers are full of invasion news and are driving everyone insane with such statements as: ‘In the event of a British landing in Holland, the Germans will do what they can to defend the

everyone living so closely together day and night in fear of their safety. And the emotional turmoil they suffered. How she grew from a 13-year-old child into a young woman and how her feelings changed towards Peter Van Daan as they became close friends.

On 4 March 1944 Anne wrote more words of wisdom: “.....I don't think about all the misery, but about the beauty that still remains. This is where Mother and I differ greatly. Her advice in the face of melancholy is: ‘Think about all the suffering in the world and be thankful you're not part of it.’ My advice is: ‘Go outside, to the country, enjoy the sun and all nature has to offer. Go outside and try to recapture the happiness within yourself, think of all the beauty in yourself and in everything around you and be happy.’

25 March 1944: At the end of a very long diary entry to “Kitty”, Anne wrote,

*An empty day, though clear and bright,
Is just as dark as any night.*

6 June 1944

Anne wrote:

“My Dearest Kitty,

This is D-Day, the BBC announced at twelve. ‘This is the day.’ The invasion has begun! This morning at eight the British reported heavy bombing of Calais, Boulogne, Le Havre and Cherbourg, as well as Pas de Calais (as usual).....”

According to the German news, British paratroopers have landed on the coast of France. ‘British landing craft are engaged in combat with German naval units,’ according to the BBC.....

9 June 1922

“Dearest Kitty,

Great news the invasion! The Allies have taken Bayeux, a village on the coast of France..... We heard over the BBC that Churchill wanted to land along with the troops on D-Day, but Eisenhower and the other generals managed to talk him out of it. Just imagine, so much courage for such an old man – he must be at least seventy!

13 June 1944

Another birthday has gone by, so I’m now fifteen.....”

Yesterday, Churchill, Smuts, Eisenhower and Arnold visited the French village that the British have captured and liberated. Churchill was on a torpedo boat that shelled the coast. Like many men, he doesn’t seem to know what fear is – an enviable trait!

Anne adds: “It’s not just my imagination – looking at the sky, the clouds, the moon and the stars really does make me feel calm and hopeful. It’s much better medicine than valerian or bromide. Nature makes me feel humble and ready to face every blow with courage!”

In the last two years, how Anne has grown and developed and the entries in her diary more philosophical as she writes about equality for women, adding modern women want the right to be completely independent! However, Anne’s diary ends on the 1st August 1944 when she made her last entry. Three days later, after 25 months of hiding, they were found by the Nazis and were arrested along with two of the Christians who had helped give them shelter.

Margot, her older sister, and Anne were transported from Auschwitz at the end of October 1944 and taken to

Bergen-Belsen, a concentration camp near Hanover (Germany). But it was an epidemic of typhus that broke out in the winter of 1944/5 as a result of the horrendous hygiene conditions, that killed thousands of prisoners, including Margot (her sister) and, a few days later, Anne. Had she lived, I wonder what would Anne have achieved in this world? This very brave and visionary human being.

I will always remember her courage, positivity and her quote:
***“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment
Before starting to improve the world”***
Anne Frank

[I would like to say thank you to Wendy Rose, a member of our group for many years who lives near Ashbourne, for bringing along the book to our group which enabled me to read the book and write the story]



Winston Churchill - Poem by Tony Huzzard

Our Winston it was who won the war
When the Germans waged it even more
Bombing our towns and the larger city
Killing our inhabitants; oh, such a pity.

The RAF being the first of the few
Saw us through when we all knew
That defeat in the early days just wasn't on,
It would have meant that all our hopes were gone.

Winston it was with his inspiring speeches,
Let the Germans know that we would fight them on the
beaches,
Giving our people the encouragement they needed,
A forceful man, who just had to be heeded.

Through the six years of conflict when times were rough
He never flinched when the going got tough
We all knew that Winston wouldn't stand for any more
With his army, navy and air force to the fore.

Throughout our history I can't recall
Any leader who had stood so tall
If ever we needed his victory sign
Winston's two fingers did us just fine.

*[Thank you, Tony, for your poem which set the scene for our stories
in remembrance of so many people who were affected by the First
and Second World Wars]*

*In a very dilapidated old book called "Harmsworth History of the
World" given to me over 40 years ago by a friend who had acquired it
from an old lady, it stated the following:*

"The Boy" Knew Everything

When Winston Churchill was a very, very, young man, he laid the foundations of his career by his surprising omniscience. When a complicated question arose, his friends used to say, jokingly, "Ask the Boy."



The Early Life of Winston Churchill

Extracts from The Sunday Telegraph –

September 25, 1966 by Muriel Lascelles



Lord Randolph said to his son “The Army is the finest profession in the world if you work at it and the worst if you loaf at it.” Winston went on to join the 4th Hussars (photo taken in 1895). The article states that: “All his life Churchill suffered from an impediment in his speech. It is hard to define exactly what it was; some thought it was a stammer, some a lisp. He was extremely conscious of this from an early age and

sought to correct it.” The article continues. “....he consulted Sir Felix Semon, a friend of the family and of the court and a throat specialist. Semon told Churchill (fee four guineas) that there was no organic defect and that ‘with practice and perseverance’ he would be cured of his disability.

The article continues: “We also have the evidence of Mrs Muriel Warde, formerly Miss Muriel Wilson, who has told the author of how when she was a young girl at Tranby Croft, Churchill used to walk her up and down the long drive rehearsing such phrases as ‘The Spanish ships I cannot see for they are not in sight.’ This was designed to cure him of his trouble in pronouncing the sibilant ‘s’

Winston had contemplated marrying Miss Wilson, who was a considerable heiress, as well as being one of the great beauties of her age but she rejected him. Thereafter he decided that he would never marry for money.

[Mentioned in my article
“Hidden Treasure” -
September/October 2023
magazine].

[Photograph of Muriel
Wilson]

On the 11 September 1896,
Churchill sailed from
Southampton for India in
SS Britannia with the 4th
Hussars. Many young men
at the age of 21, with few
attachments at home, would
have thought it a high
adventure to sail for India
and to be stationed there for
eight or nine years.

Churchill had mixed feelings. He was enraptured by any form of adventure – he had had some of a limited character in Cuba; but he doubted if there would be much opportunity in India. In any case he had already determined that his life should be one of politics. But how to escape from the Army? How to pay his debts? How to achieve an income that would permit his entry into the House of Commons? (Members were not paid until 1911, and then only £400 a year)."

Whilst in Bangalore, Winston "met the first great love of his life, Miss Pamela Plowden who was seven months older than he...." the article continues, "It appears that Miss Plowden was known to Lady Randolph but when she came on a visit to Bangalore, Churchill had to report to his mother (26 October 1896) 'Alas, I never met her in England so forbore to call.' But the following





week, when he went to Secunderabad for a polo tournament, he did not let a second opportunity slip. He was smitten with instantaneous love the first time he met Pamela Plowden.”

He commented: “I was introduced yesterday to Miss Pamela Plowden, who lives here. I must say that she is the most beautiful girl I have ever seen, bar none.” He dined with the Plowden’s

and wrote to his mother she is “very beautiful and clever.”

In conclusion the article states: “No one, not even his mother, suspected the *daemon* that was within him, nor foresaw the adventurous and triumphant days and years that lay ahead. He alone possessed the secret, the trust and the clue to his destiny.”

Winston Churchill went on to marry Clementine Hozier in 1908.



In Greek mythology, a daemon was considered a supernatural being or power.

Winston Churchill was an inspirational statesman, writer,

orator and leader who led Britain to victory in the Second World War. He served as Conservative Prime Minister twice - from 1940 to 1945 and from 1951 to 1955 (having been defeated in the 1945 general election by the Labour leader, Clement Attlee.

ARROWS OF DESIRE Poem by Muriel Lascelles

Deep down in the trenches and covered in mud - I see only the sky above.

Shell-shocked, battle weary and filled with strife - I thank God for my short life.

With hope all gone and so many lives lost, how can we possibly count the cost?

Then my heart is lifted high as I hear the Heavenly Choir - singing that wonderful Hymn, "Jerusalem" - bring me my arrows of desire.

The song was originally a poem written by William Blake in 1804 under the title "And did those feet in ancient time".

"Jerusalem" is a patriotic song and a hymn of hope. Its lyrics call for the rebuilding of England's green and pleasant land and embody the famed English exceptionalism.

Exceptionalism is the perception or belief that a species, country, society, institution, movement, individual, or time period is "exceptional". The term carries the implication, whether or not specified, that the referent is superior in some way. [Wikipedia]

[Thank you very much Muriel for the fascinating and historical story and your poem. I know Muriel has uncovered more stories as she has recently found some ancestry information which is very interesting and which I am hoping she will share with us in a future story]

The Life of Wilfred Owen by Audrey Carlin

Whilst watching "Long Lost Family" a story caught my attention because it was to do with a mother who was searching for her daughter. Living in France at the time, the mother had been forced by her wealthy mother to have her baby girl adopted

even though she and the father were together, albeit very young. The mother sent her to England to have the child before instructing her daughter to return to France. However, not only did the programme find her daughter, living in France, but also her father who now lives in Australia. After reuniting the mother with her daughter, they then went on to reunite the daughter with her father. So, a happy ending.

What was particularly interesting was that it transpired that Wilfred Owen, the war poet, was in fact, the daughter's Great Uncle who was buried in France and she and her two children, until now unaware of this information, were then able to visit his grave. I certainly saw facial features of the daughter, now in her early 50s, to those of Wilfred Owen.

Wilfred Owen

Wilfred Owen was a British poet, born 18th March 1893 in Oswestry, Shropshire. He was noted for his anger at the cruelty and waste of war and his pity for its victims. He attended the University of London and after an illness in 1913 he lived in France. He had already begun to write and, while working as a tutor near Bordeaux, was preparing a book of "Minor Poems – in Minor Keys - by a Minor" which was never published. His early poems were consciously modelled on those of John Keats; often ambitious, they show enjoyment of poetry as a craft.

Writing from the perspective of his intense personal experience of the front line, his poems, including 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' and 'Dulce et Decorum Est', bring to life the physical and mental trauma of combat. Owen's aim was to tell the truth about what he called 'the pity of War'. [Image: Argunners Magazine]



Wilfred Owen was killed on 4 November 1928, at the age of 35, in France. His death is especially tragic as the Armistice was declared just one week after his death resulting in the end of World War 1.

“Futility” by Wilfred Owen

Move him into the sun –
Gently its touch awoke him once.
At home, whispering of fields half-sown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.
Think how it wakes the seeds –
Woke once the days of a cold star.
Are limbs, so dear – achieved, are sides
Full-nerved, still warm, too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break dearth’s sleep at all?



Reflections of the Second World War by Audrey Carlin

I have very little recollection of the Second World War so this photograph is quite poignant for me as few memories were captured on camera. However, I was told by my parents that they gave a home to 6 evacuees from London. Two sisters, each of whom had two children. This is a photograph of the children sitting on the cricket field at the side of our house.



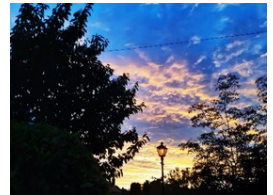
On 7 May 1945 the formal act of military surrender was signed by Germany, ending the war in Europe. The next day celebrations broke out all over the world to mark Victory in Europe or VE Day. In Britain, Churchill

marked the occasion by declaring 8th May a public holiday. I recall from conversations in later years that my parents, along with many people in our village, celebrated with a party on the cricket field. My parents were quite sad to say goodbye to their new friends but very happy for the two families as they returned to London to rebuild their lives.



Shirley now takes us through the Autumn and into Winter, celebrating the passing of the seasons.

AUTUMN by Shirley Carlin



Goodbye Summer the days are slowly drifting forth
The evenings are shorter the sun has lost its power
It's time to prepare for Winter and the dark hour
But first we watch the changing beauty of our earth

In the cooler dewy mornings of September days
When gardens shimmer in a mellow golden haze
Beneath the dying borders spiders' webs displayed
Laced works of art finer than human hands have made

Autumn's rich tapestry surprises and delights
Beds of gay chrysanthemums bronze, amber and white
A defiant rose, sunflowers, dahlias bold and bright
Late evening sun fading slowly into night

Beyond the garden the farmer's patchwork fields
Tractors rushing to and fro gathering all they yield
Orchards, hay meadows and fields of golden corn
Furrowed acres newly ploughed to be reborn

Our thrushes now silent our swallows are on the wing
A murmuration of starlings swirling on trapeze swing
The sky, pink mauve and duck egg blue
All add to this breathtaking view

Nature has a final show for the artist's eye
The trees display their dappled leaves
A palette of colour gold, yellow, russet and brown
The jewel in our nature's crown.

The harvest moon looks down with frosty stare
The trees now like ghosts grey and bare
The last of Summer fruits cling tightly to the bough
Autumn is slowly dying away, it's Winter now.



[Thank you, Shirley, for your beautiful poetic and colourful journey through Autumn, taking us into Winter....]

CHRISTMAS IN THE 1940s AND 50s

by Audrey Carlin

"In the Bleak Midwinter" is a poem by the English poet Christina Rossetti, commonly performed as a Christmas carol.

In the bleak Midwinter
Frosty wind made moan
Earth stood hard as iron
Water like a stone

Snow had fallen
Snow on snow on snow
In the bleak Midwinter
Long ago



My story is taken from this, my favourite Christmas Carol as a child; of which two verses relate to my childhood memories of winter.

"In the Bleak Midwinter, frosty wind made moan.....", depicts in my mind, the Christmases of the 1940s and 50s. They were bleak, icicles hung like shining lanterns from the house and

the windows froze looking like net curtains with pretty patterns. A puff of hot breath would give a glimpse of the bleak weather outside.

"Snow had fallen, snow on snow on snow....." this image is clear in my mind, as my hot breath hit the frozen window pane, I would take a glimpse of a snow-covered world and feel excited about the fun I would be having in the snow.

“Earth stood hard as iron, Water like a stone...” where there was a receptacle, bucket or upturned plant pot, ice would be solid for days and sometimes weeks. When milk was delivered in bottles to replace the churns, the milkman would leave it on the doorstep. The icy conditions would force up the top of the milk bottle (cardboard in those days) and the whole bottle would be solid. Getting that first cup of tea was well earned. This went on for weeks, sometimes months.

As school children in the 1940s and 50s knees would be chapped, no trousers for girls, just three-quarter length grey socks and a skirt. But all this was forgotten when, after school we (Shirley and I) would build a snowman and make a slide on the lane outside our house which would last for weeks. The winter sun was too weak to melt the ice. Keeping the house cosy and warm was virtually impossible – toes roasted in front of the open fire but my back would be cold. A heavy stone hot water bottle provided little heat as it only warmed an area of the bed at a time and as you moved it, that which had been warm soon became cold.

And yet I look back with fond memories of those carefree days as our lives take on cares and anxieties. All those emotions were yet to be experienced, understood and dealt with in the best way we could.

I choose to remember those early years, the smell of freshly baked bread in the oven at the side of the roaring fire. Thick rich tasty Hash (I loved Hash day!) and baking of jam tarts, macaroons, Christmas cake and mincepies.

We had our own hens and cockerels so we had plentiful eggs, and good wholesome food was always on the table from our

fruit and veg garden. And before I became a vegetarian, I would relish Christmas dinner with a big fat Cockerel stuffed with sage and onion stuffing, bread sauce (and apple sauce) followed by plum pudding.

Christmastime

Memories tease me wherever I go
Of Christmases spent a long time ago
And against the blue sky the stark bare trees
Moan and creak as the icicles freeze

Snow sparkling like diamonds under the moon
And watching for Santa flying through the sky soon
And freshly baked bread keeping warm by the fire
And drinking my nightcap before I retire

The Little Fir Tree by Joanne Gordon (nee Carlin) (aged 12)



Once upon a time there was a little fir tree who lived in the wood. He was very small and nobody seemed to want him for Christmas. Woodcutters came into the wood for trees but nobody took the little tree, he was very sad. But one day, a poor man who was looking for a tree came into the wood with his dear children, Helen and David. “Look” cried Helen, “look, I want that tree” she said. So, her father pulled the tree up with its roots. How happy it felt now, the tree was going to be used for Christmas. He was decorated with lights and crackers, he looked wonderful. There were all presents around him and he felt very happy. And afterwards David put him in a pot, he was still very happy but the others were not, they were chopped up and put on the fire.

The Magic of Christmas shared by Hayley Harding

We will all have our memories about the magic of Christmas and how we have celebrated it over the years since we were young but although the years have rolled by, the essence of Christmas is still the same and this story gives us a modern-day experience of Christmas with a special message.

Hayley has always been a special friend to me, many years younger than me but one of those friendships where the age gap is insignificant. Having met at work when she was 16, Hayley is now married and has two children, Mason aged 8 and Ruby aged 5 and we have known each other for over 20 years. We regularly keep in touch and I love to hear their family stories. I happened to phone Hayley last December on the day that the family were about to board the Polar Express and she contacted me later to tell me about their experience. I thought it sounded a magical experience and reinforces the message of Christmas in a different and modern way.

[Mason and Ruby waiting to board the Polar Express]



The Polar Express

The story of the Polar Express, based on the 1985 children's book of the same name, is set on Christmas Eve in the 1950s. It tells the story of a young boy who sees a mysterious train bound for the North Pole stop outside his window and is invited aboard by its conductor. He joins other children as they embark on a journey to visit Santa Claus preparing for Christmas.



The story conveys a wonderful message about *“believing, the value of friendship, respect for leadership and courage and the beauty of being kind to others”*.

The “Golden Ticket” is significant in the story and bears

the words *“believe, lead, learn, rely on, depend on and count on”*



Mason and Ruby cling on to their Golden Tickets, as it's important that they do not lose sight of them.

The bell too that Santa Claus gave to Mason and Ruby is of significance as it is a symbol of the spirit of Christmas. Whilst ever they can hear the bell, their belief in Santa Claus and Christmas will not fade. The true spirit of Christmas lies in your heart.



[This is the moment when Ruby sees Santa Claus approaching their table on the train]



Not only is Christmas a time to spread joy to children, but they can also learn valuable attributes such as *kindness, forgiveness and understanding* which is the message that the book and later, the film, portray.

“Sometimes seeing is believing and sometimes the most real things in the world are the things we cannot see.”

[Thank you to Hayley for sharing this lovely story with me and allowing me to share it with you in our magazine]



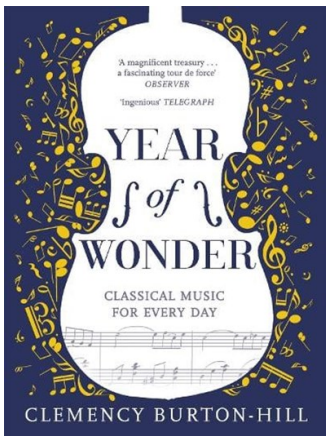
Take a Musical Journey for Christmas by

Joanne Gordon

We have often banged the drum (pun intended) about the wellbeing effects of music, including classical. Despite this, until now, I haven't personally explored the enjoyment and benefits of this genre of music.

Year of Wonder

My journey began with a book “**Year of Wonder** – Classical Music for Every Day” by Clemency Burton-Hill. Clemency, a broadcaster, journalist and violinist, who has performed at the Proms, provides a tour de force through classical music, introducing a new piece for every day of the year. On the way she hopes to debunk some of the popular



misconceptions about classical music being composed by European old white men, born centuries ago, although there are some; the book introduces male and female composers. **Trio for piano, violin and cello in D minor 1: Allegro non troppo by Ethel Smyth (1858 – 1944).**



As well as a composer Ethel was an activist and a member of the suffragette movement which campaigned tirelessly for women's rights and along with her friend, Mrs Pankhurst was sent to Holloway Prison. [Internet photo of Ethel Smyth]

The book also contains works by 'composers of colour, gay and transgender composers, and differently abled composers'. Clemency points out that Beethoven, wrote some of his magnificent works when 'fully deaf'. One of my favourite pieces of music to date (I have a long way to go) is **Gran Vals by Francisco Tarrega (1852 – 1909)**. It has a distinctive different sound, an influence from Tarrega's father who was a flamenco player. He was also blind. As a child Francisco Tarrega ran away from his nanny – "and fell into an irrigation canal, badly damaging his eyes."

For me it is these gems of information that have brought classical music alive. Knowing a little about the composer, their life or intentions has added a sense of 'wonder' to this musical experience. Clemency's aim is to bring classical music into your everyday "they can handle you multitasking around them, fitting them into your real life." ".....make them your soundtrack to fixing dinner, pouring a drink, putting your feet up, or indeed doing the washing, ironing, or catching up with emails; whatever you need to do at that moment where you finally press play." So far there have been some lovely pieces of music that could

easily be in the background to your day. **Ecolgue for piano and strings, op.10 by Gerald Finzi (1901 – 1956)**, or **Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, op 43. Variation no. 18: Andante cantabile by Sergei Rachmaninov (1873 – 1943)** or perhaps **Gladiolus Rag by Scott Joplin (c. 1867 – 1917)**.

Mindfulness Moment

The book is, however, an opportunity to be mindful. Carving out time to read the background information, which is never more than a page, then turning to the Spotify playlist created under the same name as the book and like the book sub sectioned per month, so no need to start on the 1st of January. (The book was purchased for my husband's birthday in June and that is the date our journey began).

It is my time to mindfully listen and reflect on the music. **Cello Concerto in E minor, op. 85 3:Adagio by Edward Elgar (1857 – 1934)**, Clemency writes “The cello concerto was the last major work that Elgar wrote, and it carries in its DNA the long, bleak shadow cast by the Great [First World] War. The piece is beautiful but mournful.

Other pieces are more uplifting **String Quartet no 12 in F major, op 96 ('American) 4. Finale: Vivacema non troppo by Antonin Dvorak (1841 – 1904)**. At the time of composing, from evidence of letters to friends, it is known that Dvorak was ‘relaxed, happy and in ‘good spirits’, reflected in his composing.

String Quartet in G major, op 76 no 1 1:Alegro con spirito by Joseph Hayden (1732 – 1809). Clemency states that *Hayden* was a composer with ‘wit’ ‘inventiveness’ ‘intelligence, and ‘a certain jaunty *joie de vivre*’ reflected in this cheery string music. According to Clemency there is a ‘Hayden’ to reflect every mood so perhaps a composer to listen to a little more.

Benefits of Classical Music

Lower Blood pressure

A study by Oxford University revealed that participants who listened to classical music had significantly lower blood pressure than those who did not listen to any music. Participants listened to Strauss or Mozart for 25 minutes. There are certain conditions to be effective, the harmonies should not be 'rousing' and certain parts of the music should be repeated at intervals.

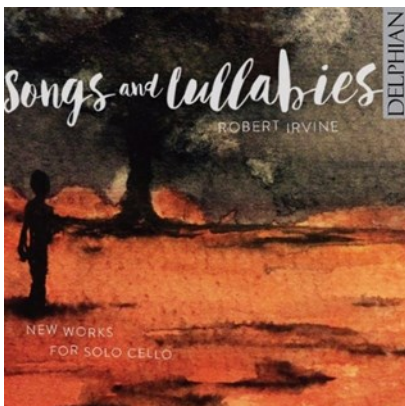
Reduce pain

According to the Welsh National Opera, a 2006 study found that groups of people who experienced chronic pain felt less pain listening to classical music than those who didn't listen to it.

Reduces stress and aids sleep

Classical music is also reported to reduce stress and aids sleep. Once again there are some requirements for the listening of classical music to be effective for aiding sleep. According to the Welsh National Opera, listen to 45 minutes of classical music, the ideal rhythm being around 60 beats per minute. The article suggested Bach's Prelude No. 1.

Global benefits



As well as the individual benefits, classical music has aimed to have a global impact. **Ride Through by Eleanor Alberga (born 1949)** was part of an album compiled by Scottish cellist Robert Irvine who read on "UNICEF's website that a child dies as a result of violence every five minutes; as a result of malnutrition every fifteen seconds; and that 17,000 children

under five die every day because they don't get the health care they need." He persuaded composers including Alberga to donate works to the album 'Songs and Lullabies' which would raise money for UNICEF. In an interview for the 'Herald' in 2016, Irvine was realistic "Playing the cello will not end child suffering" he said "let's be absolutely clear about that." But his hope as well as raising funds was that "..... the theme of this album will at the very least make people pause and think about issues that contribute to children suffering around the world."

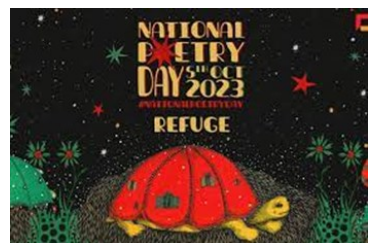
Year of Wonder continues

There is still a long way to go through my 'Year of Wonder', which has been an enjoyable experience, something very different for me, stuck in 1980s pop music era. As well as appreciating classical music, I have learnt such a lot about what classical music is, as well as stories behind the music and composers. As my journey continues my favourite pieces may change and I hope to explore more once the year ends. I can highly recommend "**Year of Wonder** – Classical Music for Every Day" by Clemency Burton-Hill for your **Christmas 'Book' Wish list**.

[Thank you, Joanne, for sharing your musical journey, it has always been advocated that Classical Music is the best genre of music to help people to manage their tinnitus, for the very reasons you say "it reduces stress and aids sleep" so I hope our readers will give it a try, if they haven't already done so]

National Poetry Day 2023

National Poetry Day is a day dedicated to recognising and celebrating the beauty and impact of poetry. It's a time to appreciate the written and spoken word, the artistry of poets, and the myriad



of emotions and stories that poetry conveys. This day encourages everyone, from seasoned poets to novices, to embrace and share their love for poetry. But we don't need a special day to celebrate poetry – it should be celebrated and embraced every day!

We have been holding our poetry group now for about five years, firstly, it was an in-person group but during Covid it became an online group which is still ongoing. We have a fun hour with a theme for that day with ideas and then a little homework to produce a poem for those who wish to do so. I think you can convey so much more in a poem and build a visual image without having to write a lot of words. And so, we celebrate our poets.

Sarah Walters explains..... how her poem evolved

“I wrote this poem last winter. There were major roadworks taking place on the main route between Bolsover and Chesterfield, causing long queues. This was a particularly stressful time because I had recently started my new job and having to factor in big delays to my journey times, combined with dropping off and picking up my daughter, was frustrating. But one evening, as I sat in a line of cars on the road through

the old opencast mining site at Arkwright, something caught my eye. It lifted my mood immediately. I identified the bird that was hopping around the grass verge as a Fieldfare, though I have only ever seen one once before. [Unsplash image of the Fieldfare]



The Fieldfare is a winter visitor from Scandinavia. It is related to the Thrush and looks similar with the speckled chest and has a yellow beak and brown/grey wings. I believe they usually hang around in flocks, the last time that I saw one it had been in a big group. This one appeared to be on its own, but perhaps it was just a straggler and the rest of them were nearby. Being stuck in a line of cars can seriously impede your view!

Fieldfare by Sarah Walters

On the pull and drag of the trunk route
On the way from over here to up there
A bunching at the berry glow signal
A line of seething way ahead stares

Gazes strayed to a dancing Fieldfare
She knew that she was unbound
Envyng her staccato green verge search
We sat on, boxed and tightly wound.

[Thank you, Sarah, for your lovely story and how your poem evolved, it certainly proves that being prepared (with pen and paper in the car) should you be held up in traffic queues is a good idea. Much better than getting anxious as the minutes tick by. A great mindfulness distraction]

Elwood by Sarah Richards

There once was a squirrel called Elwood
He lived on the edge of a wood.
Each morning he'd tussle
And his acorns they'd rustle
Till his breakfast of nuts it looked good.



[The Squirrel image accompanying Sarah's poem is from an original painting by Judy Tomlinson]

[Thank you also to Sarah Richards, who is in our poetry group and is able to produce a poem for every theme as well as being an accomplished photographer]

Joie de Vivre by Judy Tomlinson

To be alive, that's all I ask.
Sunshine, health and happiness.
To look ahead, not too far,
To live each day,
To work and play,
To see all things and ne're be dull.

Who can complain if health is theirs?
One's whole life ahead, that's enough.
Be blowed to all this money stuff!
To see the sun, to breathe the air,
Perhaps some wondering and some care.
But even these can satisfy
If only to offset the glow
That life for me holds, and so
A praise for all that's good,
Love, hope and faith (and Christmas pud)



Christmas Pud Sketch by Judy]

[Thank you to Judy whose poem reflects that of Hayden, the classical composer, whom Clemency described as a composer with wit..... and 'a certain jaunty joie de vivre' which is reflected in the mood of Judy's poem].



Enjoy a Warm Almond Chai Milk Drink with our Mascot, Jack Bear

This drink is full of magnesium to encourage the muscles in your body to relax and compounds that help to reduce inflammation which is one of the negative aspects of not sleeping for a prolonged period of time.

Ingredients

500ml almond milk
½ tsp ground turmeric
½ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp ground cardamom pods
2 tsp honey
Small pinch of sea salt

Method

- Place all ingredients in a small saucepan and set over a medium heat.
- Warm the milk slowly and be careful not to let it boil.

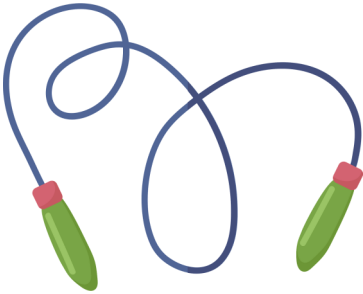


Fundraising Round-up

Sarah Richards has brought to our attention that Easyfundraising have a promotion which may support our group. Sarah informed us that each time you use Easyfundraising to buy something you get a digital stamp card. When you have made 5 purchases and have got 5 stamps you can exchange these for a £2 contribution to our charity. You can use it for Amazon purchases. There's a maximum of 9 stamp cards – so £18 can be raised for us. You only get 1 stamp per transaction but if you space out your

purchases (if you have a few items to buy) you will get a stamp for each purchase, but be careful as it will mean postage will be added each time.

Skipping Challenge



In February 2024 Joanne will undertake a skipping challenge to raise funds for our group. Tinnitus Week also falls in February and, therefore, it is a good month to think about raising funds to continue our support.

Every day during the month Joanne will undertake 250 skips. We will send out details in our January/ February magazine as to how you can donate and gift aid your donation.

Festival of Trees 18th November to 3rd December 2023

Crooked Spire Chesterfield

Our group will once again have a home-made decorated tree at the Crooked Spire, Chesterfield “Festival of Trees” from 18th November to 3rd December 2023.

It's well worth a visit, the Crooked Spire is packed with Christmas trees provided by local charities and businesses which they have beautifully and innovatively decorated to provide some early Christmas cheer.



Christmas by Merle Taylor



Can we contain our excitement and anticipation,
Christmas is approaching!

Hopefulness and happiness prevails for the children: what will
Santa bring

Rhythms of the Christmas songs and Carols can be heard
everywhere

In shops, on TV, symbols of Christmas appear. Robin redbreasts
endear.

Swathes of decorations bedeck homes, gardens and churches.

Traditional tinsel sparkles. Holly red berries glow, Ivy leaves,
green and yellow

Many a nativity scene, displayed in churches. In miniature in
homes aglow

A white Christmas, as on the old Christmas cards maybe, but a
rarity

Someone's Christmas roast of choice, pigs in blankets, a
necessity

Come Christmas Day. Children wake early: has Santa been?

Has the glass of sherry been drunk, the mince pie no longer to
be seen.

Reindeers have eaten the carrots, always a good sign. So quietly
they came, never saw their backs

Into wherever Santa has left the presents, or filled the children's
empty sacks

Swooping on the parcels, excitement breaking out. Look what Santa's brought

Tearing off the wrapping, trying to remember if they'd been bad or good, as they've been taught

Maybe when the children were younger. Now in the moment that was naught.

Around homes there is contentment, a Christmas atmosphere

Snoozing adults, after dinner, thinking: all the preparation! Thank goodness Christmas comes but once a year!

(Thank you to Merle, member of our online poetry group, for her lovely poem bringing back memories of Christmastime)



Online Christmas Special

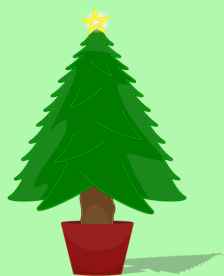
Move it or Lose it

Thursday 14th December 2023 at 11am

Set to Christmas Music and Carols Joanne will take you through some fun, chair based exercises as a winter warmer.

The session will take place on zoom. You don't need a zoom account, if you are unsure how to use zoom, you can contact us and we can talk you through.

If you would like to join Joanne for the Festive chair based exercise session please email her at chesterfieldtinnitus@gmail.com and Joanne will send you the link.



Sustainable Christmas

Would you like a real Christmas tree but find it wasteful?

Eden Gardens has a solution.

We have a limited number of 4ft/1.2m Christmas Trees to rent. (First come first served)

Cost £35.00. Picture available on request.

We will deliver before Christmas and remove after Christmas for us to nurture for another year.

Free delivery in Chesterfield/North East Derbyshire and Bolsover locality

For more information and to rent a Christmas Tree

Contact Simon Gordon on 07942 890460

**Wishing you all a Happy Christmas
and a Very Happy, Healthy and
Peaceful New Year**

How to Donate to Chesterfield & North Derbyshire Tinnitus Support Group

1. Send a cheque, payable to Chesterfield Tinnitus Support Group, to

Chesterfield & North Derbyshire Tinnitus Support Group,
PO Box 833, Chesterfield, S40 9RU

2. Make a payment directly into our bank account or set up a standing order. Our bank details are as follows:

Sort code: 60 83 01

Account no: 20447083

Account name: Chesterfield & North Derbyshire Tinnitus Support Group

3. Donate online using the secure Charities Aid Foundation website:

- Go to www.cafonline.org
- Click on the blue Donate to a Charity button at the top of the page
- Search for Chesterfield Tinnitus Support
- Select us from the list and click on the Donate button
- You can then make a payment using a card or PayPal

4. Donate your unwanted gifts for us to raffle at our meetings