



Beer Talks!

21st Edition, 22nd January 2021



Welcome!

Welcome to the 21st edition of the BAG newsletter. As well as having our usual notices slot and Craft Corner, we also have a great article by Debs Gildersleeves on good mental health and also a feature on the Beer Men's Shed group by Chris Pickles. We hope you enjoy them!

We also wanted to take the opportunity to say that we are thinking about everyone who is coping with bereavement, illness and sadness at this time. If there is anything at all that BAG can do to help, please do ask. We are here to support you.

A very fond farewell to Wendy and Bramble...

It is with deep sadness that we will be saying "goodbye" to Wendy and Bramble next week. Founder members of BAG, Head of Fun and Police Liaison and general all round fabulous person (and dog!), Wendy and Bramble have been at the heart of everything that we have done at BAG over the last year. It is actually because of Wendy that the seeds of BAG were sown, as a group of us got together to try and support Wendy after the tragic death of her lovely husband, Robert.

From all of us at BAG, good luck Wendy and Bramble, and we hope you enjoy the frozen north and your new life there!

Lots of love and come back and see us soon, BAG xxx

Notices

- **Food vouchers** are available from Lee if anyone needs them. They are redeemable at the Top Shop.
- There is a huge amount of practical help available from the local **Action for Children** centres. This includes food bank referrals, baby bank referrals, speech and language development support, parenting programmes and mental health support. For more information, please contact Amanda Partridge on 01395 226789 or go directly to the Action for Children website at eastdevoncc@actionforchildren.org.uk
- For those who love **jigsaws** we now have a fairly big supply of a variety of them to lend out to the community. They can be a great way to relax so they say, so ask your coordinator for one today.

- **Beer Buddies** - just a reminder that if you are feeling a little bit low and could do with a chat with someone, BAG can put you in touch with a local telephone buddy. For more information, please contact your street coordinator or call Lee on 07890 948262 or Annie on 07968 157136.
- **Ink cartridges** – please keep collecting your used printer ink cartridges as the school has great plans for them. More to follow!
- Why not join in the **RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch from 29-31 January** – for more information go www.rspb.org – a soothing way to spend an hour or so! If you need a hard copy of the submission form to complete and post to the RSPB and don't have access to a printer, just let your coordinator know and we can get one printed for you.

Craft Corner

Our latest craft project is to knit or crochet shawls for care home residents in Seaton. They can be any yarn, any stitch and any design. Bramble and I are currently knitting a double rib design in chunky (whilst watching Bridgerton, surprised I haven't dropped any stitches!). You could also knit or crochet 12-inch squares that could then be sewn together. Finished articles to go to Helen Turberville, please, or to your street coordinator. Helen's contact number is 07817 078004.

Also, if you have any spare yarn or fabric that you would like to donate, then please leave it with Helen or your coordinator. We have got a small supply of donated yarn already if anyone would like some, again ask your coordinator.

For those who have a sewing machine that is ready to be dusted off and put to good use, how about making some Beer Bags for our local shops to help reduce the use of plastic bags in our lovely village?

And, of course, there still is a need for fabric masks, so please crack on with these too!

Happy crafting everyone!

Wendy (& Bramble) xxx



Beer Men's Shed

Keeping busy in a COVID world...

When you get into a lockdown situation like the current COVID one, you've got a choice. You can slow down and stop doing anything, or you can get busy and start doing something new! Usually, we're all too busy doing day-to-day stuff to even think of



starting something new: it's hard enough keeping up with the old stuff! But a lot of us have been picking up new skills during the lockdowns, almost without trying. For example, most of us hadn't used Zoom before COVID came, and most of us have learned something more about the technology that we've got because we had to if we want to join in things.

Beer Men's Shed isn't just about doing woodwork. Most of our members have each got around 45 years of work-experience behind them. Multiply that by around 30 members and you've got over 1,300 man/years of knowledge, capability, brainpower, dynamism and initiative on tap. Each of the members has taken a different approach to lockdown - learning a foreign language, building a website, raising donations for our new workshop, and so on. We've been taking projects home instead of being in our workshop together - fixing computer software, sorting out people's broadband and wifi problems, mending vacuum cleaners and so on.

We've also started to get ready for Spring on our allotment that was given to us last year by Clinton Devon Estates. Onions and turnips were planted in December to overwinter, and a new delivery of seed potatoes, onion sets and carrot seeds have just arrived ready to be planted before the end of February. That will be part of the outdoor exercise that we're all allowed.

Beer Men's Shed is not, unfortunately, like "The Repair Shop" on television. We aren't master craftsmen that can make magic happen to any old broken heirloom. The Shed is there as a Male Mental Health initiative - to help men who might be feeling lonely or isolated, or even excluded. When we're working in the Shed and look around, I'm sure that each of us thinks that none of that applies to me: we think that we're OK and we're just there to do jobs and to help other fellers who need the company. "I don't need to be here, but some of the other chaps do", we think. "Typical men!", you might say.



But we're a "support group" - we're there to help each other and any other men who want to join in from any of the surrounding towns or villages.

Luckily for us, the Government has made a special rule for "support groups" during the COVID pandemic. We're allowed to keep our doors open as long as no more than 15 people are inside the workshop (our own rules are that we

don't allow more than 6 during COVID) and as long as we're all wearing masks. The Government guidelines also say that people are allowed to leave home to attend support groups, so the members are OK to come along to the workshop. The vast majority of them have decided to self-isolate - but we still open up for our formal workshop sessions each week in case anybody needs us.

With all that energy from Beer Men's Shed being bottled up indoors, it's got to burst out somewhere! You may have seen in the media that we've just been given £10,000 by the National Lottery, £6,500 by EDDC, £2,000 by Devon County Council. We broke through our first goal of raising £20,000 in only eight weeks. But then another COVID lockdown started, so, we started raising more money.



The next bit of good news is that the Exeter Chiefs' Foundation has just agreed to donate £4,000 to Beer Men's Shed to help towards building our new and larger second workshop.

We're getting ready for the end of this COVID lockdown and planning ahead for our new workshop, so that we can welcome more men from our area to join in the Shed's work. We're being positive and looking forward to a better tomorrow. How does that song go? - "Ain't no stopping us now...!"

Chris Pickles

Surviving the Winter Lockdown

I don't know about you, but it felt to me as if the whole world was being told that we'd wake up on 1st January 2021 and the sky would be blue, the birds would be singing and everything that was wrong with 2020 would have simply gone away? Is it any wonder then, that people are feeling ever more anxious and panicked by the current lockdown?

First of all, we need to be reassured that we will get through it. It might be taking a little longer than we had all hoped, but if we think how far we've come already, we can get through this. We just need to keep being kind to ourselves and those around us. The really important thing is to focus on the now. It's a case of trying hard not to constantly think about what you can't do, but finding the joy in the things you can.

Create rituals; as many of you already know, my favourite piece of advice comes from a 92-years young lady, who had mastered the art of incorporating ritual into her every day. Each evening at 5:30pm, she cuts a piece of lemon, reaches for ice and mixes herself a long gin & tonic. She then lights a candle and spends time just gazing into the flame to count her blessings. Rituals don't have to be complicated or taxing - forget about forcing yourselves outside in the cold and rain for that "daily walk" or even reading ten pages of War and Peace nightly just because those things seem to be what is expected by others. Do whatever makes YOU feel good, it's not selfish; it's essential!

Limit exposure to the news media; it can easily become addictive and anxiety-provoking. Set boundaries around it, ensuring that you have something nice to do to switch off after observing the headlines. Above all, give yourself permission to pull up the drawbridge, cosy up, reach out to friends who let you be you and be gentle with yourself.

No one is an expert when it comes to getting through these strange and constantly changing times so, now that I've finished writing this, I'm going to attempt to practice what I preach, dig out my favourite Ealing comedy DVD & open the popcorn!

Take care and stay safe!

Debs xx

PS If you would like to talk to someone, please contact Lee on 07890 948262 or Annie on 07968 157136 and they can put you in touch with someone suitable.

Don't forget, if you or anyone you know would like to receive a printed copy of Beer Talks then just let your coordinator know.

INFORMATION ON LOCAL SHOPS AND TAKEAWAYS DURING LOCKDOWN 3 –

UPDATE 21st JANUARY 2021

BEER VILLAGE STORES

TEL: 01297 21782

Food, drink, household items, greetings cards, cigarettes, lottery and dry cleaning. Happy to deliver. Card payment over the phone or cash on delivery. Open 7 days per week, but orders Monday to Friday only please.

ROCK VILLA

TEL: 07752 113854

Post Office, Off license, gifts, day to day household items, greetings cards. Shop 7 days per week, no post office on Sundays.

BEER FISHERIES

TEL: 01297 20297

A wide range of fresh fish, delivery available. Currently Monday to Saturdays.

BEER PHARMACY

TEL: 01297 21823

All usual pharmaceutical and support health products, as well as prescriptions. Delivery available. Closed Sundays

WOOZIES

TEL: 01297 20707

Open as usual, closed Tuesdays

CHOCOLATE AND MORE

TEL: 01297 625999

Shop currently closed. Happy to receive orders over the telephone with local delivery if required.

STEAMERS

TEL: 07900 036231

Order and collect take away meals, currently two to three times per week. Details on Facebook.

BEER FISH AND CHIPS

TEL: 01297 625774

Open Thursday to Saturday for takeaways between 1200 – 1430 and 1700 – 2000. Orders can be called through in advance.