

SBC bulletin (no. 24) – 31st August 2020 - by Bridget

I've loved hearing about how other members started to play bridge (and even how they met their husbands/life partners), so I will tell you how I began.

It was at a stage when I was divorced with three small children, had met someone else, got engaged and then, sadly, he died. Needless to say I was feeling pretty low and a friend suggested I join her at an evening organised by the National Council for the Divorced and Separated (NCDS - a group to help those newly on their own get out and about again). After much resistance (not sure I wanted to spend time with people moaning about their 'ex's'), I joined and they were a surprisingly jolly group. One of the members played bridge and persuaded three of us to have a go. It was all a bit hit and miss but I enjoyed it, particularly the social side. It was where, firstly, I met two people some of you may remember: Alison Hood, who was a member of SBC for a time, and Sue Anslow (later Savery and now Campbell) who is still a member and who we hope to see again soon; and then I met my non-bridge-playing partner John. In fact, John and I pretty much ran the group for a while having split from NCDS and named our new group Network. However, when John and I got together we didn't think we should stay involved, someone else took over for a while but we gathered that the group fizzled out in the end - a shame as it helped so many of us.

So, to go back to bridge, the person from NCDS who taught us was not a natural teacher so I decided to join the classes at OBC and learn the basics. I never did persuade John to have a go, but he has other interests and is happy for me to pursue mine.



One of his interests is old motorbikes. I tried riding pillion once but it was so uncomfortable that I decided to learn to ride myself, so, aged 49, I joined a group of teenaged boys to learn. I like to think the boys were impressed as one of them said "Cor, I wish my Mum would learn to ride a motorbike".

They were all so sweet and encouraging and when I took the test they insisted I went back and told them how I got on. After one failure, I passed, went back to tell them and they all clapped and one of them kissed me on the cheek! I went on to ride in many UK rallies and on holidays all over Europe in torrential rain, storms and tempests -- and some perfect sunny days! The photo above was taken at one of our Brough Club rallies and I am riding my 1928 Brough Superior bike, now sadly sold to help my children buy houses, but I still have my Honda 400/4.

We recently had a small break in Ely (by car, not motorbikes). Booking the hotel was interesting. We first saw the hotel on 'Secret Escapes', a website which advertises holiday and hotel deals. It looked nice so I then went onto the 'Trivago' price-comparison website to see if they had a better deal for that hotel. It was about the same, so I then rang the hotel direct and got the best deal as the room was about the same price but they included dinner on the first evening up to a value of £30 each, so we went with that. The moral of the story - try ringing the hotel direct and negotiate a better deal.

Ely cathedral was amazing, especially since the oldest parts still standing date from around 1090, and it's enormous. A later part of it, completed in 1349, was once richly adorned with statues of saints. However, in 1541, after the dissolution of the monasteries, its sculptures were either removed or defaced and you can still see many headless figures in the alcoves and marks of chisels on the walls - what a load of hooligans! The rest of Ely was rather disappointing - all charity shops, barbers, hairdressers and nail bars -- if the residents of Ely are not all well-groomed, they have no excuse!

Here's the easiest cake I've ever made, has virtually no fat or eggs and is delicious:

All-Bran Fruit Loaf

<p>Ingredients: Margarine for greasing a loaf tin 100g self-raising flour 300ml skimmed milk 270g mixed dried fruit 140g caster sugar 100g All-Bran Original</p>	<p>Method: Preheat oven to 180°C or Gas Mark 4. Put All-Bran, sugar and dried fruit in a basin and mix well together. Stir in milk and leave mixture to stand for ½ an hour. Sieve in flour, mix well and pour into the greased tin. Bake for about 1 hour, turn out immediately, allow to cool, slice and eat (spread with butter)</p>
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I'm going to end with a poem: **Smiling is infectious** by Spike Milligan

Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today,
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner
and someone saw my grin.
When he smiled I realized
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile,
then I realized its worth.
A single smile, just like mine
could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected!

Take care everyone,
Bridget