

# Bridging Social Isolation

The newsletter of the Bridgend Centre in Bollington



Welcome to the April 2026 edition of 'Bridging Social Isolation'.

Now the clocks have sprung forward, it really feels like Spring is upon us and we start the new season with a new look newsletter!

As ever, there is lots going on at the Bridgend Centre in April. This weekend we have a 'Health and Wellbeing' event with free Tai Chi taster sessions on the Saturday, as well as free health checks. More details can be found on page 3.

On 25<sup>th</sup> April, we have our famous Vintage Fair, which will provide opportunities to grab a bargain whilst supporting our small charity at the same time.

In addition, we have all our regular activities, guided walks and groups plus a longer walk on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April to the West Parkgate of Lyme Park.

Enjoy the sights and sounds of April and we hope to see you at the Bridgend Centre soon!

## **Bridgend Centre**

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T: 01625 576311

[www.bridgendcentre.org.uk](http://www.bridgendcentre.org.uk)

Registered Charity 1123287

We are a charitable  
Incorporated Organisation.

## **Centre opening hours**

Monday - Friday 10-4

Saturday 10-3

## **Room Hire**

Our fantastic new meeting rooms are available for hire, including evenings and weekends. Please contact the centre for further information



## Bridgend Centre Unicorn goes viral



The Bridgend Centre hit the 'Bollington' Facebook page this month when a customer posted this picture of their little girl with a colourful unicorn purchased in our wonderful charity shop.

We love the idea of 'tell me that you have been to the Bridgend Centre without telling me you have been to the Bridgend Centre' as a way to describe the weird and wonderful things you can buy or obtain from our Centre.

Whether it is the three teenage boys wearing pink cowboy hats leaving the Centre last Thursday or the smile on the face of the isolated lady coming back from a trip on our Shuttle Bus trip, it is great to see the effect Bridgend has on people who visit.

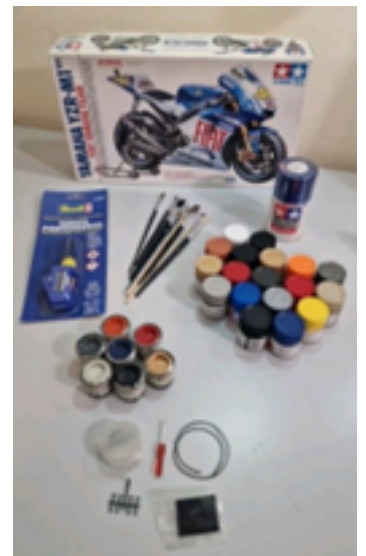
### The model donors

One of our regular visitors here to the Centre very kindly donated a part complete scale model kit of a Yamaha Motorcycle—a 1:12 scale model Yamaha YZR MI'09 by Tamiya to be exact! As you can see—there was really not much of the model which had already been completed.



We listed this item in our online eBay shop to raise funds for our charity. In January a lovely customer called Andrew purchased this from us, along with the collection of Humbrol and Tamiya paints.

Over the course of a couple of months he very patiently and carefully constructed the rest of the scale model and we were overjoyed to receive some completed photos of his work recently. We thought you may like to have a look at the fantastic job he has made! We are sure you will all agree!



We would like to pass on our thanks to both the donor and the purchaser—without generous and kind people like you our Centre would not be able to function and provide the support it does for many people—a heartfelt thankyou from everyone at The Bridgend Centre!

### Huge thanks to Macclesfield Lions



Macclesfield Lions recently made a very generous donation of £400 to the Bridgend Centre to help fund new heaters on the ground floor. The heaters are much more efficient and effective than the previous ones, that had been in situ for over 26 years and we hope they make the Centre warmer and more comfortable next winter!

Pictured is Martin Biss from the Lions with Bridgend Chief Officer Rebecca Lea.

## Bridgend Centre Fundraising Lotteries

Our recent '£35,000 for 35 years' campaign went fantastically well and all the money raised will go towards running our Drop-in Service, supporting people who need it, six days per week.

The campaign may have ended, but the need hasn't. Each week, we're still opening our doors to people looking for connection, support, and a sense of belonging. It's often the everyday moments - a chat over a cup of tea, a friendly face - that make the biggest difference. Your support has helped make that possible, and we're so grateful.

A great way to financially support the Bridgend Centre is by joining one or both of our two new lotteries. Both have potentially great cash prizes. The 'Win Big Lottery' is £20 per entry and we will give an amazing 50% as a cash prize to one lucky winner every month. We are aiming for a target of 100 participants for this draw, which would create a prize of £1,000 with fantastic odds of winning of 1 in 100.

The 'Members Lottery' is £3 per entry and there will be a first prize of 40% of the pot and a second prize of 10% of the pot. Again we have a target of 100 people signing up.

These are both fantastic opportunities to raise money for the Bridgend with the fun and excitement of potentially winning a cash prize!

The draws will take place at the end of April, so sign up today!

<https://bridgendcentre.org.uk/fundraising-lotteries/>

## Goodbye from Jane – Community Worker at the Bridgend Centre

I can hardly believe that it has been 9 years since I joined the Bridgend Team as a Community Worker. Now I have chosen to hang up my working boots and retire. Having had a wonderfully successful working life and career in various industries which included hotel management, recruitment, retail and sales management, I can now spend time on leisure and pleasure and most importantly my small but precious family and lots of friends.



Going back 9 years, which feels like yesterday, a friend who attended one of the activities at the Bridgend Centre had seen a job vacancy advertised. She convinced me that I should apply because she felt it was just 'up my street' and that I would love it.

(Lesson 1 – Listen to people who know you well)

This role came along at a time when I was struggling immensely following the death of my lovely, one in a million husband, Phil. So, trusting her judgement and friendship, I applied and was unexpectedly offered the job.

(Lesson 2 – In dark times when you think you can't- believe me you can)

I have loved the role, which has had such variety. It has a great people focus and is hectic but fun. Every day is busy and multi-tasking is a must. I was a little concerned initially that, as I lived in Poynton, I was a bit of an outsider coming into Bollington but I was welcomed with open arms and have felt very much part of the community. I have met many amazing and lovely people over the 9 years, I am a great believer that everyone has something to offer and that everyone has special unique and traits, whether or not they believe it themselves.

(Lesson 3 – Find that special something in everyone you meet)

Some funny things that have happened along the way. What goes on behind the scenes in a charity shop is sometimes hard to believe. I can now hold my hands up and confess to selling a bicycle which I thought had been dumped outside! It even had a lock on it! When a gentleman said he was interested in purchasing it I happily had the lock cut off and sold it to him and off he went with it. Some time later, a customer came and told us he thought his bike had been stolen from outside of the shop. The light dawned on us – eek! I was horrified. Luckily as we knew the customer who purchased it, we managed to contact him and he was happy to be refunded and the bike returned to its rightful owner. Phew!

(Lesson 4 – Some days may not go to plan, but tomorrow is another day)



On another occasion (and an interesting part of the job role) was catching squirrels inside the charity shop. There was a huge fiasco with myself and a colleague in one of the toilet cubicles where we thought we had the squirrel cornered. All that could be heard were squeals, hysteria and laughter as we found the squirrel stuck to our clothing then moving faster than lightning bouncing off the walls at great speed. We did catch it eventually and popped it back on the veranda.

## Goodbye from Jane continued.....

We are always grateful for the generous donations that are given to us. However there are occasions where we have laughed and cringed simultaneously – very personal adult toys and dirty underwear being just some of our treasures! But enough said on that. I have been asked also, to go and collect clothing which needed to be washed and returned to its owner – that is a service we don't provide. Every day is different.

There has been a great deal of positive change over the 9 years for the Bridgend Centre and it has been fabulous to be part of that. The layout and structure of the building, the staff team, the clientele and so much more have all changed beyond recognition.

(Lesson 5 – Change is good in order to keep up with a changing world)

I have always said that every town and village should have a facility like this – it is valuable beyond words to so many service users, volunteers and to members of the team too. We are all human and we all need that very special 'Bridgend family' support at some time.

It is very sad to be leaving but I wish the Bridgend Centre and the staff team continued success in all that they do in future times. I will miss everything and everyone. Thank you for the memories.

I hope that I have 'made a difference' in my time with the Bridgend Centre.  
I hope that I have helped people with their individual issues.  
I hope that our many conversations will be remembered.  
I hope that I have added cheer and a friendly voice to ease the tough days.  
I hope that I will see you again in future times when I visit.



**To celebrate my retirement and say goodbye, please pop in on Monday 13th April between 11am and 3pm. I will be bringing cakes and non-alcoholic bubbly, my treat to you.**

### Mind games - Do you know your proverbs?

- |                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Red sky in the morning | 11. Absence makes               |
| 2. A stich in time        | 12. A friend in need            |
| 3. Never judge a book     | 13. Practice makes              |
| 4. A bad workman          | 14. Don't put off till tomorrow |
| 5. The early bird         | 15. The grass is always greener |
| 6. A rolling stone        | 16. Where there's a will        |
| 7. Every cloud            | 17. Red sky at night            |
| 8. Actions speak          | 18. Honesty is                  |
| 9. An apple a day         | 19. Appearances can be          |
| 10. A bird in the hand    | 20. Laughter is                 |



## Walk - The Carrs Country Park

The Bridgend Centre is renowned in the area for its guided walks and walking trails exploring the beautiful countryside in the Bollington area. We have started producing some guided walks a little further afield for Macclesfield's monthly 'Local People' magazine. The walk this month follows the River Bollin through the Carrs country park, on the edge of Wilmslow town centre, before visiting Styal country park and Quarry Bank Mill.



This is a flat walk of 4.5 miles over a variety of surfaces. Parking is at the Carrs car park on Cliff Road or Wilmslow train station and bus stops are a short walk away. Refreshments and WC facilities are available at the car park or at the mill on the way round. Please be extra careful on the busy road crossings.

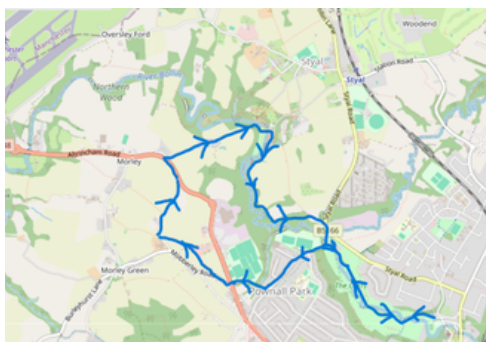
From Carrs Car Park, go through the yellow gate to the left of the café/WC building and turn right. Follow the path for a quarter of a mile to bridge over the River Bollin. Go over the bridge and turn right (signposted Lindow Common & the airport). Keep the river on your right hand side and follow the path for about half a mile to a T junction. Turn left here (signposted Lindow Common & the airport).

Go slightly up hill and turn left at the next gate onto a track. Then turn right after 50yds onto a Restricted Byway path. Keep straight on until you come to a road named Broad Walk. Turn right and then almost immediately left onto Kings Road. On the other side of the road is a red post box – take the footpath alongside the post box.

Follow the path crossing Pigginsshaw Brook with playing fields on the right hand side. At the end of the footpath, go straight on crossing the busy A538 onto Mobberley Road. Follow the road for a short distance and take the next footpath on the right hand side through a black gate.

Follow the footpath to the end and turn right onto Nansmoss Lane. At the end of the lane turn left and stay on the footpath alongside the A538. Proceed for about 200 yds until you see a layby on the opposite side of the road. Carefully cross the road here and join a track (signposted Lauren's ride).

Follow the track to the keeping the right hand side of a red brick farm and descend down to Quarry Bank Mill. Take the steps to the left of the mill building. At the end of the first flight of steps, turn right and walk along the front of the mill. There is a café and toilets in the mill.



Proceed straight on between Snugberry's ice cream and the recycle point. Go through the black gate and keep the old mill ponds and River Bollin on your right hand side (ignore the paths to the right). When the path eventually opens up, bear right at a gate and proceed to another gate. Turn right here (signposted the Carrs) and proceed to a car park.

Turn right crossing a red brick bridge over the river and turn immediately left (signposted town centre via the Carrs). Retrace your steps to the start. - Daniel O'Brien, walks volunteer

## Bridgend Book Club

Bridgend Book Club got off to a controversial start this week with the first book now under our belts. The book was chosen for us by the Cheshire Library service and was 'Reservoir 13' by Jon McGregor. It was read by everyone and discussed at length at the second meeting which took place on Tuesday. The story follows 13 years after a young girl goes missing whilst holidaying with her family in a fictional village somewhere in the Peak District.

Reservoir 13 is described as a "chilling meditation on loss and time". It is safe to say that this book divided the group, and the debate was very constructive and interesting. The focus of the story is on the cycles of life, both the natural world and the interwoven lives of the people in the affected community. The story documents how this shocking incident affects the community, the people and the region. Across the 13 years many things change and shift, but conversely other things remain the same and the story describes this in fine detail. Without giving away any spoilers, here are some of the comments members of the group shared:

"I enjoyed the description of the natural world and how the author reminds us of the cycles of life and the passing of time"

"The style of writing with limited paragraphs separating thoughts and lack of speech marks at times made the story hard to follow"

"I found the interwoven lives intriguing and wanted to hear more about them into the future"

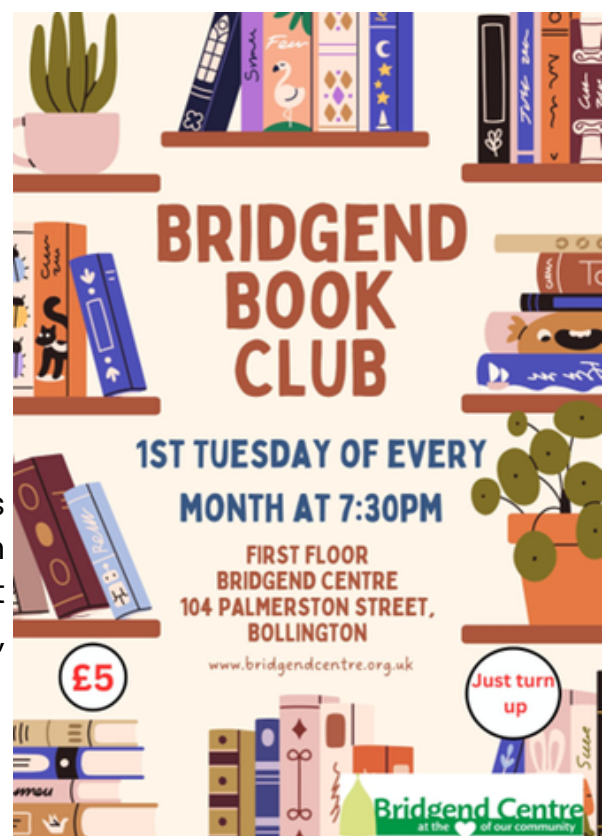
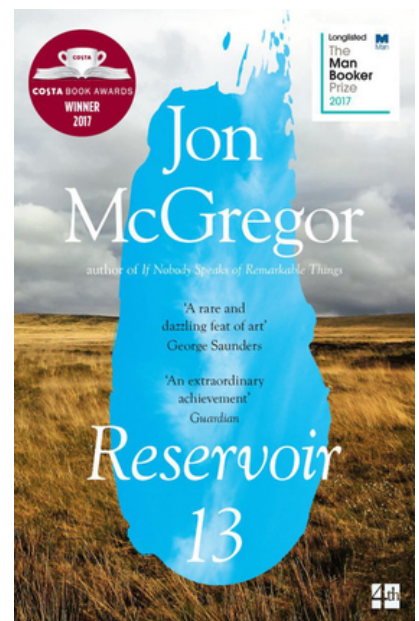
"There was not enough focus on the missing girl and her family for me"

"I was expecting a traditional mystery and hoped for more of the loose ends to be tied up"

The whole group felt that Jon McGregor achieved his aim of writing a story around the theme of "life goes on" and those of the group who had read it before enjoyed it on second reading for that specific element.

We have now swapped for our next book which is Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman and all were keen to get started. We meet on the first Tuesday of each month, next meeting is 5th May, 7:30pm at the Bridgend Centre. All are welcome.

Review by Jo Maitland



## Recipe - Lamb and Beef Meatballs

### Ingredients

500g/1lb 2oz lamb mince or beef mince, or a mix of both  
1 slice bread, whizzed or grated into breadcrumbs  
½ tsp dried mint  
1½ tsp dried oregano  
200g/7oz feta  
2 large red onions, cut into chunks  
3 tbsp olive oil  
1 lemon  
2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes  
1 tbsp granulated or caster sugar  
½ tsp ground allspice or cinnamon  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
cooked spaghetti, rice or couscous to serve with your choice of salad or vegetables



### Method

Preheat the oven to 220C/200C Fan/Gas 7. Put the mince, breadcrumbs, mint, ½ tablespoon of the oregano and ½ teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper in a mixing bowl. Finely crumble in 75g/2¾oz of the feta, then use your hands to squish the ingredients together until well blended. (This will help the mince to also become tender). Roll the mixture into 20–25 small meatballs.

Put the meatballs and onion chunks into a roasting tin in a single layer. Drizzle over the olive oil, give the tin a good shake, then roast for 10 minutes. Give the tin another shake to release any stuck meatballs, then turn each one over and roast for a further 10 minutes, until the meatballs are browned.

Zest the lemon and keep the zest fresh for serving by wrapping it in a piece of damp kitchen paper. Juice the lemon and mix the juice with the tomatoes, sugar or sweetener, the remaining dried oregano and the allspice or cinnamon. Use 200ml/7fl oz water to swill out the tomato tins and stir this in too.

Pour the tomato sauce all over the meatballs and onions, turn the oven down to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6 and bake for 35 minutes more.

Check the meatballs are cooked through and the sauce has thickened. Season to taste. To serve, spoon the meatballs over rice or couscous, crumble over the remaining feta and sprinkle with the lemon zest.

#### Answers to brain teaser on page

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Red sky in the morning, shepherds warning     | 11. Absence makes, the heart grow fonder               |
| 2. A stitch in time, saves nine                  | 12. A friend in need, is a friend indeed               |
| 3. Never judge a book, by its cover              | 13. Practice makes, perfect                            |
| 4. A bad workman, blames his tools               | 14. Don't put off till tomorrow, what you can do today |
| 5. The early bird, catches the worm              | 15. The grass is always greener, on the other side     |
| 6. A rolling stone, gathers no moss              | 16. Where there's a will, there's a way                |
| 7. Every cloud, has a silver lining              | 17. Red sky at night, shepherds delight                |
| 8. Actions speak, louder than words              | 18. Honesty is, the best policy                        |
| 9. An apple a day, keeps the doctor away         | 19. Appearances can be, deceiving                      |
| 10. A bird in the hand, is worth two in the bush | 20. Laughter is, the best medicine                     |