

Up!

Accentuating the Positive

ISSUE NO. 1 OCTOBER 2020

Reading Up!
Eating Up!
Living Up!

Making the world
a better place -
one page at a time

Welcome

TAKE A WALK ON THE UP! SIDE

Contents

Up Front! <i>The Team</i>	1
Welcome on board!	
Look Up! <i>Steve Lowe</i>	2
The real Kes	
Up Sticks! <i>Winston Plowes</i>	3
Life on the water at Hebden Bridge	
Listen Up! <i>Jez Lowe</i>	5
Spotlight on a Pitman Poet	
Write Up! <i>Poetry Corner</i>	6
Poetry on a theme	
Making Up! <i>Indigopobble</i>	7
Crochet design with Pat Foster	
Eat Up! <i>Square Roots Kitchen</i>	9
Nothing with a face - and it all tastes ace!	
Close Up! <i>Photography Corner</i>	11
All the best photographs	
Read Up! <i>Vic Watson</i>	12
My favourite read - a personal recommendation	
Growing Up! <i>Lovaine Community Garden</i>	13
A haven in the heart of Urban	
Global Round Up! <i>Sophie Lively</i>	15
Changing cultures - one name at a time	
Keeping Up! <i>Buy The Kilo</i>	16
Meet the self-styled "Plastic Warrior"	
Coming Up! <i>Next Issue</i>	18
Send us your poems and photos	





Photograph by Jo Marr

Up Front!

Here at Up! we're all about people, community and focusing on the positives.

Let's face it, everyone likes a moan now and again, us included! But instead of moaning, every issue of Up! will instead focus on the good things – what we can do to improve life. We'll meet people doing great stuff for others, share stuff that improves our lives and stuff that increases the chances of the world still being a great place for all of our tiny people when they are big and we aren't here anymore. Great stuff!

Up! is put together in our lovely home in Cullercoats, a tiny ex-fishing village on the north east coast, dating back to the 16th century. From the seafront, 200 metres from our home, you look out at the big, wide world, and this is our intent with Up! This being Issue 1, we mainly feature projects and voices close to home. However, just like when you're standing on our wonderful sea front, we plan to look outwards and sincerely hope that, like the passing ships we see every day, many of you will come into port and decide to stay aboard with us as we begin to travel further afield. Up ahoy!

Bridget & Harry

Bridget Gallagher is currently studying for an MA in Creative Writing with the Open University. She has been running her well-loved craft skills business HoneyBridge House for several years and enjoys playing concertina and singing.

Harry Gallagher is an experienced writer and dramatist with several poetry books to his name. He leads the north east stanza of the Poetry Society and is often to be found accompanying Bridget on the folk scene.

Looking Up!

STEVE LOWE

Up!'s outdoors man on a favourite feathered friend

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Perhaps it had something to do with Ken Loach and Kes, a film that made me laugh and cry, based on Barry Hines' excellent "Kestrel for a Knave"? It may be the fact that the bird epitomises a sense of freedom, but either way I adore Kestrels.

They are considered by many to be our most familiar and charismatic birds of prey. Their habit of hovering motionless over open grassland, farmland and even near roads and motorways also means they are one of the easiest to spot.

Hanging motionless in the sky, they have the ability to keep their head absolutely still, even in windy conditions. Keen eyesight then ensures they can drop onto prey - typically small mammals, birds and insects - with pinpoint accuracy. Nests are usually old nests of other birds but they also use ledges, buildings, boxes and tree holes.

Sadly, over the course of the last 40 years, increasing pressures from agricultural intensification and changes in land use have contributed to a substantial decline in the size of the UK population and the kestrel is listed as a species of conservation concern across Europe. This decline appears to be less severe here in Northumberland and they are still one of our commonest birds of prey, but for how long?



Photograph by Jo Richardson

Effortlessly at height hangs his still eye (Ted Hughes)

It's now easy to add your own observations to the dataset required to remain vigilant. For instance, the Kestrel Sighting Count aims to record sightings of wild kestrels across the UK. Data obtained from this will help the Hawk Conservancy Trust identify those areas used by kestrels and provide useful insights for the development of future scientific research projects. Records can also be submitted to your own county bird recorder or via your local environmental records centre - details below.

Kestrel Sighting Count

<https://www.hawk-conservancy.org/conservation-research/uk/kestrel-conservation/>

ERIC (NE)

<http://www.ericnortheast.org.uk/recording-wildlife.html>



Steve is at his happiest outdoors, especially in his adopted county of Northumberland. An experienced wildlife professional, he has fingers in "pies of many different flavours"! He is currently working as a freelancer with Northumberland Rivers Trust as well as undertaking working with volunteers on local heritage and archaeology projects. His hope is to leave the world a better place.

Up Sticks!

WINSTON PLOWES

Poet Winston Plowes lives on a canal barge close to the town of Hebden Bridge. He tells Up! a little about life on the water ...

Tell us a bit about yourself and your floating home. Did you choose life on the water or did it choose you?

I am in the privileged position of earning a living with my words and helping others find their own voice. Michael Symmons Roberts once described a poet as “a messenger bringing back bulletins from the edge of experience” and for me this statement has never been more true than now. As writers, we have an important role in life to listen and to interpret, we are journalists of the emotions.

Here on the Rochdale Canal we all have a story about how we ended up here in our community of twenty boats. I nearly made the move in the early 90s but was put off as this was before mobiles and wireless technology. Lots of people live in Calderdale to escape inner city Manchester, Leeds and Bradford but to stay close enough to commute.

We nestle in the damp bottom of a steep sided valley where the road, river, railway and canal almost seem to plait themselves together as they squeeze through tunnels and stride over bridges. I've been here 13 years and have settled into my shadow here aboard a 52ft widebeam canal boat.



Photograph by Dave Croft

You have a day off from being Poet In Residence at the school you work at. Tell us about your ideal day.

After a fried breakfast eaten outside, the morning mist has burnt off and I'm going for a 10k run, up to meet the skyline on the open moor, looking forward to spaghetti on my descent and a glass of red wine after. I might have been lucky and seen an owl or an Emperor moth.

How has living on the water influenced the way you view the world? Does it have an influence on your poetry for example?

Interestingly I rarely write about the cut, maybe I'm too close to see it clearly? But here's a short piece commissioned by the arts festival in nearby Hebden Bridge.

Olive Moon

Reflections of passing strangers
doubling the silence.
Slow brushing,
skimming the dregs,
painting the valley's wet crease.
Ploughing through the swim
and tickling the whiskers of fishes.

Up Sticks!

WINSTON PLOWES



Living on a canal boat is like the most luxurious form of camping imaginable, you are more in touch with the weather, the wildlife and the seasons and It's a good home for a writer.

What advice, if any, would you give to anyone considering alternative ways of living?

I've never been one for convention and following the herd so I would suggest that you go for it but make sure you have a safety net just in case.

A cheeky one to finish! Hebden Bridge has long been famed for its Arts scene. Is it really as great as it's cracked up to be?

I need to tread carefully here... Some would say there are too many cafes and bars and shops for tourists and too few practical and functional shops for the people who live here. It is of course a tourist driven area and recently won a high street of the year award against stiff competition so must be doing something right. I have met and collaborated with many of its creative inhabitants from a gong bath musician to a cat spiritualist and love the variety of life here. You can sometimes spot half a dozen poets during a weekly shop!

Winston Plowes shares his floating home near Hebden Bridge, Calderdale with his seventeen-year-old cat, Sausage.

He teaches creative writing in schools, universities and to local groups while she dreams of Mouseland. His latest collection, Tales from the Tachograph was published jointly with Gaia Holmes in 2018 by Calder Valley Poetry
www.winstonplowes.co.uk



A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees.

AMELIA EARHART

Listen up!

JEZ LOWE

If someone mentions 'Folk Clubs', what's your initial reaction? I'm willing to bet that somewhere high up on the list would be mentions of fingers in ears, Arran sweaters and tragic tales of woe in the valley-o (all 64 verses). Yet if that perception was really true, then how did the folk scene give a grateful nation the likes of Billy Connolly, Jasper Carrott, Mike Harding or a list of other national treasures?

If there were any justice, our featured artist this month would have joined that list many years ago and be world-famous. Jez Lowe, the North East-based singer and musician has all the attributes needed. A prolific songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, his work, though recognisably folk-derived, travels far from its source and back again, whilst always keeping its feet planted in Jez's beloved North East.

Born and raised in Easington, County Durham some 65 years ago now, he only seems to stop touring the world in order to record more songs - and what songs they are! Ranging from heart-wrenching tales of real-life tragedy (Last Of The Widows) to the laugh-out-loud (High Part Of The Town) they hit every sense square-on.



Listen to any of his albums and you'll find the songs quickly lodged in your brain, so full of hooks are they.

Personally I've always thought of him as the Folk equivalent of Paul McCartney. Go see him live and you'll come away with aching ribs (he is very funny) and the warm, warm glow you only get from a truly great artist taking you under their wing and sharing a unique one-off experience with you. All this and the man has also authored two novels - but that's another story!

Up! recommends Jez Lowe:
www.jezlowe.com

Write Up!

HARRY GALLAGHER

Viewpoint

The traffic rages and fumes
but just above the spume
a stillness of kestrel
holds the world in its eye.

Wren

There is a wren in our back garden
who doesn't even know
the name of the Prime Minister.

Smooth and round and perfect
(the wren, that is)
it flits around in the browning
of bush branches.

Needing no leader,
its only boss the sun
rings a lark alarmclock
for start of shift.

Breakfasted and kids fed,
wren takes the red-eye flight
and all the livelong day
sings its songs of freedom.

Garden Gangsters

There's a two-tone coaltit
sat tweeting in a tree,
his ghost town warnings
in a limited key.

Down on the grassy dancefloor
moonstomping magpies,
all eighteen-holer docs
and sta-press thighs

hang around in the shade
by a brutalist drainpipe,
cawing out to each other
in search of easy bother.

Slow and steady in the saddle
of a horse chestnut sits
a smooth collared dove
crooning old doo-wop hits.

Underage spuggies crowd
round a crumby jukebox,
drinking in the sun –
too much, too young.

In a sudden discord of squawks
and stripes and pips,
the gull cops pile in,
fat on nicked seaside chips.

Public gathering dispersed,
they strut around friendless,
bragging loud about bloodsports,
making up overtime reports.

Just out of sight,
next door but one
the revellers regather,
the beak goes on ...

Making Up!

INDIGOPOBBLE

Up! talks to a Morpeth maker, hooked on crochet

Tell us a little bit about yourself and your crafting. How did you learn to crochet?

My mum taught me the basic crochet stitches when I was about ten or eleven years old. She was a knitter really and just tried out some crochet for herself and then taught me. I made a very simple scarf when I was about twelve and then just abandoned crochet for several decades!

Crochet came back into my life just before I retired from teaching. I remember it was the February half term holiday and I thought I needed a project so that I had something other than work to think about. For some reason crochet came to mind. I bought a book and some yarn, remembered the basic stitches and I was off. Then I discovered various bloggers, Facebook and Instagram and there was no stopping me. Once I retired, I started going to the social sessions at my local yarn shop, met a bunch of like minded people and some great friendships were made.

We have to ask, where did the name Indigopobble come from, it's so unusual!

It's much harder than you might imagine to come up with a totally unique name. My eldest son, who is now in his twenties, gave himself the middle name of Indigo when he was about 8 years old. I borrowed that part of my name from him. For several years I taught a class of Y1/2 children and the maths scheme we used in the school involved reading a nonsense poem called "The Quangle Wangle's Hat" by Edward Lear. All kinds of weird and wonderful creatures lived in the hat and the



Pat Foster, aka Indigopobble, with one of her latest designs - the Elizabeth Shawl

children had to do a counting activity. One of the creatures was "the pobble who has no toes". The children really enjoyed the poem and it has always stayed in my mind. Put the two together and you have a totally unique name.

What was the first item that you designed yourself, and where did your inspiration for it come from?

My first design was a blanket. The inspiration for it came from a colour scheme put together by Heather of *The Patchwork Heart* fame. I only joined Facebook so I could read her posts! One of her posts was a hot water bottle cover which was a rainbow of stripes with each colour separated by dark grey. I loved the colours, added one more, found a stitch I liked and the *Rainbow Stained Glass* blanket was born. It is still one of my most popular patterns.



Making Up!

INDIGOPOBBLE

Can you talk us through the process of designing an item, from the initial idea to the finished pattern?

It varies quite a bit. Sometimes, I can see exactly what I want to achieve in my mind's eye and then there is a bit of experimenting to get the arithmetic to work as in my *String of Beads* shawl.

Sometimes I am inspired by textures as I was with my *Nine of Bobbles* Blanket. My first shawl pattern was my *Helka* shawl. I had seen the beautiful things made using Scheepjes Whirls and just wanted to try it. Occasionally, I draw out a chart on squared paper first. I must admit, I do love the maths involved in designing a pattern and I get a lot of satisfaction from figuring it out.

I try to make notes as I go along, type up a first draft and then make a sample swatch to check if the pattern works making any corrections as I go. This is also useful for taking photos which might help make the pattern a bit clearer.

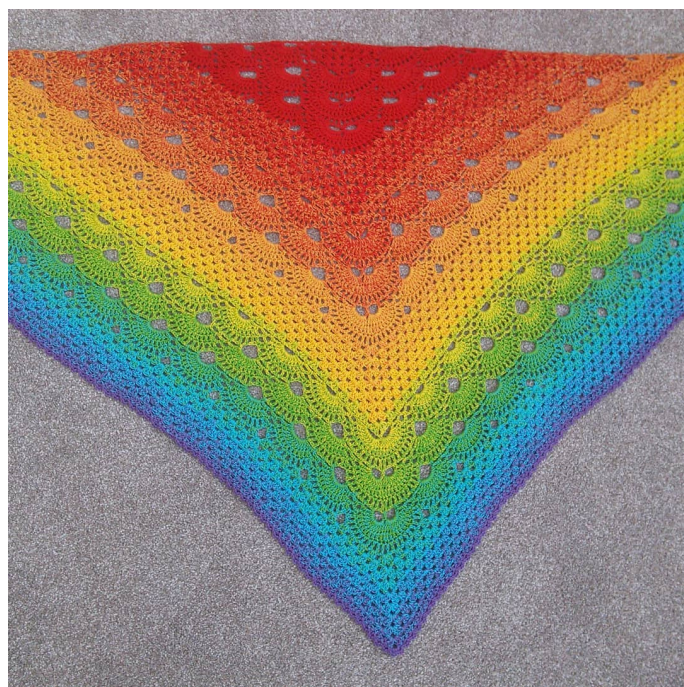
Once I think the pattern is right, I translate it so that there is a US version as well. I used to ask on my Instagram account if anyone was interested in testing but now, I have built up a group of brilliant people that I approach to see if they are willing to help me. I have started setting up a group on Instagram and then my testers can share any issues that arise. Any corrections are made. I have a couple of friends who proofread and final corrections are made. Then I publish my patterns on Ravelry.

All this must take quite a bit of time?

It's more time consuming than you might imagine but it's lovely seeing other versions of my designs being made and posted on social media or the Ravelry projects page.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking of having a go at designing their own project?

Go for it! I love the idea that you can end up with something totally unique. It doesn't matter whether or not you end up with a written pattern. But if you do, I strongly recommend that you have it tested before you publish it.



If you'd like to try one of Pat's designs for free, why not check out her 'Starting with a Granny Square' shawl pattern (pictured above) which you can find at: <https://www.ravelry.com/projects/indigopobble/starting-with-a-granny-shawl>

Eat Up!

SQUARE ROOTS KITCHEN

Up! talks to a kitchen with taste

Tell us a bit about yourselves and your business.

Hi there, we are husband and wife team Matt and Jo and we're the owners of Square Roots Kitchen which is an all vegan deli based in Tynemouth Metro Station. We absolutely love what we do and are passionate about helping to sustain our planet by providing cruelty free, animal friendly food and drinks to our customers.



What was it that made you decide to become vegan? Was it an easy decision?

We were enlightened about veganism by a customer who asked if we sold any vegan products when we first traded at our

stall in Tynemouth market. We researched what being vegan was and were horrified at the unnecessary cruelty inflicted on animals to provide for the meat and dairy industries. Once we realised you can thrive on a well balanced cruelty free diet the decision was easy.

What would you say to anyone who's considering trying a vegan diet?

We would advise changing your diet over time. Maybe have an all vegan day once a week and gradually increase the days. Make



Matt and Jo Coles, founders of Square Roots Kitchen

sure your diet is varied and also take a vitamin b12 supplement. We're sure you won't regret it.

Up! can definitely vouch for the quality of your food, having sampled most of the menu now! A simple question for you – how on earth do you make it all taste so good?!

That's great to hear thanks, we put a lot of thought and attention into our food and try to use the produce from our allotment whenever we can. There's nothing like home grown, home baked produce.

We know that Square Roots is about more than just great food, sustainability is really important to you too isn't it?

It is yes..we had a chance meeting with Surfers Against Sewage and they were encouraging local businesses to replace three of their single use products for e.g plastic cutlery to wooden etc. Again we researched plastic pollution and saw the damage it's doing to our planet so it was the only way forward for us and we started to use recyclable and compostable products. We also encourage customers to bring their own cups too.

Eat Up!

SQUARE ROOTS KITCHEN

Finally, the two of you always look so happy in your work. Give us your top tips for a happy life!

That's so nice to hear thanks...we are so thankful to now have a good work/life balance. We love what we do but mostly enjoy cooking cruelty free food and drinks in an animal friendly environment....not to mention enjoying a good glass or two of vegan (of course) wine at home with our feet up!



Strawberry Devine , Peanut Butter Brownies, Croissants with Blueberry Jam and Cashew Flapjacks

5 Ways to Make a Difference

1.

Carry out a Random Act of Kindness. Why not leave a bunch of flowers on a neighbour's doorstep, or pay for a 'buy it forward' coffee at your local café?

2.

Check out your local council's recycling policy and make sure you're recycling as much as you can. You might be surprised by what's allowed and what's not!

3.

Organise a book / dvd swap with friends

4.

Support a local business by liking and sharing their social media posts. This really does make a difference, and won't cost you a penny!

5.

Plant a tree to help offset your carbon footprint.

For lots of useful tips check out - <https://www.conservationhandbooks.com/how-plant-trees>

Close Up!

PHOTOS ON A THEME - NATURE



Photograph by Jo Marr



Photograph by Mark Husman



Photograph by Jo Marr



Photograph by Jo Marr

Send us your photos for next month's edition - check out the back page for details



Photograph by Dylan Belmont

Read Up!

VIC WATSON

Here at Up! we love a good book. There are so many to choose from now, so we thought we'd ask author Vic Watson to tell us about one of her favourites.

No Time for Goodbye by Linwood Barclay was the first crime fiction novel I read. And what a story! You know when you're fourteen and you wish your family would just disappear? Well, when Cynthia wakes up the morning after making that wish, hungover and full of regret, she discovers that her family have gone, leaving no trace. No bodies, no evidence, no sign of struggle.

Twenty-five years on, Cynthia takes part in a TV programme to publicise cold cases but after her appearance, strange things begin to happen. There's a letter, then a phone call and an email. A hat, like the one her dad used to wear, appears on her kitchen table. Is Cynthia going mad?

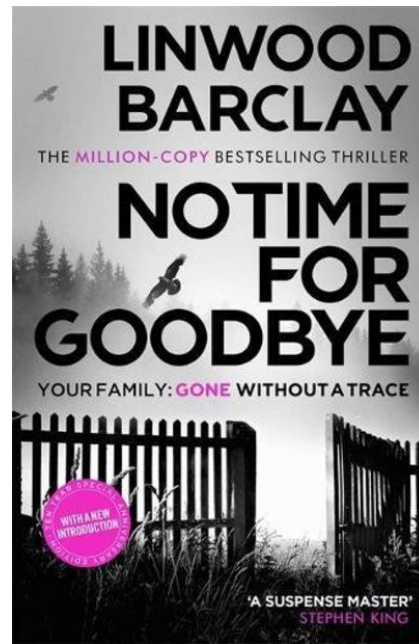
Narrated by Terry, Cynthia's husband, *No Time for Goodbye* is a classic thriller, pulling the reader in from the first page and tightening its grip until the very end.



Victoria Watson is a writer, reader and host of Noir at the Bar in Newcastle and, in 2020, ran Virtual Noir at the Bar for 22 weeks, connecting readers and writers from all over the world with one another. Victoria runs Creative Writing groups through her business, Elementary V Watson.

She is also a copy-editor and proofreader.

www.elementaryvwatson.com



Published in the UK by Orion Books

The characters are believable and well-rounded, dropped into a situation that the reader can invest in.

No Time for Goodbye is a well-plotted novel about ordinary people in an extraordinary situation. I loved *No Time for Goodbye* because it's eminently readable, consistently paced and filled with intrigue, I can't recommend it highly enough.

In June 2020, I was honoured to host Linwood Barclay - my literary hero - at Virtual Noir at the Bar, an online event that connects readers and writers.

Growing Up!

LOVAINE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Up! talks to Wendy Young about the joys and challenges of setting up and maintaining a community garden in the heart of Urban

Tell us a bit about how the garden came into being.

It started in 2009 in an attempt to solve a problem. The space was basically a flytipping and antisocial behaviour hotspot, a WWII bomb site left to decay until local residents set up the Lovaine Community Garden Group.

It was a huge undertaking and responsibility - there are lots of large, established trees in the garden which have Tree Protection Orders on them and are now under our duty of care. As beautiful as they are, it comes with expenses and challenges.

We've been lucky to receive a few grants over the years from various charitable funders, such as the Mayor's Wellbeing Trust, to initially set up the garden, and more recently from Tesco 'Bags of Help' and The Community Foundation. These have enabled us to create a unique, more accessible space; we have a polytunnel to grow things overwinter and protect tender crops, with paved areas for wheelchair or buggy access. There are raised vegetable beds, a fruit orchard path, herb beds, flowerbeds - both perennial and wildlife - with a mix of pollinators and wild birds.

We are organic and use no pesticides, herbicides or chemical fertilizers. We have chickens and ducks - the duck pond irrigates a portion of the garden, the free-range poultry eat the pests (slugs, snails etc) and provide free fertiliser. All eggs go to neighbours/members/users nearby, keeping food miles low and hopefully making up for the occasional crowing fest from our resident cockerel, Boris.



The lovely thing is that over time, it has become not just a garden, but a community space. We've had artists, wood carvers creating art and sculpture and have run a whole range of craft sessions for local kids, big and small! And we are very keen on upcycling/recycling - free pallets are a Godsend!

A custom-made gazebo/bandstand has hosted music gatherings and there are also bird watching activities and astronomy events. One night we gathered to watch a lunar eclipse - we didn't see it, but we were treated to an apocalyptic lighting storm instead. That was fun in a polytunnel!



Growing Up!

LOVAINE COMMUNITY GARDEN



How can the local community get involved?

We have open days for the public, or at least we did (pre-pandemic) and hope to again. In the meantime, you can also book a private session in the garden (via our Facebook page) for a small group of people, we have had lots of people booking private sessions to meet with family, or friends in small groups in a private outdoor space. We are not a huge space so we do need to limit numbers and the booking system has helped us make sure that everyone gets a chance to access the space in a fair and safe way.

Another way is to come along to one of the hosted sessions organised by our members/friends - as well as gardening, there are music sessions, craft sessions and wellbeing sessions currently being held - obviously these are limited to 6 people for the foreseeable future. If you have an idea for a group or session you would like to run, get in touch with us and we can try and figure something out.

What advice would you give to anyone who wanted to set up their own community garden?

Give it a go! It is a lot of work but it is super rewarding, if you need advice or pointers on where to begin with something like this, check out VODA North Tyneside, they can support you in forming a legitimate community organisation, the charity Groundwork can help you with funding eligibility and support, and the website Social Farms and Gardens is very useful and is free to access but you do need to sign up as a member. The RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) also has various resources available for this sort of project.

What skills have you learned through running the garden?

Patience is a virtue - when you start seedlings, take cuttings or plant a shrub/tree, you have to wait, it could take 10 years to see fruit or flower - that is gardening. When you plant a garden, you are planning for the future, - and that can be super valuable for lots of people, especially in these times where we already had a huge problem with people suffering with mental health issues, we now have even more uncertain times ahead. Any gardening task is planning for the future, and that is a positive thing. Also compromise, we don't always agree on everything, but nature finds a way to compromise/exist in harmony and so do we.

We know that you're a singer and musician too Wendy, so we'd like you to finish the song title - "I'd like to teach the world to ..."

Haha - I feel like 'to sing in perfect harmony' is a big ask right now! So I am going to say 'to grow organically' instead - look after the bees and insects, plant native species beneficial to pollinators in your garden, even if that is just a yard with a pot or a hanging basket.

You can find Lovaine Community Garden on facebook and book a visit - <https://www.facebook.com/LovaineCommunityGarden>

Global Round Up!

SOPHIE LIVELY

Our regular look at what's happening elsewhere in the world



Imagine not being referred to by your name in public. You have no personal identification documents. Your name is not on your child's birth certificate. Your name does not even appear on your own wedding invitations. This is the reality for so many women in Afghanistan.

However, using the *#WhereIsMyName* hashtag, women's rights activists have been tirelessly campaigning to bring about change.

Challenging attitudes that often leave women excluded from many parts of society, their lobbying across social media and beyond has resulted in significantly optimistic news for many women in Afghanistan.

As of September 2020, three years of activism have culminated in Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, signing an amendment allowing women's names to appear on identification cards and birth certificates. Ingrained Afghan tradition states that using a woman's name in public brings shame on the family and thus, prior to this amendment, only fathers' names were recorded on birth certificates.

This amendment is a remarkable development for women's ability to reclaim their identities. Regaining their sense of self, this is a move toward inclusion and gender equality in a country deeply entrenched with notions of 'male honour'.

Previously excluding women from many aspects of social life, it is hoped that the success of this particular campaign and the change of law it's brought about will have positive consequences for women, giving them autonomy in accessing, without the presence of a man, vital rights such as healthcare, the ability to travel freely, education and enrolling their own children in school.

An increasing number of female activists, academics and change makers are pushing through in Afghanistan and this latest news highlights the incredibly positive and real-life effects their efforts have made and continue to make.

Change is possible.

Sophie Lively is currently studying for an MSc in Global Development with the Open University. She is passionate about social justice and life-long learning, and spends as much time as possible out of doors with her 2 young boys and chocolate labrador. An avid reader, you can find her on Instagram - @whatsophieisreading

Keeping Up!

BUY THE KILO

In this world of needing to do more to help conserve our planet for future generations, knowing where to start can feel a little overwhelming. Up! speaks to Jackie Sewell, owner of eco-friendly business Buy The Kilo.

Jackie, can you tell us a bit about you and your business?

I started this business with my oldest daughter Rachael. For over 30 years I had an interior design and soft furnishing business.

About 15 years ago I was doing an interior design course as I was self-taught and wanted to have the qualifications behind me. I completely changed direction and started a Fine Art degree. This changed my life and direction I was going in. My work evolved over my course and I found I was gravitating towards found objects, especially plastic.

Working with plastic and highlighting the environmental issues through this platform, we as a family needed to reevaluate our life and lifestyle. My youngest daughter was living in Cornwall and she was shopping local and visiting a few Zero Waste shops in her area. We saw a gap in the market in the North East and thought we would bring the concept here.

Our business is all about saving your one-use plastic items going to landfill by reusing them. You come to the shop and refill your cartons with dried goods such as pasta and rice, pulses and beans, nuts and seeds, baking ingredients, herbs and spices, shampoos and shower gels, oils and



vinegars, household cleaning products, peanut butter and plastic free household items and toiletries, we have nearly 400 products. This shop is about food management and managing your food waste, buying what you need, rather than buying what you're forced to buy in the supermarkets.

Since we opened 18 months ago, we have helped and advised around a dozen other shops to open, creating a fantastic zero-waste community.

Some of our readers might think that living sustainably is difficult and costly. Can you suggest some easy ways to make a start?

We never encourage anyone to over-buy, and a lot of people who shop regularly with us say they save money shopping with us, as they are buying what they need and there is no waste. We are not Tesco and we can't compete with cheap pasta. Our food is of an amazing quality and we would say that we compare our food to the 'Best' ranges in the supermarkets.

Keeping Up!

BUY THE KILO

Living sustainably takes time rather than money, it is time consuming going to our shop, the butchers, bakers, fish mongers to get your weekly shopping. But the satisfaction knowing that you are supporting local and eating good, tasty food is very important.

It takes a lot of time and effort and we encourage customers to do one thing at a time, whether it's just refilling your washing up liquid bottle and not throwing it away, is a huge step. If everyone did one thing it would have a huge impact.

What are the most popular items that people buy from Buy The Kilo and what are some of the more unusual items that folk might not realise you sell?

Our food is seasonal, we sell a lot more porridge and lentils in the winter, but generally all our food moves very quick and nothing is standing still for long. It is quite funny when there is a good recipe in a magazine or a cookery programme, we are inundated for specific ingredients. This week it was coconut flakes.

We constantly hope word of mouth will be our greatest tool. We are in the process of updating our website, but usually you can go on and we have a list of our products.



Okay, so you wake up and you're the Prime Minister. What would be your priorities for your first month in office?

OMG I would ban all bad plastic being produced in this country, there are over 7,000 companies in the UK that produce plastic. There will be no packaging of any sort produced if it can't be recycled.

I would have a state of the art recycling and refuse collection programme set out right across the country, so we all recycle everything in the same way and have facilities to recycle everything. A HUGE TASK ... but it would have an incredible impact on the environment.

Who, or what, inspires you to keep spreading the sustainability message?

Martin Dory from #2minutebeachclean in Cornwall has been a huge influence, Hannah from The Refill Store in Cornwall, helped us so much to make our shop happen. Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall is great in making things happen and making people think about their own lives and lifestyle and obviously David Attenborough.

Contact Buy The Kilo:

No 3 The Sidings, Tynemouth Metro Station, North Shields NE30 2TF

www.buy-the-kilo.com

Coming Up!

NEXT MONTH

Thanks for reading the very first issue of Up! We really hope you've enjoyed it.

We'd like to thank all our brilliant contributors for sharing their stories and photographs with us.



We don't know about you, but we've learned an awful lot during the ups and downs of 2020. For example, some of our new favourite walks are the little hidden gems we've discovered along back streets and paths we never knew existed until 2020 made us look!

For our next issue we'd love to see your poems and photographs on the theme of 'learning' and we'll publish our favourites. Feel free to interpret the theme however you wish!

Please send your contributions to:

TalkToUp@gmail.com