



COME SINGING NEWSLETTER MARCH 2025

Dear All,

It's Spring, though I have to keep reminding myself when my raincoat drips in the hall after yet another downpour! February fill-dyke belatedly remembered to live up to its name yesterday, but those few warm days last week made us all hope for better things to come.

And in time for St. David's day today the daffodils are coming into their own. Even tiny corner shops are offering bunches of slender stems and papery, pencil-point buds, ready to burst open in a blaze of glory after a few days on the window sill...



Saint David probably knew a bit about weather as legend has it that he was born (around 500 AD) on a Welsh clifftop during a vicious lightning storm. He travelled widely in England, France and Wales, preaching and founding monastic settlements. His way of life was simple and he is said to have lived on water and leeks which does sound awfully austere, however fond one is of both... In Welsh, he was known as Dewi Ddyfrwr – David the Waterdrinker. In his final sermon he is recorded as saying 'Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things that you have heard and seen me do.'

A wonderful man.

Happy Saint David's day!

Last week a friend described visiting an exhibition at the Saatchi gallery in London:

FLOWERS – FLORA IN CONTEMPORARY ART & CULTURE

<https://www.saatchigallery.com/exhibition/flowers-flora-in-contemporary-art-amp-culture>

It sounds extraordinary. One of the pieces is an installation by Rebecca Louise Law, made up of over 100,000 dried flowers, each perfectly intact, which reminds me of Flora in Botticelli's 'Primavera'... Flora is said to have originated in Greek mythology, where she was called Chloris (meaning pale green – related to chlorophyll??) Chloris was abducted by Zephyrus, the god of the west wind, who transformed her into Flora who in turn was believed to have transformed Adonis, Attis, Crocus, Hyacinthus and Narcissus into flowers. What confusing lives they all led!



Here's a flower and season-based quiz... Answers at the end

1. Who's late for a very important date?
2. Daffodils are often said to have 'trumpets' but which flowers are associated with bagpipes?
3. 'It's been a long, cold, lonely winter, little darling; it feels like years since it's been here.' Who's coming now?
4. Which floral song was used as the advertisement for British Airways?
5. Dress code if you're going to San Francisco
6. Not quite a snowdrop – rather furry and grey – but a blossom of the snow.
7. The lawn is coming to life again! 'As I was going to Strawberry fair, singing, singing
... ..'
8. And more... An early song by the Rolling Stones (1967) with Lennon and McCartney on backing vocals! '.... Don't tell no lies...'
9. A madrigal by the Suffolk-born composer John Wilbye '..... gave me fairest flowers'.
10. 'Once I had a secret love' – but now I've 'even told the..... ..'

Enjoy the stirrings of spring! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXMEVTtAZkI>

We're not yet at the season of Easter eggs but I was interested recently to discover that Faberge, artist-jeweller creators of exquisite and valuable eggs for the Russian Imperial family from 1885 to 1916, also had a close connection with North Norfolk.



It seems to have begun with a commission in 1907 to model some of the animals kept by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra at the Sandringham estate. A Royal Stud had been established there in 1886, and the King bred herds of Irish, Scottish and English cattle on the Estate farm, while the Queen was a passionate dog lover. Faberge were not thrilled at first to be creating portraits of livestock, but agreed to send one of their best workmen to model (amongst other things!) a turkey, prize bull, the champion racehorse Persimmon, whose winnings helped fund the Norfolk estate, and Caesar, Edward's favourite Norfolk terrier.



The wax models were then sent back to the Faberge workshop for completion and the figures then returned to the London branch for sale to the King and Queen who were delighted. The results combine wonderful craftsmanship and near-kitsch. I for one will never look at a Faberge egg in the same way again!

Sorry about this, but: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/zh4yt39>

In honour of Saint David's day we need a leek recipe of some sort! While it wouldn't be a good idea to follow his example and live only on leeks and water, I did find and try out this very abstemious version which uses just leeks, potatoes, garlic, a few herbs and stock. It's very easy but tastes delicious...

Leek soup

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 large leeks
4 garlic cloves, sliced
About 1kg floury white potatoes, peeled and diced
1.4litres vegetable stock
1 teaspoon dried thyme
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon salt plus more to taste
black pepper to taste
Chopped fresh chives or parsley for serving

1. Clean the leeks carefully and chop them. Use both the white and green parts.
2. Sauté the leeks and garlic in oil over a medium heat to soften but not brown them.
3. Add the potatoes, herbs, stock and bay leaves.
4. Boil, then simmer until potatoes are tender. About 15 minutes or until the potatoes are soft and easily pierced with a fork.
5. Turn off the heat and blend the soup using an immersion blender to produce your preferred texture.



We hope you can all enjoy every appearance of spring, and hope to see you soon at singing. Do send in your news and ideas – we always love hearing from you!

With best wishes and love from all at Come Singing

Flower quiz answers

1. The mad March hare <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q93VrYOXSe8>
2. Flower of Scotland <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8tNgAlh-TI>
3. Here comes the sun <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUNqsfFUwhY>
4. Flower duet from Lakme <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Qx2lMaMsl8>
5. You should wear some flowers in your hair https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8UuTRIYB_E
6. Edelweiss. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bL2BCiFkTk>
7. Buttercups and daisies <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPFmLMT8iSY>
8. Dandelion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxOpI37tysw>
9. Flora <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tXBIHzgzwM>
10. Golden daffodils <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fU8tQpCZEzg>