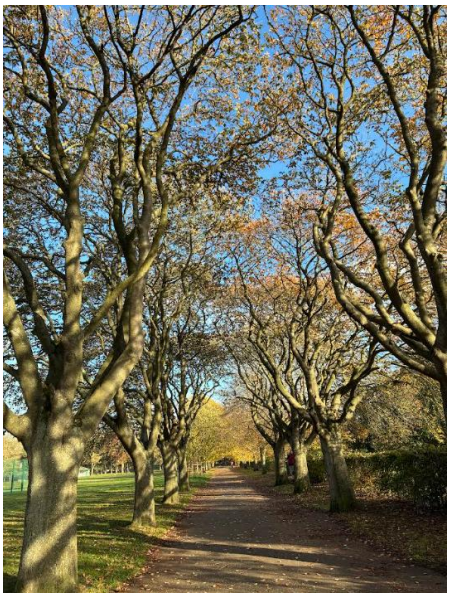
KEYHOLE

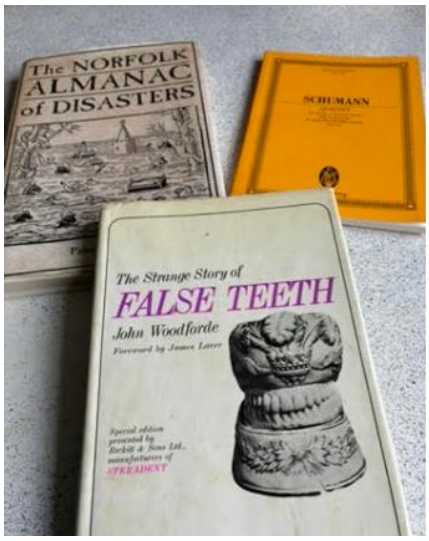
KEEP YOUR HOPES ALIVE

NOVEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER



Dear All,

The upside of November is the pleasure of drawing the curtains after tea and curling up in a chair with a good book or the radio. These treasures from a recent trip to Oxfam have been keeping me happy and busy!!



The Almanac lists Norfolk disasters that have occurred any given day of the year! It's quite sobering reading as Norfolk Novembers have often been full of drama as the season changes gear - especially storms, floods and shipwrecks. It's humbling to hear of courage and heroism such as that of the nine Caister lifeboat crew members who were lost after setting out to rescue a ship in a howling gale on November 14th, 1901, but heartwarming too to hear of how people have pulled together in times of adversity.

On a cheerier note, November 1st is the anniversary of the formation in 1440 of the Norwich Waits! These were civic officials, required to take the city watch from the Feast of All Saints until the Feast of the Purification in February, and to pipe the hours during the nightwatch. (I bet the neighbours loved that!) They also played for civic church services, public festivals, celebrations, proclamations and receptions, and were active for around 400 years until being disbanded in 1790. I always think of them as a merry band and wish they could be re-introduced, like this perhaps?



It's certainly time for comfort food, not just porridge, but good old fashioned stews, soups and puddings... Even if we eat them less often now, the very thought of childhood ribstickers like toad in the hole, spotted dick, shepherd's pie, pease pudding and dumplings sets up a warm glow of nostalgia! I remember too the delight and novelty of newfangled convenience foods like fish fingers (first on sale in 1955), Vesta curries (19610) Angel Delight (from Bird's in 1967) and of course Smash dried potato! All of them an affront to any serious home cook, but they soon sneaked in to the pantry! Overseas holidays and the advent of television brought a taste for more exotic foods and we learned how to wrap spaghetti round our forks and even to use chop sticks! If it tasted too unfamiliar, there was the Cerebos table salt packet, with a boy chasing a bird with salt, ground white pepper, Colman's mustard in its yellow tin, HP Sauce and Daddy's Sauce... Olive oil was still something bought from the chemist to soften ear wax, and in our family there were a few well-intentioned culinary disasters before my parents turned against it.

Quite a few songs deal with food fantasies: here are a few tasty ones, but you can probably think of lots more!

Food, glorious food,, https://youtu.be/hEQDllvuy1I
Bangers and mash. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGFpVN2xwXU
Shortenin' bread, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVlT8B8amPc
Animal Cracker in my soup, https://youtu.be/NKxYyh6lZCk
Chestnuts roasting on an open fire, https://youtu.be/yFtL77os5iQ
Jambalaya https://youtu.be/t5ImncN-rQc
Tea for two https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQXYOpkq0g4
Boiled beef and carrots https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8GCTqB0oY0

Which brings us back nicely to teeth! While not strictly essential, they can make a big difference to our enjoyment of food. Nowadays, even if our own teeth desert us, there are usually crowns, bridges, denture or implants to help, but dentistry also seems to have had a golden age in Ancient Egypt!an times! A gold dental bridge from around 2500 BC, probably intended to stabilise loose teeth or secure replacements, was found in El-Quatta, and similar Etruscan gold bands may also have been a status symbol, to display one's wealth. The oldest set of partial dentures found in Mexico were made from wolf molars (for wolfing one's food??) Ancient Mayans even replaced missing teeth with carved stones, bits of bone or even seashells which eventually fused with the patient's jaw bone for a permanent fix. Here are a Mayan human tooth with a jade inlay. (c 500 - 1000 AD) and a rather natty walrus ivory partial upper denture...



None of these things, nor the wooden and ivory (hippopotamus tusk) dentures worn by George Washington can have been at all comfortable. The need for false teeth increased as sugar consumption grew in 19th century Europe. This drove research and development, but some solutions were still grisly: Waterloo teeth were recovered from soldiers who died in the Battle of Waterloo and mounted on ivory bases for those people wealthy enough to afford them - a status symbol among the elite - o dear. Porcelain and vulcanite were other experiments, but not until the 20th century did acrylic and rubber compounds made 'modern' well-fitting false teeth possible, popular and affordable. Many of us will have heard of people having all their teeth and being presented with a smart new set of dentures as wedding gift!

In that spirit, here's a quiz about teeth and smiling!

1. There's only one thing I want for Christmas...
2. Have we met somewhere before? By the bathroom door?? What am I?
3. Which big fish appears in the first line of the song 'Mack the knife'?
4. 'When you're laughing, the sun comes shining through' - what comes before this??
5. What will help '...though your heart is aching.. even though it's breaking' ?
6. You're never fully dressed without what, and which musical does this come from?
7. 'The way your smile just beams, the way you sing off key.... ' What's the song
8. He's never known to frown and everybody says he is the happiest man in town. Who is he?
9. 'Sure, 'tis like the morn in Spring In the lilt of .... laughter'
10. When you are gone, what will I be remembering? (The theme song of The sandpiper).

Pease pudding is one surprising favourite treat that crops up in song is is the great Northern favourite. It's nothing to do with mushy peas, but smooth and solid with a creamy, subtle flavour: made with yellow split peas soaked and boiled in ham stock. The orphans in Oliver dream of 'pease pudding and saveloy, but although the rhyme 'Pease pudding cold, pease pudding hot' appeared in print in 1760, it was a staple food of the 14th century. Poor families might only have one big pot or cauldron, so this could be hung over a fire and left there for hours to cook.

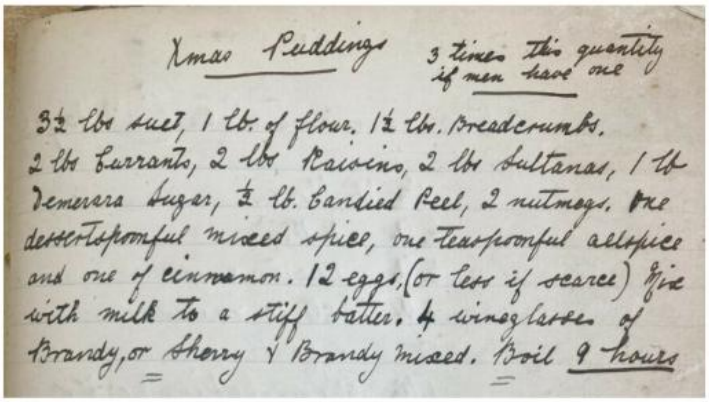
Here's a simple recipe for a chilly day...

- Place a ham hock in your biggest pan, cover with cold water and slowly bring to the boil. Once it's come to the boil, take it off the heat and pour away some of the water; this will get rid of some of the saltiness from the ham.
- Wash about 300g yellow split peas thoroughly in cold water then soak overnight in fresh water.
- Next morning, bring the ham stock back up to boil, add a small diced onion and one clove of garlic, then all the yellow split peas. Turn down the heat, cover with a lid and simmer for about one hour.
- Using a hand blender, blitz to a rich pulp, add a few knobs of butter, mix all together then place into covered ovenware dishes and bake in the oven for approximately 30 mins.
- When cooked, fluff mixture through with a fork, then let it set. Eat sliced, hot or cold



Stir-up Sunday

While on the subject of food, don't forget that it will soon be Stir-up Sunday, the last Sunday before Advent, this year on November 22nd. It gets its name from the first words of the Collect for the day in the Book of Common Prayer: "Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people..." and traditionally is the time for making the Christmas puddings. Originally there were 13 ingredients, to represent Jesus and his disciples, and the mixing bowl would have been passed between all family members, each making a wish as they stirred. To honour the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus the pudding mixture had to be stirred from east to west, and coins were often added to the mixture to bring luck into the household. (More dental work needed as a result??) Here's an original recipe, probably using beef suet, and a not dissimilar, more family-size list of ingredients:


Xmas Puddings 3 times this quantity if men have one

3½ lbs suet, 1 lb. of flour. 1½ lbs. Breadcrumbs. 2 lbs Currants, 2 lbs Raisins, 2 lbs Sultanas, 1 lb Demerara Sugar, ½ lb. Candied Peel, 2 nutmegs, one dessertspoonful mixed spice, one teaspoonful allspice and one of cinnamon. 12 eggs, (or less if scarce) Mix with milk to a stiff batter. 4 wineglasses of Brandy, or Sherry & Brandy mixed. Boil 9 hours

DD.HN.3.2.12 From the recipe book of Hilda Bates-Harbin of Newton Surmaville, early 20th cent. Somerset Archives and Local Studies

3 ½ lbs suet, 1lbs of flour, 1 ½ lbs breadcrumbs, 2lbs currants, 2lbs raisins, 2lbs sultanas, 1 lb demerara sugar, ½ lb candied peel, 2 nutmegs, one dessertspoonful mixed spices, one teaspoonful allspice and one of cinnamon. 12 eggs (or less if scarce) mix with milk to a stiff batter. 4 wineglasses of brandy or sherry. Boil 9 hours.

- 125 g (4oz) white breadcrumbs
- 50 g (2oz) plain flour
- 125 g (4oz) vegetable suet
- 225 g (8oz) dark muscovado sugar
- 125 g (4oz) sultanas
- 125 g (4oz) raisins
- 50 g (2oz) currants
- 150 g (5oz) dried figs chopped
- 150 g (5oz) dried dates chopped
- 50 g (2oz) diced mixed peel
- 50 g (2oz) glacé cherries halved or quartered
- 50 g (2oz) almonds chopped
- 1 small cooking apple peeled cored and grated
- finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tablespoon black treacle

- 1 teaspoon ground mixed spice
- ½ teaspoon grated nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 large eggs
- 175 ml (6floz) sweet white wine or stout
- butter for greasing
- rum or brandy to serve (optional)

This has been a rather foody newsletter, but there you go - we'll soon be glad of cosiness and a house full of the smell of cooking!

Just one final thing, and you'll find out why next month: have a listen to this rather straight-laced version of a very well-known tune. It was used for all sorts of words, but I remember from school one verse ending the words: 'Go dress yourself Dinah in gorgeous array, and I'll bring you back a huzzyband both galliant and gay, Singing toora-li, toorali, toora-li-ay'.

Meanwhile keep safe and well, and we'll hope perhaps to see you at singing in November!

With best wishes and love from all at Come Singing

Answers to the teeth quiz!

1. All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGSZ8shIPac
2. A pink toothbrush! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oI7-U75tvQs https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DH3KlmIXYos
3. The shark https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iooViITRp9M
4. When you're smiling https://youtu.be/APDCJst3qLc?si=ZMzfKc0eKxBJ52oQ
5. Smile https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ps6ck1ejoAw
6. ...without a smile. Annie https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry79LzkkDb4
7. They can't take that away from me.. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeSkP-xcK8U
8. Laughing policeman https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hI1nPd7hezM
9. When Irish eyes are smiling https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pw0b3fHRMcQ
10. The shadow of your smile https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2S_UoJA5LAQ