

COFFEE
CAKES
CHATTER
& more



**Reflections on
Coffee, Cakes, Chatter and More
in Cotterstock from
October 2023 to April 2024**

OCTOBER

On a beautiful sunny morning in October 2023, we opened our first pop-up café with tables outside for people to enjoy the last of the autumn sunshine. Villagers had baked, the cakes looked amazing, there was an air of anticipation as we had no idea how many people would come. We were surprised and delighted when a walking group arrived at 9.55am and got us off to a good start, we served 37 people that day.

Robin Windsor made origami angels with everyone and Maggie went on to make a host of angels for Thurning church. It was the perfect start to Cotterstock's Coffee, Cakes, Chatter and more.



NOVEMBER

In November, the Cotterstock bakers laid on another beautiful array of cakes and bakes, including our version of an Anzac biscuit; 45 visitors came to enjoy them. A group of cyclists had got up early to call in at the start of a much longer ride.

Refreshments were followed by a video remembering the first world war and Armistice Day which was very poignant and moving and we received lots of lovely comments afterwards; people even asked for a copy.

One lady said “I came on my own but am leaving having made new friends, I am looking forward to the December one already”.

Pre-school children had fun with the toys and books on the mat whilst their parents appreciated some adult conversation.

People living on two narrowboats, stranded by the floods at the lock came, they were delighted to be classed as honorary Cotterstockians.



DECEMBER

We had a Christmas themed café in December. Christmas songs were playing in the background, Santa napkins and a joke supplied with every drink and cake order! I know, they were very cheesy like.....What does Santa measure with? Santametres 🤣🤣🤣🤣.

Cyclamen adorned the hall and Christmas jumpers were on display; most people (Simon), were in the party mood by the time Ian and Gill arrived with Keith Hannis on the keyboard to organise a Christmas sing-a-long.

Hopefully people left feeling a little bit Christmassy. Visitors have requested recipes for their favourite bakes so Christine and Sue had the idea of sharing recipes which has proved popular.



JANUARY

Our pop-up-café was a challenge for us all in January because, not only was it bitterly cold but the council had decided to close Cotterstock main street and also, one route into Cotterstock was flooded. Despite all the challenges our first customer arrived at 10:05 and made us laugh, he said: “I’m exhausted, I feel like the Milk Tray Man, it was the thought of cake that kept me going”!

Fortunately, it was a great success with 35 people braving the elements and everyone staying to listen to Sharn Matthew’s brilliant talk on “Fashion and Morality”; she definitely left us wanting to hear more.



FEBRUARY

Elizabeth Ward organised a taster session of chair yoga for the last half an hour and the calm and serenity of her yoga was a great way to finish the session. Elizabeth's yoga proved to be very popular on the day so she decided to organise additional sessions on Tuesday mornings in March.



We turned into detectives after this session as a pair of glasses were left on one of the tables. We hated to think of someone being left optically challenged so an email to Adrian followed by a chat with Joan then a phone call to Lucy who spoke to Rosemary resulted in Diane being able to return the glasses to Betty in Oundle

👍 🙌 😊 .

One lady said that she enjoyed the refreshments so much she wondered if we could cater for her 60th birthday afternoon tea!



MARCH

Numbers continue to grow and in March we served 47 people; many have become regulars now and we know that new friendships have been made. Spring flowers adorned the tables and gave the room a real dose of optimism of better weather to come.



Max and Toni visited from Oundle library with a display to raise awareness of all the additional things that go on at the library and brought a selection of free new books for adults and children too.



For the last half hour Kathryn Baird talked about her fascinating hobby of collecting and transcribing postcards and diaries written in Pitman shorthand from over a century ago. Kathryn is a captivating speaker; it was a lovely way to spend a cold but sunny Monday morning?



APRIL

WOW, our helpers were run off their feet with 53 people coming to our April coffee morning.

A gorgeous selection of seven cakes and bakes were available for people to enjoy as they waited for Robin to begin his flower arranging demonstrations at 11:30 a.m. Robin had bought a standard bunch of flowers from the supermarket and he showed people how to make two beautiful arrangements, carefully describing every step.

After Robin's demonstration people were entered into a free raffle to win the arrangements, Linda Whitcombe was one of the lucky winners.

It was lovely to meet our Rural Dean, the Rev Eddie Smith and his wife Jenny who fully participated in the coffee, cake and chat. He commented that it was a warm and welcoming community event. It was a perfect end to what has been a very successful series of coffee mornings.



IN CONCLUSION

Coffee, Cakes, Chatter and More ran monthly from October 2023 to April 2024; it proved to be very popular with villagers, the benefice and the wider community.

Some facts:

- we served 284 people
- we baked 43 cakes and traybakes
- we welcomed 7 guest presenters
- we forged new friendships
- we enjoyed displays by Oundle Library and Volunteer Action
- we paid the village hall a £168 hire charge
- we donated £629 to our village church. N.B. This was a not-for-profit venture BUT, despite only charging £3 we did make a return. This was because double the number of people we had anticipated attended and our cooks, presenters and organisers were incredibly generous by not charging for their ingredients, materials, printing ink, fuel, etc., hence a profit was made.



This has been a real community event. Thank you to all the people who supported it in any way including our visiting presenters who gave of their time so willingly and to all the villagers and friends who baked the wonderful cakes.

