



Filomena, centre, with some of the community cooks at St Mary's Parish Centre. Photo Mike Coles

Food and friends in the kitchen

Cooking and eating food can be a great sharing experience which is why social enterprise Bread N Butter have been running free community cooking sessions for the last few months.

People come together once a week at St Mary's Parish Centre in the High Road, N2, to try different recipes and then enjoy the results, and take them home to their families.

Filomena Komodromou, one of the directors at Bread n Butter, said: "Our ultimate aim was to create community cohesion. Food connects us, brings people together, unites us and crosses boundaries, whatever your culture, background, race or religion. We all have stories, traditions, habits and routines centred around food."

The sessions have been funded by the Grange Big Local project in response to demand for opportunities for lone residents to make new friends and for local communities to integrate with each other.

"We believe our Community Cooking Together sessions address all these issues and bring people together whilst learning new cooking skills," said Filomena.

Zero waste

The sessions also tackle the important issue of food waste which has a huge impact on the environment. Each week attendees are offered food donated by The Felix Project, a surplus food redistribution charity based in Enfield.

At the end of the session attendees are able to take fresh fruit and vegetables and cup-

board staples home with them along with any leftovers from the cooking sessions.

Sessions are free to local residents to attend and take place every Friday from 11am-1pm at St Mary's Parish Centre, East Finchley, N2 8HG. To book your place email: filomena@breadnbutter.org.uk. For more information visit www.BreadnButter.org.uk



No such thing as too many cooks. Photo Mike Coles

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Chocolates and roses

Just when your credit card has got used to being maxed out over Christmas along comes the next way of separating you from reality. Yes, it's that time of year again, when the look of delight on the face of a child opening presents is replaced by the look of disappointment on the florist's face when you only buy six red roses.

No one's too sure who St Valentine was, there's a load of options amongst the early martyrs. Was he a Turkish bishop or a priest in Rome or a Christian flower seller who gave 12 roses to a Vestal Virgin martyred by being smothered in rose petals?

And why February 14th? Well, let's start by blaming the French. It was Charles V who named it as the day of love in a charter in 1400, and the first Valentine's poetry was written by a Frenchman. OK, a Frenchman locked up the Tower of London, but a Frenchman just the same. But it wasn't until the 19th century that things got really crazy.

First there was 'The Young Man's Valentine Writer', or guide to stalking as we'd now call it. Then, in 1851 there was the arrival of the penny post so the sender paid the postage and finally Esther Howland started churning out pre-printed cards in 1867. From there it was only a short step to Cadbury's coming up with heart-shaped chocolates. And since then it hasn't stopped.

In amongst the endless romantic trash on Classic FM, special menus in restaurants you'd normally avoid and re-reruns of *When Harry Met Meghan* we spend a medium-sized fortune. In the USA they send 200million cards. The average American spends the best part of \$150 'celebrating'.

Here we're just as bad and send 25million of the things. Guess how much that all costs by the time you've chucked in the champagne, chocolates, flowers and special dinner at Chez Boris? Well, I'll tell you, it's about 2billion quid all told. So this year, do something different, donate it to a better cause. Just think what the NHS could do with that sort of extra cash.



Prize winners: from left, Maxine Allon, Neil Boast and Anna Paganini in the Phoenix foyer. Photo Mike Coles.

Free seats at Phoenix

Three film fans will be able to keep up with all the latest movie releases after winning prizes in the annual Phoenix Cinema raffle, held at the end of last year.

Neil Boast won two free tickets a week for a year and said: "I bought raffle tickets to support the cinema. I'm very happy I won." Maxine Allon won free tickets for six months and Anna Paganini won free tickets for three months.

Maxine said: "The Phoenix is such a wonderful, beautiful cinema", and Anna said she was "delighted to win". The raffle raised more than £1,000 to go towards the costs of running the cinema, which is a charitable trust.

Trading group for new parents

By Hande Kiamil

I hate putting things in the bin and it is particularly upsetting when usable things end up in landfill whilst new versions are being produced and sold.

So I have long been a user of the 'shpock' app, which matches buyers and sellers by location. However, I find that things take a while to sell. I used not to mind that, but in May I had a baby, and what he needs and enjoys changes on a weekly basis. I wanted a way to buy and sell quickly and locally.

A friend told me about a very successful buy and

sell WhatsApp group started by a Haringey mum. Taking inspiration from this, I have just launched an N2 group for babies', toddlers' and young children's items.

Any N2 expectant parents or parents of young children who would like to join can email their name and number to n2parents-buyandsell@gmail.com and I will add them to the group.

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