



A Happy New Year

It's so good to get back to business as normal after all the enforced closures.

In the last newsletter I mentioned the lady who phoned to ask if we had any fabric we could sell her. I had a response to that which read: *I can see why someone asked if you sell material, perhaps they thought the chat and coffee were the main things.* Thanks for that, but the same day as that email came, when I offered a new customer a cup of coffee, I got a stern *I'm not here on a social visit.* Oops. Slapped wrist.

Well, we've not served much coffee since mid-December, so it'll be good to see some friendly faces and get the dishwasher (the electric one, not me) back in action.

VAT

I may already have said that we intend to absorb the new VAT increase, though, having said that, our fabric suppliers are slowly bumping up their prices due to the increase in the cost of raw cotton.

Next Programme

This is taking shape and I thought that you might care to see some of the teachers, new to us, who'll be coming:

Sally Ablett April 30th and again on September 10th

Di Wells June 25th & 26th

Ferret July 5th & 6th

Ineke Berlyn August 20th & 21st

Pauline Ineson August 27th & 28th

We're also hopeful that Sheena Norquay will be able to teach here on October 15th and 16th

And a reminder that Philippa Naylor will be here the following February (18 th & 19th)

Thank You

In the last newsletter I should have thanked all of you who from time to time, and for no particular reason, respond to the newsletters I send out. I occasionally wonder if they're too self indulgent – showy offy, even – but I am grateful for the comments that I get. It re-assures me that there are people the other side of this computer screen. Following the last missive I was particularly pleased by the reaction to the German Santa Claus story. The lady concerned was delightful and she really was anxious that I should publish it in some way or another.

Stung (told in the shop)

I was just a little dot, then, peeking over the hedge watching my father who was moving a beehive from A to B with a horse and cart. All of a sudden the horse moved forward, and jolted the top off the hive. I saw it as it happened. There was a chap coming down the road on a bicycle and when he saw what was happening he dropped his bike and ran like mad, but Father had to get the lid back on the hive 'cause the swarm would have caused chaos in the village. Sarn, it was, near Bridgend. I remember he came into the house with his neck and face all covered in these black marks - he was stung to blazes. And he passed out for while. Mother made him drink pints of bicarbonate of soda to reduce the acid - in a tiny Welsh village in those days doctors were of secondary importance. Some days later he did go to see the doctor who said that Mother had done the right thing.

But the strange thing was, many years later, when Dad was in his 70s, he had a medical examination and the doctor said, "Do you know, you've got the heart of a young man. Were you ever stung by a lot of bees?"