



GREATER

A Better Way Magazine

Issue One: Free to the residents of Greater Bentley



Bentley Bonanza (© Warren Draper)

EDITORIAL

GREATER is a new magazine for the Greater Bentley region. It is made exclusively by people from the area. We're from here, but we don't think that ours is the only voice that matters. So we'd love for you to get involved. **GREATER** is a celebration of the people and groups who are making a difference in our area. We focus on grassroot, community enterprise and the many volunteers and community activists who are already providing solutions to the problems we face. We want to celebrate their stories so that they inspire others to get involved with building a brighter, healthier, happier, **better** Greater Bentley.

GREATER is part of the **A Better Way** network (details on page 4). Together we are creating a 'quiet revolution'. We want to create a network of resilient, self-reliant, caring communities — and we think Greater Bentley is the perfect place to show the power and potential of this network. So join with us as we develop the magazine you're now holding, celebrate the 'doers' in our area, create new and exciting initiatives throughout the region and, ultimately, build *A Better Way*.

GREATER is a collaborative project open to all residents, groups, schools, churches, charities and institutions in the Greater Bentley region. We want YOU to get involved with future magazines, workshops, events and projects. Visit www.greater.org.uk or call the library on 01302 873456 for further information.

THE SMALL PRINT

GREATER is produced and distributed by a small team of dedicated Greater Bentley residents. If you'd like to get involved please get in touch. Production costs are met through advertising revenue and support from the Carnegie Trust. If you're a business who likes what you see, please consider advertising with us.

The opinions expressed in each feature or article in **GREATER** are those of their respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the **GREATER** editorial team, the editors and production team accept no responsibility for the opinions expressed.

CONTENTS

- 04 **A Better Way**
- 09 **A Better You**
- 11 **Better Together**
- 12 **Better Business**
- 14 **Better Hearts, Better Minds**
- 18 **Building Better From Below**
- 22 **Giving A Vulnerable Child A Better Start In Life**
- 25 **In Better Voice**
- 26 **Better Connected**
- 30 **Better Days?**

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- Ian Mayer**
- Natasha Meade**
- Tara Hannan-Murphy**
- Audrey Thompson**
- Steve Wyler**

A Better Way

Steve Wyler

A Better Way is a national network of people who think it is possible to improve services and build strong communities.

Some of us work in charities or in community groups, or in public services, or in the private sector. Some of us are volunteers, or elected politicians, or trade unionists. Or simply citizens who want to make a difference.

What brings us together is a set of simple ideas. You might find some of them familiar, and perhaps even obvious. But most of the time, we believe, they are given lip service rather than actually practised.

But just think what would happen if we all follow through these ideas with courage and conviction! Perhaps then things would start to change for the better, in our services

and our communities, and in how we treat each other.

• Prevention is better than cure. We all need help throughout our lives, and benefit from 'right first time' support, sometimes at early stages, sometimes at moments of crisis or difficulty. We also need strong communities that build readiness, resilience and resourcefulness, and national systems and policies which help people to thrive, not undermine them.

• Building on strengths is better than focusing on weaknesses. Even in the most difficult circumstances people and communities have much to offer. They are well placed to come up with the solutions, and to take action accordingly. Defining people by their 'needs' or deficits, and doing things for or to rather than with them, creates dependency. Creating conditions where people can flourish on their own terms sets them free.

• Relationships are better than transactions. Deep value is generated through relationships between people and the commitments people make to each other. We find this first and foremost in families, communities and neighbourhoods, but organisations in every sector need to do more to treat people with humanity and as individuals and so generate deep value too.

• Collaboration is better than competition. Collaboration is the best way to address complex social issues and we need to develop leadership styles that support it. Price-based competitive tendering for public services is harming society and wasting taxpayers' money. Rather than a destructive, value-squeezing contest among a few big corporations in pursuit of shareholder profit, we need a collaborative method that brings together people with a shared interest in a common challenge.



Local resident, Audrey Thompson (© Warren Draper)

• Mass participation is better than centralised power. Power is concentrated in the hands of too few people. More decisions should be made by larger groups of people with a shared interest or expertise in the subject, starting with those whose voices have not been heard: 'no decisions about us without us'. Moreover, public agencies, charities and businesses achieve most when they move away from command and control by the few and stimulate the resourcefulness of the many.

• Local is better than national. People need the power to shape the places they live and work in. Stewardship is a shared task but governments should stick to what they do well and stop trying to organise services and community life from the centre, set out aspirations not blueprints, recognise the value of locally based organisations, and only get involved in things which local people can't or won't do by themselves.

• Principles are better than targets. All too often universal targets, standard setting and inspection regimes fail to encourage the best behaviours or prevent the worst. Quality is a continual process, emerging from principles of human dignity, best reinforced by reflective practice, citizen engagement, challenge and accountability.

• Changing ourselves is better than demanding change from others. The best starting point is what we ourselves can do, putting the common good first and our vested interests last. The more we achieve, the more others will follow.

We have found that these ideas are often best taken forward by small groups of committed people, coming together, encouraging each other, learning from each other, making connections, building trust. A quiet revolution! And that's exactly what has been happening in Bentley,

ever since local resident Audrey Thompson heard about us, and brought a few people together to think about the changes they would like to see in the neighbourhood.

If you would like to find out more, please have a look at our website: www.betterway.network, or send me an email: stevewyler@betterway.network.

Steve Wyler

Co-convenor, A Better Way





A Better You

Tara Hannan-Murphy

Are you looking to develop your skills, Knowledge and Personal Development? Want to meet new friends? Or you may be looking for a new job, a career change, a new challenge or opportunity. At every aspect of a person's life we are always learning new skills and developing our knowledge and experience no matter what path we are currently walking down.

If you feel that you could or should be achieving more, then why not make this the time to join a new course, group or activity. The Better Way group are committed to working together collaboratively to support and inspire families

& individuals to reach their full potential. We know everyone has the right to, aim high and to shine.

The WEA – The Workers' Educational Association is working in partnership with Bentley Library, several community, voluntary organisations and local Primary schools to arrange and deliver meaningful, accessible and enjoyable activities for the whole family and individuals in and around the Greater Bentley Area. Taster sessions and courses are typically free to those on certain means tested benefits and are tailored to meet the needs and interests of the people attending them.

If you are interested in working with /or volunteering with the WEA to help us best meet the needs of our community or want to find out where the wide range of courses & FREE FUN family learning sessions are running this Summer / Autumn please contact:

Tara Hannan-Murphy at thanmmurphy@wea.org.uk or visit our website www.wea.org.uk .

BENTLEY AREA COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

'Better2Gether'

Working together for a greater Bentley

TOUR DE GREATER BENTLEY



BENTLEY BONANZA COMMUNITY GALA
SUN 14th JULY, 2019 - 1pm -5pm BENTLEY PARK

In the Bandstand
Bentley Community Choir
DJ-Limitless Events
Paradigm Impact Network
Heather Rigg

Refreshment Provision
Crumbs Catering
Ice Cream Van
Licenced Bar in Pavilion



**Juggling Jim
& Fun Bikes**

Around the Park
Storm Taekwondo
Community Stalls
Face Painting
Punch & Judy
Don Valley Model Flying Club

In the Pavilion
Tour De Yorkshire Display
Photographs,
Decorated Bikes & Bunting

+ ROBINSON'S FUNFAIR! **FRI, SAT, SUN - 12TH, 13TH & 14TH JULY**



Better Together *Commitment to collaboration and partnership is the best way forward!*

Janis James

Did you know?

For well over 10 years, our schools across Bentley, Scawthorpe, Toll Bar and Arksey have been working together to improve the quality of education on offer across our community. The spirit of collaboration and support continues to be a key strength in our area and the envy of other communities of schools across Doncaster.

The strength in our partnership starts with half termly meetings of headteachers from all our schools including Don Valley Academy. We look at key themes that are relevant to our pupils in the locality and look for ways to work together to improve our offer to young people.

Key members of staff from each school meet up to plan a range of activities that bring teachers together to share the best possible practice. This can be anything from sharing the learning in our children's books to how we teach maths in our schools. Every year our teachers get together for a full training day in February. All our schools take turns to host the day and as well as inviting nationally renowned key note speakers, we arrange workshops for teachers sharing the very best ideas from each school.

As a group of schools, we have also planned many Community Arts projects and have celebrated the creativity of our pupils holding exhibitions at Bentley My Place, Bentley Library and Bentley Pavilion over the last few years. These exhibitions have taken place at

weekends with parents and the local community invited. In recent years, we have organised a joint schools music festival held at The Dome as well as a celebration of Shakespeare at Doncaster College Hub. These events were extremely popular with our parents and pupils alike.

As well as the arts, our PE staff have also worked hard to arrange sports festivals designed to increase participation in sport, improve levels of physical activity and most importantly to have lots of fun. There are many 'friendly' sporting events held across the school year.

Whilst many of our local schools have seen new headteachers come into post over the last few years, the partnership of Greater Bentley schools continues to thrive. We all value it too much to lose it!



Better Business

Rethinking Business in Community

Ian Mayer DL

It's a given that the most important priority for a business is that it makes a profit - to put it simply, it needs to make more than it costs itself. A business needs to grow year on year, become bigger and bigger, better and better, stronger and stronger, enabling it to sustain itself, cover its costs and live well into the future. But does it? Is this all about money? Is there a non fiscal way of building a great business? - A way that builds empathy with local community, and grows the whole. A way that's collaborative, cooperative and constructive.

Although the primary purpose of a business is to grow itself, it is also to grow everything else, both within itself and around itself. Business growth is not just about cash; business growth should include everything that gives a lift to the locality and community in which the business resides.

I like the contrast between the two words organisation and organism. Organisations are about being ordered; they are all about creating structures through which individuals cooperate systematically to conduct a specific business. They involve strict procedures, boundaries and controls. An organism, however, speaks

about being mutually dependent and working in harmony together; they are all about creating ecosystems that benefit the whole rather than the one.

What would a business that benefited a community look like?

I believe first and foremost it would be indigenous. We would see a total connectedness between individuals, community, and every area of the business process. The word 'indigenous' is all about living or occurring naturally; an indigenous business is a business that cares about its surroundings and helps to grow those surrounding for the benefit of everyone.

A visual picture of an indigenous business could be that of the contrast between that of a plantation and a forest. Within the plantation, everything is controlled and sterile. Although plantations can often appear large and productive, there is very little spontaneous life - their security is in the order and routine. Within the forest, many different species exist together, working in harmony and being interdependent. Growth is spontaneous, unfenced and not controlled by humankind.

The difference between that which is man-made, and that which occurs naturally is evident all around us. We can see a clear contrast between humanity's order and nature's order. As business owners and leaders we need to ask ourselves, are we building plantations or working with those around us to grow thriving forests?

If our local economy is going to grow and thrive, then it needs to be sustainable, and able to reach beyond monetary growth into a future that has both substance and hope.

Business plays a critical role in all we hope to achieve together, and all that communities aspire to become, but it must be conscious and it must be constructive.

Married to Alyson Mayer, author of "Are We Brave Enough?" Ian is an entrepreneur who connects church, commercial, civic & community leadership, to see influence & transformation.





Better Hearts, Better Minds *Faith, Hope and Love*

Dave Berry

'And now these three remain, faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love.'

1 Corinthians 13:13

Everything changes. They used to say the only things that were certain were death and taxes, but today it seems that we live in a world of constant change. So many things seem so uncertain. So where do we turn? Is there something solid we can build on for the future?

Perhaps our families will give us a secure foundation? Families are great, but even they change, people fall out of love, family members move away and eventually our loved ones die. Maybe our friends are all we need? Over our lifetimes our friendships change and even

our closest friends sometimes let us down – they are only human after all.

The Bible talks about three virtues that remain, faith, hope and love. Faith is trusting in something. In some ways, every time I sit on a chair, I have faith that it will take my weight and not collapse underneath me. Faith in the God of the Bible is a faith that never fails. God can be totally trusted.

Hope is that sense that something that is not right now, will be right in the future. That our broken relationships can be mended, that the dream we've held on to could still become real, that the pain from the past won't always guide our future. We all need hope, and there can always be hope. Christians find their hope in God. The Bible says that at the end, everything that's wrong will be put right. There will be real justice and true fulfilment. I, for one, can't wait.

Love is to be known fully and accepted fully for who we are. Someone once said that God loves us just as we are, but He loves us too much to leave us this way. Love enables people to change and become more and more the person they were made to be. I love my wife, but my love for her is not perfect. God's love always gets the balance right between acceptance and challenge. Sometimes calling out destructive behaviour is the most loving thing to do.

The churches in Bentley are all about focusing on these things that last, faith, hope and love. Whatever your personal feelings about church, they have been here a long time. Arksey Church has stood in our community since the 12th Century, almost 900 years. The Methodist Church started meeting here in the 1790s (although they didn't have any buildings until later), St Peter's was opened in 1896 and St Philip and St James in 1918. We do know something about things that last!

All the churches in Bentley are welcoming places. If you're feeling like you need to connect with something that lasts, that maybe faith, hope and love are what you're looking for, come and see. You won't be pressured into believing something you don't, rather you can explore for yourself whether this ancient faith in God has answers to some of our modern day problems.

Dave is the Vicar of St Peter's Bentley and a trustee of the Inspiring Futures Academy Trust which oversees Bentley High St Primary School and Rosedale Primary in Scarwsby.

All the churches in Bentley welcome people who are curious about faith or interested in exploring if this Jesus thing is real.

You'll be warmly welcomed on any Sunday at any church in Bentley:

Bentley Baptist Church, Askern Road
10.40am, 01302 876401

Bentley Methodist Church, High St,
10.45am, 01302 783980

Bentley Pentecostal Church, Arksey Lane,
10.30am and 6pm, 01302 820182

Mount Hermon Community Church, Bentley Road,
11am, 01302 788801

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, High Street,
10am, 01302 874337

St Peter's, High Street,
9.30am and 11.15am, 01302 876272

St Philip and St James, Victoria Road,
10.30am, 01302 875266



Building Better From Below

Warren Draper



Along with my collaborative arts partner, Rachel Horne, I am co-founder of *Doncopolitan* magazine and Bentley Urban Farm (BUF). In fact, it was the trust and vision we built over the years creating *Doncopolitan*, which gave Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council the confidence to allow us to run BUF as a cooperative social enterprise.

BUF is an 'upcycled market garden'. We use reclaimed (waste) materials to repair and maintain the former horticultural training centre down the lane between St Peter's Church and Bentley High Street School. We started primarily as an anti-food poverty project, but soon learned that there were kids from more affluent families who were also not getting nutritional food simply because both parents had to work and were relying on 'convenience' food. We began to focus on changing people's relationships with food. Getting people to grow healthy, local, organic, planet-friendly food together and, more importantly, encouraging them to eat together, is now our main priority.

Our SEED & SAV£ project teaches people how to grow their own food in a wildlife friendly way. People have learned to grow down at BUF, started growing at home and even sold some of their produce back to us for our seasonal veg box scheme (run at certain times of the year, contact BUF on 07846 439982 for

details). We're just starting to run more social events so we can enjoy our produce together and get to know each other better. But one of the most important aspects of our project is that we're doing this from within our own community. Because we firmly believe that the only way we are going to see true and lasting change is to, as Gandhi famously said: "*be the change you wish to see in the world.*"

Or as Rachel says, we're just living a better, brighter, greener, healthier lifestyle and inviting anyone who's interested (especially you!..) to join the party.

Greater Bentley suffers terribly from food poverty, poor nutrition and food related health issues such as heart disease and obesity. We are a food desert where 94% of us live within walking distance of a fast food outlet, but there is no independent greengrocer – it is a place where it is, quite literally, easier to buy kebabs than kale. But we're also surrounded by amazing resources. We have one of the best microclimates in the north of England and, according to the Soil Association, we have one of the most interesting and diverse soil maps. BUF is already experimenting with interesting niche crops to sell to posh restaurants which could easily become micro-community enterprises for local people (let's get the money flowing from the rich to the poor for a change). We're doing

this by utilising the resources and skills which already exist within our community. We have pretty much zero money, but we have a level of passion, vision and commitment which makes us rich in other ways.

Food is just one area in our lives which can be improved through bottom-up, grassroot community enterprise. From arts and culture, to energy and industry, there are resources in our area which have the potential to change everyone's lives. Community enterprise, the focus of The Better Way project, is key to a new kind of economic regeneration. One which is in our hands and which immediately benefits the people of Greater Bentley. BUF is just a very small part of an emerging whole, but it is a fun, healthy and friendly way to get involved. Come and join us – along with our many friends, such as the young adults from the Ridge Employability College – every Friday between 10am and 2pm to find out more.

bentleyurbanfarm.com

doncopolitan.com



renew 127

Wellbeing Centre

Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday
10.00am to 2.00pm



A community space, a safe place where it's OK not to be OK. Somewhere to make friends, learn a new hobby, or perhaps introduce us to yours. The Centre also has a prayer/quiet room where inner habits of wellbeing are shared.

127-129 Askern Road, Bentley, Doncaster DN5 0JH

 01302 876401

 bbcdoncaster.co.uk

 BentleyBaptist



share skills and experience

do what you can

make new friends

find a new hobby

take time to chat and listen





Giving A Vulnerable Child A Better Start In Life

The Gift of Fostering

Janice Jinks

England has a national shortage of Foster Carers at the moment, so recruitment campaigns are taking place to help children become part of a loving family environment.

My husband Kevin and I have taken on this role with a passion for the last 32 years, providing a loving home for above 60 children, and also, as part of the Mockingbird Project, providing a grandma and granddad figure to another 20 children and young, people building a true fostering extended family.

Children and young people come into our life for many different reasons. Some may stay a short time and others will live with us as their 'forever family' into adulthood and independence. Children and young

people need time to build trust and time to settle and feel secure. They need a home where they are loved and cared for. Not judged, but understood for who they are and the life experiences they bring. Fostering requires a passion to make a difference to every child or young person that is placed with you. Relationships can last a lifetime and we still are in contact with many of the children or young people that have been in our life.

We do try to keep sibling groups together wherever possible if this is in the best interest of the child or young person. If this can not be achieved we ensure there is regular family time, fun events and activities the children or young people can enjoy together. We hold a weekly youth club in Bentley where

fostering families can support each other and children & young people can build friendships with others in similar situations. This has proven to be a positive step in their lives, with many young people keeping those relationships as care leavers.

The children and young people that we have been blessed to care for have taught us so much about resilience, spirit, determination and the ability to dig deep and turn the negatives in their life into a brighter pathway for the future. It is inspirational to me how our children can overcome the barriers that have been put in their way.

Often these children & young people have had fragile and destructive educational experiences.



Moving schools, or not attending, or not being placed in a school that meet their individual needs. Some children come to us with undiagnosed conditions that immediately put barriers to education in their way. Education, however, gives us the building blocks for life and, as Foster Carers, we would support a child or young person through any educational challenges they may encounter. We bring in advocates and our virtual schools to meet individual needs, so a child or young person can get the best from their childhood years. Schooling them to offer them the best chance possible of a successful future in life and employment.

We also work with birth families wherever possible to ensure family

roots and ties remain – at times to rehabilitate children or young people back to their families because sometimes circumstances can change and parents manage to turn their life around with the right support.

Fostering can also include caring for babies who are going through the adoption process, awaiting a permanent adoptive family and working towards a transition plan to ensure the process is a smooth one and in the best interest of the child. Many children are looking for adoptive homes in Doncaster and regular information sessions are held in the area for people who may show an interest.

People from all walks of life can foster, you just need to meet the requirements for approval. Grandparents can make excellent Carers. Their families have grown up, so they often have spare bedrooms and they have lots of time to give – and lots of life experiences to offer young people on their own pathway to life.

If you're interested in becoming a Foster Carer and want to find out more, please contact Doncaster Services Trust and ask for the next information evening. Don't be scared to try, it's such a rewarding role, and it gives you a unique opportunity to become someone's hero.



Goldie was sad because Little Fishes is for children and their carers and not for goldfish.

Little Fishes is a toddler group for all children under school age. We meet on Tuesday mornings at St Peter's Community Hall, DN5 0AA from 9ish til 10.45. Every week we have playtime, sensory activities, crafts, playdough, snacks, singing and all sorts of fun together. And all for just £1 per family. Find out more by messaging us on Facebook (search for St Peter's Bentley) or call the church office on 01302 876272.

Bentley Community Choir is a fun, free and welcoming choir, open to anyone who wants to sing - no auditions and no experience necessary! We meet weekly in the Library on Mondays 7.30 – 8.45 and have regular performances in and around Bentley to share our love of music.

The Doncaster arts network *Right Up Our Street* commissioned and funded the choir in response to requests from Bentley Residents and, after a slightly rocky start in 2016, Sharon Richards, Professional Vocal Coach (and all-round fabulous person!), took the reins in December 2016. Our debut performance at the Bentley Community Carol Service followed after just two rehearsals! We became regular performers at Bentley Bonanza, collaborating with Line Dancing in St Peter's Community Hall, the DN Festival, Light Festival and other events in central Doncaster.

In 2018 an exciting collaboration between the people of Bentley, our choir leader and composer Sharon Richards and playwright/director Richard Hurford produced the Great Bentley Songbook, a vibrant new music theatre show inspired by Bentley past, present and future. A deeply moving work, it celebrates Bentley's history and people and commemorates the great challenges Bentley has overcome, looking forward to a bright future. First performed in July 2018 in Bentley and at the DN Festival, we're actively working on developing and broadening the project.

But in September 2018 our future looked uncertain. Right Up Our Street's Arts Council Funding was running out and the choir looked set to close at Christmas. A monumental effort from choir members, most of whom are Bentley residents, led us to form our own small charity, open a bank account (a surprisingly tricky task) and start fundraising. Choir members dug deep to help us get going (we discovered we do awesome raffles!), Doncaster Council gave us a small grant and the Bentley Churches supported us with a proportion of the donations from the Community Carol Service. Instead of the 2018 Carol Service being our last performance, it was here we shared the news that we could re-open in January and we're now on firm financial footing.

In fact, while we're grateful to Right Up Our Street for getting us going, we've found that organising the choir locally through our own charity has been the best thing that could have happened to us. Our membership has grown, our connections and performances in Bentley have increased. We held our first solo concert in the Library in April which was a fantastic night. Sharon continues to inspire us and stretch us to achieve all we can as a choir.

And we've learned that singing is great for making friends, physical health and mental health! Earlier this year, we asked choir members what Bentley Community Choir means to them. They said some great things!...

In Better Voice

Catherine Berry

"It is a feel good, uplifting experience and besides making new friends, we have such an enjoyable evening. My favourite night each week."

"I suffer from anxiety and have done for many years... being able to come along on a Monday night to sing with others who don't judge or know that much about me means quite a lot."

"I always thought I couldn't sing but since joining the choir I've found they all help me to keep in tune! We're all on the same level and also it helps relieve any stress that built up through the day."

"Love the people, expert singing teachers and fabulous songs. It releases stress and certainly makes me feel very happy."

You can hear us at this year's Bentley Bonanza, find us on facebook www.facebook.com/bentleycommunitychoir or get involved by coming along to a rehearsal at Bentley Library on Mondays 7.30-8.45.



Better Connected

Your Guide to Happenings, Events & Help in Times of Crisis

This is our very first issue and, being a very small team of local residents, we didn't have time to survey all of the wonderful groups, individuals, charities and institutions who do incredible work in our area. We'd like to apologise for that and invite anyone who would like to be featured in future issues to call or pop into Bentley Community Library to talk to us or fill in a questionnaire so we can provide information in future magazines and on our website. We know the power of collaboration and want to be as inclusive as possible, so please get in touch. For now though, we're listing the activities which take place in one of our wonderful community libraries and giving guidance on where you can find further information.

Bentley Area Community Library Events

AM	MONDAY 9am-5pm	PM
Art Group 9am-1pm	Smile 8.30am-4pm	W.E.A. Creative Crafts 1pm-3pm (Term-time only)
MIND Social Group 10am-12pm	St. Leger Homes 9am-5pm	Family Health Group 24/6, 1/7, 8/7, 1pm-3pm
		Choir 7pm-8.30pm
		BACuP 2 nd Monday in Month

TUESDAY CLOSED

	Smile 8.30am-4pm	Yoga 1.30pm-2.30pm (term time)
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WEDNESDAY CLOSED

Carers Group 10am-12pm 2 nd Wed in Month		
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THURSDAY 9am-5pm

MacMillan Benefits Advice-by appointment	Smile 8.30am-4pm	Sugarcraft 1pm-3.30pm (Term Time)
Voices 10am-12pm	St. Leger Homes 9am-5pm	
W.E.A. Learning Group 10am-12pm (Term time)	Conversation Day 10am-3pm	
Wellbeing Group 10am-12pm	Craft Group 10am-3pm	
Wellbeing Officer 10am-12pm		
Cancer Support Group 10am-12pm		

Useful Websites

Your Life Doncaster: www.yourlifedoncaster.co.uk

Healthwatch: www.healthwatchdoncaster.org.uk

Doncaster Council: www.doncaster.gov.uk

UK Government: www.gov.uk

FRIDAY 9am-4pm

Libre Digital 9.30am-12.30pm 2 nd Fri in Month	Smile 8.30am-4pm	W.E.A. Computers 1pm-3pm (Term time)
Fibromyalgia Group 10.30am-12pm	St. Leger Homes 9am-4pm	Art Group 1pm-4pm
		Family Hub 1.30pm-2.30pm (Term time)
		Library Listening Group 1pm-3pm
		Royal British Legion 3 rd Fri every Month

SATURDAY 9am-12pm

Peer Group Support 10am-12pm 1 st Sat in month	Councillors Surgery 10am-11am Last Sat in Month except June Councillor Jane Nightingale Councillor Bill Mordue Councillor Charlie Hogarth
Heritage Group 9.30am-12pm 2 nd Sat in Month	MP's Surgery – by appointment
Readers Group 10.30am-12pm 2 nd Sat in Month	Other Meetings by arrangement Stronger Families meeting Bentley Bowlers Meeting Volunteers Meeting
Counselling (by appointment)	

SUNDAY CLOSED



Bentley
Monday
5pm & 7pm
Laura
07964677240
Tuesday 9am &
Wednesday
5pm & 7pm
Becky
07581099075

Message for more Info!

slimmingworld.co.uk
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Better Days?

An Octogenarian Remembers

I was born on May 5th 1935. Most of my life I have lived in Bentley and Arksey. My parents moved from the north to find work for my father who was a miner.

We lived on the Avenue in a pit house. The houses were back to back, the bit between houses was called the backs; this is where we played games like tin can a lurky, Hop Scotch, skipping and many more. I don't remember many people having footballs or playing football.

We used to dig big dens in a piece of wasteland called the wastepiece, make tents with a clothes horse and an old sheet. We also went on walks, sometimes to get some milk from Jackson's farm down Stocksbridge lane. Mr Jackson used to deliver the milk each day, he came to the door with his big milk churn and measuring can. My mother would provide a big jug into which Mr Jackson would measure out the milk in gills or pints. Other tradesmen came to the house too, the butcher on his bike, Bibby's selling clothing and haberdashery came along the backs with a horse pulling a double sided wagon with all sorts of interesting goods. The rag and bone man was a weekly visitor. Ma Gibson used to come pushing a cart in which she collected kitchen and food waste to feed to her animals on her smallholding.

People in the mining community didn't have much money and had to rely on each other for support in hard times, but they also enjoyed

social activities together, we went on long walks over the flood banks, learnt the names of trees and wildflowers, took picnics with us and enjoyed eating the contents sitting in fields filled with buttercups, oxeye daisies and other wild flowers which are not seen as much now.

The houses had no running hot water and only gas lighting. We had a large black stove on which most of the cooking was done and a small boiler to one side that provided the hot water. On washing day or when we had a bath (the bath was in the kitchen under a lift up bench top) the fire under the big copper was lit.

The shops were at the top of the Avenue. The pawnbrokers, fish and chip shop, Chester and Roberts, general grocery, Melias, another grocery store, always had lots of large biscuit tins along the front of the counter with clear lids so that you could see the biscuits. Broughts the bakers and sweet shop. The Co-Op had a butchers and general grocery. There was also another butcher, an accumulator shop sold the acid batteries needed to provide the energy to run the radios. Dr Walkers' was one of the end houses, the front room was the waiting room with wooden benches for sitting on and he also had a dispensary. Mrs Chambers used to sell fresh yeast from her home (many people baked their own bread), the street lighting was gas, the buses were trolley buses. Not many people had cars.

During the war, as children we didn't know a lot about the fighting, only if someone lost a relative. We had to share our homes with Bevan boys, food was on ration and clothing too, many mothers were good at recycling clothes and making peggy rugs, we children used to get the job of cutting material up for the strips that were then propped into the hessian (usually old sacks).

The metal railings were taken down and sent towards the war effort.

When the sirens sounded we all put on our siren suits and gas masks and went into the air raid shelter, where we usually had drinks of cocoa.

Bentley Pavilion was the place where the clinic was held, I remember going with my mother to get the concentrated orange juice and dried milk. The pavilion floor was always covered with waterproof green sheeting so that mothers could bring the prams into the building. The pavilion was also used for Sunday school anniversaries large tiered seating was put up, we all had our best clothes on and all our families came to hear us sing and recite poems. Sunday afternoons was a regular place for families to go, the band would be playing in the bandstand and lots of people just enjoying meeting each other and relaxing. The park had closed off grassed tennis courts that were sometimes the venue for punch and Judy shows and other entertainment, we had to buy a ticket at the



entrance to the tennis court. The pavilion was also used for dancing and vegetable shows and many other community events. The play areas were good with a paddling pool, sandpits and an area for swings, teapot roundabout, rocking horse slide etc. There was a Lily pond with fountain and gold fish in it. Massarella ice cream was sold from a cart that usually parked near the Cook Street entrance to the park.

On the High Street were many shops including a large Co-Op. During the war we sometimes had to go to the room upstairs to get a special treat, an orange or banana and I think Rose Hip Syrup was supplied. On the High Street was also the Coliseum picture house. It was a real night out going to the pictures, buying sweets from the little shop next door (with our coupons) and sitting on the plush seats on the balcony. A Saturday morning film show was run for children, only the downstairs was used, the seats were wooden flip-up

seats and it was usually quite noisy. The cowboy and Indian films usually featured Roy Roger and Trigger.

I went to Bentley New Village School at the age of five. The school was heated with large coal fires or stoves in each classroom, the classes were very formal, and no moving about in lessons and needing to go to the toilet during a class was frowned on. We had regular health inspections, especially for head lice and scabies, we were given cod liver oil regularly from a spoon ough!

There were no antibiotics in those days (my brother died of measles at one year old due to a lack of medicine we now take for granted), so kaolin poultice, goose grease and other old remedies were used. When anyone died they were usually laid out by someone in the community. Births were quite often attended by a neighbour or friend, the midwife lived locally, and there were very few hospital deliveries.

On the whole, my life in Bentley as a child was a happy one. We had no television, computers, fridges/freezers, not much money and no electricity until I was 15yrs old. I did have lots of room to play, lots of friends and only the eleven plus exam to worry about. I had loving parents who went without themselves to look after my sister and me. Some parts of everyday life in Bentley were very different, some better, some worse. But many other things, the important things — like family, love, laughter and hope — were exactly the same as they've always been. Life, as they say, is what you make it, regardless of the troubles we face.



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