



There was always time for tea

My

VIEW

By JOAN GOWER



TEN YEARS AGO the Hilltop Social Club was considering starting a newsletter. My sister, who lives in Wales, edited one called *Valley Views* and I thought that we should have something similar. With a lot of help from others, in particular Chris and Cheryl Ives, the first issue went out in June 1996 with the strapline: ‘To preserve the past... To report the present... To advertise the future’ - one I unashamedly stole from *Valley Views*!

FOR A VERY long time I thought that no one really read it, but slowly feedback came - I would overhear people chatting about something they’d read in the letters or I’d get a call to ask a question about an article, or someone would ring and ask if I would mention something in the next copy.

At the beginning I wrote and produced most of it myself, but a lot of people helped in many ways. For a long time our next door neighbour, the late Jim Paige, did the printing—his contribution, he said—and for this I was very grateful. Jim also contributed many humorous articles under the pseudonym of ‘I’m Sage Jape’, an anagram of his name.

SEVERAL OTHERS wrote regular columns, including the late Gillian Cressey (Gee Cee), whose incomparable wildlife items filled many pages. I particularly liked her description of a bee as a ‘Buff Bummed Bumble Bee’ and her contributions were sadly missed when she moved away.

Amazingly, we have never missed an issue. In November 2000 I had just been discharged from hospital. Marian Brown came to see me with flowers and a card and I told her that I

was not up to producing the next issue. So Marian got several people organised and did it herself. That was fantastic and I’ve never really thanked her properly for it.

Delivering the newsletters to the whole community was always a problem. The most difficult of course was the December issue. With Christmas round the corner and the weather doing its worst, it was hard work. Likewise, when it was very hot, and as age and rusty knees began to be a problem, I realised that I would not be able to do it for much longer. But again people stepped forward to help. My thanks to them all.

Although, I must admit, I’ve never had the kind of problems my sister encountered, such as delivering to an isolated farmhouse up tractor-churned lanes half way up a mountain!

OVER THE years I have enjoyed producing the *News*. Even the deliveries were good most of the time, as people would stop to chat and often ask me in for a cup of tea. I have lost count of the number of plants scrounged from neighbours while doing the deliveries, and I made a host of new friends. Many thanks to all of you for being so nice to me over the years. It has been great. I’m very glad now that I had the idea a decade ago or, at least, glad I stole the idea from my sister! I think overall I’ve got more out of it than I’ve put in.

Joan

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