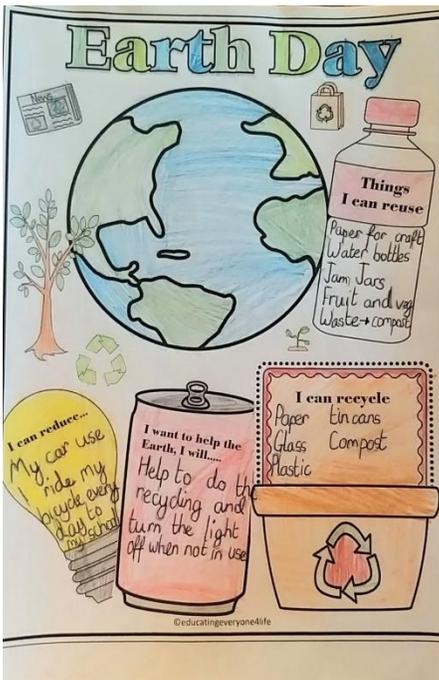




The Poggio Post

UK Community Newsletter –April 2021
EJSU - Supporting service personnel and their families

Earth Day 2021



Thank you for joining hands on Earth Day and making our Earth a better place to live and an earthlier place for our next generation to enjoy and appreciate! Make Earth Day every day.



Unity in Community

After what has been a particularly difficult twelve months I am very much looking forward to local events and activities restarting. Over the coming weeks I will restart collating local information of activities and events in and around Ferrara and Emilia-Romagna and will be distributing this information on a regular basis.

Alongside this myself and Paul Emery are in the early stages of developing a community travel blog so that we can share travel and restaurant recommendations and information. Once this is up and running, we hope that the contributions will be beneficial to all.

As part of my role as the CLO I am able to support the facilitation and the organisation of community events and activities. In addition to this I have a small amount of funding within the FCUK that can be utilised. If anyone has any ideas or events they would like support to arrange please get in touch with me to discuss.

Thank you to you all for your continued support and I very much look forward to a community event in the (hopefully) not to distant future.

JCCC

Contacting the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC). All service personnel, and their families whether at home or overseas are recommended to store the JCCC contact number in their phones. This is also strongly suggested for UKBC's.

If circumstances should arise whilst your relative is overseas either on a posting, at sea, or on deployment, that make it necessary for you to apply for his/her return on compassionate grounds (such as a death in your immediate family, serious illness or serious family crisis) you should telephone the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) +44 (0) 1452 519951 in the first instance.

This number is continually manned 24 hours a day, including weekends and Bank Holidays. Further details can be found here on <https://www.ejsu.net/jccc/>

I have some JCCC cards with useful information on that I will be distributing over the next few weeks.

IFJT Charity Cake Bakes

It's been great to see the interest in assorted charity events on our PR WhatsApp Group recently, so I thought this would be an opportune time to provide an update on the IFJT Cake Bakes we ran in 2019 in support of Macmillan Cancer Relief.

In normal circumstances the DACCC runs 7 IFJT courses a year at Poggio, each with up to 35 students, and some nations use it as a form of generating income – the new arrivals amongst us have probably heard stories of the mythical 'Bacon Burn' held on the first Thursday of each course to generate money for FCUK. The Brits got in first, but were closely followed by the Americans and Germans with Burger and Bratwurst Burns respectively. In October 2018 the Macmillan Big Coffee Morning coincided with an IFJT, so I took the left-over goodies in to work and asked for donations. Funnily enough they went down really well, so in 2019 we produced baking for all the courses and by the end of the year raised over £1000 for Macmillan.

Sadly, last year COVID put it on hold. Unfortunately, the situation has not yet improved enough for communal/sharing food at work, but this is a heads-up that if we have enough bakers it would be great to start again when conditions allow. I'm getting a lot of requests from our NATO Colleagues who are very keen to taste British Baking again! After summer, I will be relinquishing my post as IFJT Course Manger to start my new job in the DAOC, but will be more than happy to carry on coordinating, although this time under the umbrella of FCUK; partly to make the most of the support that it offers as the hub of our UK Community, but mainly because I'm intrinsically lazy! (I'm rather hoping certain senior officers won't read this far into the Poggio Post.....)

Given the fantastic amount raised by Steph's Quiz last weekend in aid of Macmillan, we ought to smash the 2019 total in future years!

Neil Dixon



NEW TOTAL UPDATE!!!!!!

Ferrara Community Fundraiser 24/04/21

With even more generosity, there were a few additional donations by you during the last few days and the amount we have raised as a community for Macmillan Cancer Support is now an absolutely amazing

€710

This has way surpassed what I thought we might be able to raise and has truly blown me away.

To put it into context, this new total amount would pay for;

74hrs of one to one specialist palliative nursing care provided at home for a patient or...

a whole week for a Macmillan social worker to spend time supporting patients and also their families or...

3 families affected by cancer have a special memory making holiday to enjoy precious time together...

run the Macmillan Support Line phone service for 2 hours. In this time, they could deal with 100 calls and web enquiries from people who want questions answered, need practical/financial support, or just need to talk.

What an achievement, and all through your generosity as a community!

Again a massive thank you to all of you who supported and attended the event on Saturday. I hope everyone had a good evening and hopefully it will be the last virtual event for a long, long time!!! Also, please can I say another **huge** thank you to those of you who supported the fundraiser so brilliantly by buying so many extra raffle tickets and those of you who donated some fantastic prizes. Thank you also to FCUK for kindly donating €75 which was made during the Grand National event and €50 towards a prize.

The list of winners from the night and their prizes are;

QUIZ

1 st	An escape room experience	Team Quaranteam; Baz, Corrie Bing and Harry
2 nd	A bottle of Port and cheese selection	Team Memery; Paul, Amy, John and Joanne
3 rd	A movie night snack pack	Captains and American; Kate, Tooley and Mikey
Bogey prize	Quiz game	Le Cabine; Adam and Jodie

RAFFLE

€50 voucher to spend at The Lab	Mitchell
Ginos Italian Express Recipe book	Booth
Whiskey glass and stones set	Mitchell
Aperitivo; la dolce vita book of cocktails and Aperitivo recipes	Fergz
A massage	Booth
An A/L day	Yeomans
A manicure and pedicure and nail care kit	Barry
A selection of craft ales and game	Hodson
A letscom activity tracker	Yeomans
A bottle of wine	Nind
A takeaway for 2 prepared and delivered to your door	Fergz
1l of Gin and Copa glass set	Barry
A private yoga couples session	Dixon

I will get the prizes to you over the next couple of weeks. I would like to suggest we run this event annually as a fundraiser evening perhaps in March/April to come together as a community again and show our support for this amazing cause. Congratulations to the winners and thanks again to you all for your support, Steph.

A Marsh and A Medieval Hillside Town

(By Neil Dixon who recommends getting a small drink before reading)

Those of you who remember the previous article I wrote for the Poggio Post a year ago may also remember a few things about it. Firstly, it was a 4 page epic requiring considerable time, dedication, and probably a large drink to get through; secondly, it had a lot of castles; and finally it started with an apology as I'd promised to write it the year before. You'll be pleased to know that the first two points don't apply to this one – it will be shorter with only one castle, but..... I promised Dani I'd write this in Lockdown One 😞

Anyway, as we thankfully move from Red/Orange to Yellow and can therefore start heading out of Ferrara again, here are a couple of suggestions for places to visit not too far afield. Although very different, both are child and dog friendly (including the castle).

Argenta Nature Reserve

The Argenta Nature Reserve is about 45 mins drive SE of Ferrara the other side of town from the Argenta Gap War Cemetery many of us are familiar with from Remembrance Day(s). We've been several times, and enjoy the peace and quiet of somewhere that feels like a snapshot of the Norfolk Broads.

If open, the Museo delle Valli di Argenta is a small museum worth a short visit. The ground floor has info on the history and biodiversity of the area, and upstairs there are displays on the wildlife predominantly aimed at the younger visitors (so I like it a lot!). It's pretty much all in Italian, but easy enough to understand even if (like me) you've not got much further than 'Si' and 'Grazie'.

The Nature Reserve itself is quite large and there are various places to park and walk from (including the museum), but we usually go to the car park close to the Restaurant / Café Oasis. This is also close to a large pumping station, giving a very visible reminder of how much of the land around here is reclaimed, and the work required to maintain it. Take the footpath along the dyke past the HQ of a local fishing club, and follow the lakeside round to a wooden bird-watching tower. This has been fenced off for repairs recently, but here's to hoping they are now complete. From there, a circular (well, square) walk along the dyke and then across a field allows for a decent loop rather than re-tracing steps (or swimming).



There's plenty of wildlife to see, including the usual suspects when it comes to waterbirds – herons, coots, moorhens and of course.... lots of ducks!

This walk takes no more than an hour or so, and we recommend it for anyone looking for somewhere relatively local to go for a couple of hours regardless of the weather, particularly if you have young children needing to be exercised. Yes, we do still remember what it was like and in fact I last went on 23 Dec just before the Christmas Lockdown with our daughter Jenny (aged 20), who very clearly needed to get out of the house!



If little (or big) ones need to be fed and watered, then in addition to the Oasis, the Agriturismo Vallesanta at the top of the walk offers meals (or did). Unfortunately, I cannot give personal recommendations as we somehow keep missing the opening hours of both. D'oh! If these are either shut or unsuitable there is always the option of popping into the centre of Argenta before heading home. I won't claim it to be the most exciting of Italian towns, but I'm confident you'll find something to eat.

(I haven't included a map because the Museum, Oasis and Vallesanta are all easily found on Google Maps).

Brisighella

Just under a 90 min drive from Ferrara, the medieval town of Brisighella sits half way up a hillside in the foothills of the Apennine Mountains between Bologna and Rimini. It's ideal for a couple of hours if you only have time for a quick visit, or for the day if you feel like taking it easy and idly exploring the whole place. With its pretty pastel houses the town is very pleasant to wander around, and has numerous eateries should you get peckish, ranging from simple cafes through to ristoranti. (Café Tips: watch the world go by over a coffee at the Aurora Bar in the main piazza, and try the gelato from the Carlotta Café just down the road)



There are three local features to look out for, and you really can't miss the first two unless it's a really foggy day; the clock tower and the castle keeping watch over the town from the ridge above. (Weather Tip: try not to visit on a foggy day).

The Torre dell'Orologia, known for its large 6-hour clock, was built in 1850 from the ruins of the original stronghold around which the town developed.

Facing it across a cleft in the hillside, the imposing Rocca of Brisighella is well worth the €3 entrance fee, comprising of two round towers and an enclosed courtyard protected by substantial walls. Both towers are accessible, with displays on each floor, and there are sweeping views of the Lamone Valley from the top of the Venetian Great Tower and the wall walk. Back down in the courtyard the Armoury built into the Western Bastion is worth a look.



The clock tower and castle can be reached from the town, and both taken in on a circular walk with an obvious gravel road connecting the two. Clockwise (castle first) is easiest as the path up to the tower is somewhat steeper. For those not up to the walk there is parking at the castle. Do check the opening times though – even in the 'old normal' I think it was only open weekends.



The third feature, and unique to Brisighella, is the ancient 'Via degli Asini', or 'Way of the Donkey'; a closed medieval road at first floor level with half-moon windows looking down on the street below. Originally running inside the actual homes, it was designed to protect the donkeys (and their owners) as they moved their wares about town and transported gypsum (on which the town's wealth was built) from the nearby quarries.



Those with an interest in military history should look out for signs around the town with photos taken after it was liberated in 1945 (captions in both English and Italian). My favourite is this one showing a convoy of jeeps climbing up out of the valley in the snow at the top of the ridge framed by the clock tower and castle. Brrrrrr!

Oh, one last thing..... Soon after turning off the A14, do keep an eye open for a somewhat unexpected sculpture of a young girl pulling a large whale! Why here miles from the sea, you may ask? And what does it mean? A recent IFJT student who hails from the town provided the answer. Commissioned by a mayor no longer in office by the time the piece was completed, it was also somewhat larger than expected. So after spending some time puzzling over what to do with it (and not wanting it anywhere near the town centre) the townsfolk finally hit on the obvious solution – stick it on a roundabout to confuse visitors. And the symbolism? It represents humankind dragging the troubles of the world behind them. Apparently. In girl / whale form. Artists, eh?



Covid-19

Emilia-Romagna is currently in the Yellow Zone. This means that the following restrictions are in place;

-Outdoor sports is allowed.

-All shops will reopen.

-All schools will resume in-person teaching.

-Bars and Restaurants are now able to serve lunch and dinner but only at outdoor tables. They must also close by 2200 in line with the national curfew.

- The national curfew of 2200 to 0500 remains in place. You can leave your house only for work, state of necessity and health reasons. Self-certification will be required during the curfew.

-It is possible to visit friends and family at a home with a maximum of 4 additional adults (not including children up to the age of 14).

-It is now possible to travel between yellow regions.

Up to date information relating to Covid-19 and restrictions can be found via the following links;

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/italy>

<https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control>

<https://www.esteri.it/mae/it/>

<https://www.thelocal.it/>

In addition to this there is a News section on the Poggio Renatico EJSU.Net page which contains regular updates and can be accessed via the following link;

<https://www.ejsu.net/poggio/>

If you have any questions or queries, please contact the NSE team. We will continue to provide regular updates once they become available.

Community Library

Ferrara Book Club Launch!

Hi everyone, I just wanted to update you all on the plans for the Ferrara Book Club and what we have been doing over the last few weeks to get it up and running.

We have taken all of the books out of the NSE and I have logged every available book into adult and children libraries. At the moment we have a total of 152 adult books!!!

Despite the fact we still have restrictions at the moment, we are going to strive to ensure these books get out to the community ASAP. In order for this to happen, you will need to do the following to enable your personal access to these books;

You will need to download the free Bookshelf - Your virtual library app from the app store

Log in using the email access address; poggiopageturners@hotmail.com

Use the password; ferrara1

Click on shelves

Click on Ferrara Adult or Junior Library

You can then browse through the library and if you click on something you think you might like, it will come up with details of the book and a brief description.



If you see something you would like to borrow and read, send an email with your name and chosen book selection to poggiopageturners@hotmail.com.

I will then put the book in a safe cover ready for you to enjoy. We can organise how you get your book whether that is through PR, picked up or delivered to you.

When you have finished with the book, we will organise its return, quarantine and sanitise it safely so it is ready for somebody else.

Go back online and choose your next book!

Some of you may already be aware that the Ferrara Junior Book Club has also been launched this week in exactly the same way. The next stage in taking all of this forward is I will be asking for any donations of second-hand books from the community (adults or children's) to build up the number of books we have available. Depending on interest, it may also be feasible to start running a new community book club. Ultimately, the final goal will be to log books onto separate shelves which will make navigating through the app a bit easier i.e. for the children having age appropriate bookshelves, and for the adults, having specific genres i.e. autobiographies, thriller and crime, easy reading etc.

We hope this new venture helps to improve access to the books for the whole community but mainly that everyone can enjoy reading some new ones! This is a completely new way of organising our library and getting books out to you and we really hope you will find it easy and useful. Please contact me if any of this doesn't make sense or you would like any help whatsoever.

Stephanie and Dani

BFPO

Service Reminder:

BFPO Customers are reminded that from 4 May 2021, BFPO will no longer be accepting mail items intended for export to overseas BFPO locations, which do not comply with current International Mail Import/Export Regulations. These mail items will either be refused at point of direct delivery at BFPO Northolt site or returned at the first opportunity back into the Royal Mail system. Please note, BFPO do not offer a guaranteed timed service and hold no liability for items which are perishable, out of date or unusable at the point of receipt.

Family and friends of UK defence personnel and their dependants serving overseas, who post private mail items via UK Post Office Counters should note, that you should always be required to complete a customs declaration for private parcels destined for BFPO addresses overseas. Completion of customs declaration forms should be as accurate as possible and must include as a bare minimum, all contents, value and a valid signature. These details are important to ensure local customs authorities in the country of destination can assess your parcel contents and clear items for delivery as efficiently as possible.

BFPO continue to thank all customers for their patience, support and understanding and rest assured we are working tirelessly to get back to business as usual, as quickly as possible.

Further updates will be provided as they become available. If you require any assistance or further information, please contact the NSE team.

I hope you are all well, if anyone has any suggestions or articles to publish in the Poggio Post please let me know. Thanks, Dani 😊