



Welcome to the Playing for Cake February Newsletter!

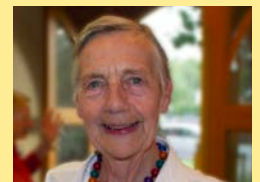
We're in the middle of that famous time of the year where it all feels a bit bleak! The post-holiday slump, grey skies, and chilly days can leave us feeling like we want to hibernate—but don't worry, we're here to bring some joy and harmony your way! February is a month of finding the light in the little things, and we have plenty of sessions to keep the energy flowing!



Singing with the Shanty Sirens

Two key dates for your diaries in February and March!

Our popular Singing for Breathing sessions are restarting on Tuesday, 11th February 2025, at The Reef Leisure Centre. These will run every Tuesday from 2:30–4 PM for 8 weeks. You can book via the Everyone Active app, contact The Reef Leisure Centre, reach out to us directly, or just come along!



Sing with Saffron
Session Leader



Time Out With Tina!

At Sheringham Little Theatre

Mark your calendars for an additional treat! Our incredibly talented Co-founder, Tina, will be performing live at Sheringham Little Theatre on Sunday, 16th March 2025. Tickets are just £5 and must be booked in advance at the theatre. Don't miss it!



Amazing Amazing Grace!

Who knew your favourite tunes could be good for your heart? Recent research highlights the health benefits of singing, with the hymn Amazing Grace standing out. In a study of older adults with coronary artery disease (CAD), singing for 30 minutes improved microvascular endothelial function, a key marker of cardiovascular health.

The Power of Music!

The study tested several songs, including Amazing Grace, This Land is Your Land, and You Are My Sunshine, and found that Amazing Grace had the greatest positive impact on the vascular function. Its emotional resonance and soothing rhythm likely play a key role in its benefits. While You Are My Sunshine also provided moderate advantages, This Land is Your Land showed a gentler effect.

The Lasting Impact of 'Earworms'

Beyond immediate health improvements, the study suggested that “earworms”—persistent mental repetition of songs—could extend benefits beyond the singing session. Brain imaging has shown that thinking about singing activates areas of the brain linked to physical vocalisation.

Healthy Harmonising

While the results were short-term, they could highlight singing as a safe, accessible intervention for people unable to engage in traditional exercise.

Although the report is still awaiting peer review, we believe it doesn't matter which tune you choose—singing brings harmony to both body and soul.

Heart-Healthy Fitness At The Reef

If you're looking to stay active and boost your well-being, The Reef and Victory offer Pulmonary Rehab sessions to help you breathe easier, feel stronger, and connect with others in a friendly environment. These sessions are open to anyone with a breathing or pulmonary condition. While many join through referrals from Kelling Hospital, all are welcome.

When and Where

Hourly Sessions run from The Reef Leisure Centre: Tuesdays at 2 PM and The Victory Swim and Fitness Centre: Mondays & Wednesdays at 1 PM

The goal is to improve fitness, enhance breathing, and support recovery while building community. Some participants have attended for years for both the health and social benefits.

A Tailored Exercise Experience

Each session includes a functional exercise circuit with activities like sit-to-stands, rowing, and resistance band exercises, adapted to individual needs.

An example circuit includes rowing, sit-to-stands, resistance band chest presses, back rows, step-ups, cycling, and shuttle walks.

These sessions improve breathing, build strength, and encourage social connection.

You can book via the Everyone Active app, by contacting The Reef Or Victory directly!

If you're looking for more ways to support your breathing, why not try our Singing for Breathing sessions—fun, uplifting, and great for your lungs!



🎵 For Sale: Starter Clarinet - Only £50! 🎵

Jane is selling her East European-made clarinet, and it's the perfect instrument for a beginner!

In good working order and ready to play, this clarinet is a great option for those just getting started or needing a reliable backup.

Set up at a trusted instrument shop in Cambridge, this clarinet has been carefully looked after and is waiting for someone to take it to the next level!

Please contact us for more information.

We also have some violins and bows, all needing some repair work. If you'd be interested in them please talk to Amanda at a session or email info@playingforcake.uk



A simple baked cheesecake recipe



- 200ml soured cream
- 3 tbsp plain flour

Ingredients

- 150g digestive biscuits
- 75g butter, plus a bit extra for greasing
- 900g full-fat cream cheese
- 200g caster sugar
- 3 eggs, plus 1 egg yolk, lightly beaten
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4 and grease and line a 23cm/9in springform tin.
2. Crush biscuits into fine crumbs, mix with melted butter, and press evenly into the tin's base. Flatten with your fingers or a spoon.
3. Bake for 10 minutes, then set aside to cool. Reduce oven temperature to 160C/315F/Gas 2.
4. In a bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Add sour cream and flour, then gradually mix in the eggs and vanilla.
5. Pour the mixture over the biscuit base and bake for 45 minutes, until set with a slight wobble and pale top with golden edges.
6. Turn off the oven, open the door, and let the cheesecake cool inside to prevent cracks.
7. Once cool, remove it from the oven and let it cool completely before taking it out of the tin.

Do you have a favourite cake recipe? If so, we'd love to hear from you! Please share it with us at info@playingforcake.uk.



In every newsletter, we'll meet a new Caker. In this issue, we meet **Jane**, one of our founders!

Can you share a favourite memory that involves enjoying a great cake?

When I was a student, more years ago than I care to remember, myself and a friend used to go swimming together regularly to try and keep fit. The only trouble was that the pool was next door to a tea shop that sold great cheesecake.....!



What were your feelings and experiences when you were around an early PFC event?

I think PFC started in 2016. At that time, I was a company board member rather than leading sessions, as I am now. So, in 2017, I went along to a workshop that Tina and George Crawley (pianist) led for members of a Dementia Support Group. Despite being in a relatively uninspiring church hall, the fun theme of 'a musical day out beside the seaside' drew the participants in to joining in the singing and actions with gusto!

In your view, what makes PFC stand out as something special?

I think the range of what is on offer from the more focused 'singing for breathing' to the more *let it all hang out* 'singing for health, happiness and wellbeing' sessions. I also appreciate the supportive friendships between the growing number of group tutors.

What are some of the benefits, perhaps unnoticed, of singing at PFC sessions?

Yes, whilst on the surface the groups meet for singing, taking part is certainly as much to do with helping to give structure to people's weeks, avoiding loneliness, making new friends, and, as someone was saying to me at a session today, for a group of mostly older people to be led some of the time by younger tutors - a welcome chance to engage across the generations.

What's your favourite song to sing with everyone during a session and why?

Oh, that's a hard one, I could name many. But recently, at the North Walsham group, we sang through "Singing In the Rain," which literally had one or two people doing Gene Kelly dance impressions around the room! And today, a lovely short two-parter, "Listen To My Heartbeat", rounded off what had been quite a lively session in a lovely calming way.

Enjoying this newsletter? Get it in your inbox every other month by signing up for free [here](#).

