

# The PAL Gazette

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## Front Page Poems 'February'

by Anne Coulter

Storms, hail and dustings of snow,  
February is wicked I'll have you know.  
I enjoy the heat of Wesley on my knee,  
He's a typical cat. He doesn't always agree.  
I attend art class. That gets me out.  
And gives me something to worry about.  
Last time, my friend wore a jumper  
which said 84,  
She must be about 30, not much more.  
If I got a jumper marked with my real age,  
Would I get extra help as I paint my page?  
It is certainly not Spring like, but the  
snowdrops don't care,  
I am pleased to see them in clumps  
everywhere.  
With caution I will walk to the nearest  
shop,  
There are puddles over which I will hop.  
I am off to buy a valentine for a friend  
And on that happy note dear reader I'll  
end.



Wesley the cat

# LOOK OUTSIDE

Cost of living?... fuel crisis?... war?...  
So many people have said to us they  
are fed up watching the news.

Why not turn your attention to what's  
happening outside your front door as  
the season slowly looks forward to the  
spring. Have you noticed the stretch in  
the evenings yet? By time this PAL  
Gazette reaches its readers sunset will  
be after 5pm. That's a full hour longer  
than in December. Spring is on the way.

### Signs of the New Season

Here are a few things to look out for  
which remind us that nature carries on.  
How many will you notice?

The dawn chorus: It's starting to come  
back. If you are awake as the sun  
comes up, stick an ear out to hear the  
local tweety birds singing. Around this  
time of year the dawn chorus begins  
with a few birds and then grows as the  
weeks and months pass. International  
Dawn Chorus Day is 5th May 2023.

Daffodils: Already the daffs have poked  
their heads above the ground. A clear  
sign of the season in recent times is the  
supermarkets full of bunches of  
daffodils for a pound. Daffodils provide  
a wonderful splash of sunshine yellow  
to brighten the grey days.

Blankets of flowers: Outside we are  
joined by early arrivals in February;  
snowdrops and crocuses have started  
to appear, bluebells too. Snowdrops  
are particularly hardy - the frosty  
weather is no match for them.

Keep your eyes peeled for returning  
visitors including butterflies, frog spawn,  
bumblebees and more.

### Feathered Friends

The Royal Society for the Protection of  
Birds (RSPB) garden birdwatch took  
place at the end of January. Over the  
next few months birds start to return  
to the Belfast skies. Traditionally spring  
hasn't arrived until the call of the



cuckoo can be heard. Cuckoos return  
in March arriving from Africa, ready to  
lay their eggs in other birds' nests (the  
naughty things!). It is said "one swallow  
does not a summer make"... though  
it'll be April before these graceful, fork-  
tailed birds return.

Meantime, in February there is already  
lots of winged activity, with blue tits,  
house sparrows and the ever-busy  
wood pigeon. Bird nest construction  
begins in February and nests can take  
up to a month to construct. Keep your  
eyes out for cocoon-like nests made by  
long-tailed tits.

### RSPB Window on Wildlife:

Belfast boasts its own observation  
point. The RSPB Window on Wildlife is

a nature centre at 100 Airport Road  
West. It comprises a visitor centre,  
walking trails, guided tours, and  
observation hides. Window on Wildlife  
is an excellent way to observe over  
100 species of birds and other wildlife  
near Belfast Lough. For more  
information telephone 028 9046 1458.

Weather permitting, there are lots of city  
walks to go on. For those of you who  
are on the internet, visit  
<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/walking>  
for walking route information from  
Belfast City Council, or call the Parks and  
Leisure department on 028 9032 0202.

Sometimes what's happening outside is  
very welcome news.

## Quick-fire Phone Competition!

The 8th person to call Lois on  
**07595 261253** will receive a  
£10 Tesco voucher. **Calls will be  
taken 10am-6pm, Monday-  
Friday.** Competition closes 26th  
February 2023.

Winner announced in next edition.

Winner of the January Edition  
(Edition 33) was **Jean Nesbitt.**



## PAL Gazette News

**GET INVOLVED!** Would you like to join the team that  
helps put the Gazette together? You can help by writing  
articles, collecting recipes, searching for competitions, even  
helping with the mail out.

Call Lois on **07595 261253** if you would like to join the  
PAL Gazette team.

In the meantime, keep sending in your stories! We love  
your recipes, special stories, and poems.

Call Lois on **07595 261253.** Or if you use email, send  
them to [info@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:info@engagewithage.org.uk)



# HERE TO HELP

To reach the Engage with Age team see numbers below.

We are always happy to receive your phone calls so our mobile numbers are:

- John McCandless 07729 526576**
- Cathy Chambers 07468 695593**
- Sarah Gordon 07423 702721**
- David Jamison 07436 174793**

**Eamon Quinn 07710 993036**  
**Anna Albrzykowska 07425 627531**

**Our telephones are available during office hours and weekdays.**

If you phone and we can't answer, please leave a message and we will return your call.

## Send your letters to:

**The PAL Gazette, Engage with Age, East Belfast Network Centre, 55 Templemore Avenue, Belfast BT5 4FP.**

Or you can email: [info@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:info@engagewithage.org.uk)



# Benefits of Podcasts

Podcasts are a great home entertainment option, that can also be educational and inspiring. They are very similar to the radio programmes that one listens to on ones computer or smart phone. Podcasts have the added benefits of:

- Being instantly accessible
- Most are free of charge
- There is a plethora of podcasts on almost any topic you can think of, from health and wellbeing, to hobbies, educational, history and many more.
- You can listen to a podcast anywhere – in the house, on the bus or out for a walk. It can actually encourage you to get more exercise, taking a walk and listening to a story.

Below is a short his guide that takes you through how to get started with podcasts and some recommendations of good podcasts to listen to.

### What is a podcast?

Podcasts are like radio programmes but they are available on a number of different devices (like smart phones, laptops, tablets). The contents and topics are vast and can be listened to whenever you want. You don't have to

tune into them and they can also be paused, stopped or rewind. There is a podcast out there on almost any topic – that's guaranteed! Whether you are interested in true crime, want to learn how to knit, want to listen to recent sporting highlights, or hear your favourite actor/author speak. The choice is yours and it's endless!

### How to listen to a podcast

There are a number of ways to listen to podcasts, you could use your desktop computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. To listen to a podcast you need you to go to a streaming device such as;

- **Spotify**
- **Amazon Music**
- **Apple's Podcast**
- **Google Podcasts**
- **Youtube**

You can also go online a research podcast for free and there are a variety.

### Top podcasts to listen to:

There are so many out there, but to start off pick something that you are interested in, this will then lead you to suggestions and other areas. For example, if you like history you will be given endless lists, but you can narrow it down by typing in a particular period



in the search function.

**Here are some highly recommended podcasts for over 65's:**

- **Desert Island Discs**
- **National Trust Series**
- **Woman's Hour**

- **TED Talk Podcast**
- **In Our Time (BBC radio discussion series)**
- **News Quiz**
- **Two Cups of Tea**
- **Audio Books**

## Reader Poem MEMORIES

Quietly as in a dream I see  
 Those men that once I knew  
 Pale faces old, now lined and gaunt  
 Bodies bent, long weary with toil.  
 Then with a second glance  
 Beyond the mists of time,  
 I see again those faces, young, fresh  
 Filled with fun and laughter.  
 Bodies lithe and firm, swiftly running.  
 Alas, in hasty carefree youth I did not see  
 Lurking midst that happy scene  
 The less remembered ghost of time.  
 Also in that dream there comes in view  
 A quiet sun-filled village street  
 Where once we laughed and played  
 But cannot be again.

© Harry Williamson

# The Questionnaire

**Name:** Anne Coulter

**Position:** Freelance writer.

### How do you enjoy spending your free time?

I like gardening. I go to an art class and I go to the "Thursday Club". I live in a rural area so getting around can be tricky but these activities keep me busy. And, of course, I compose poems. I used to write poems as a birthday gift for people, something which I loved to do. I also contribute to a number of magazines. I can almost write to order!

### Favourite Pastimes

I like watching "A Place in the Sun" and all the travel programmes. I like the scenery in those programmes. It's a dream though, I wouldn't really like to go (because the programmes don't mention all the bugs and the wild animals). But I like getting away and the escapism of it all.

### Why are these activities important to you?

It's something to do and I like being busy. I am retired and it's a nice way to spend my day. I'm a creative person so I enjoy it.

### Favourite Food?

I like hot food - Indian food. I don't know the names of the dishes but I like choosing spicy food from any menu and trying new things. I also enjoy any meal that has been made by someone else! That's always a treat.

### What is the best thing about living here?

Where I live is the best thing. I am plonked in the middle of the country. I have great views of Slieve Croob. I love trees and I'm surrounded by mature ones. I live in the midst of fields and cattle and it's wonderful. I love nature.

### Tell us something about you that not many people would know?

Everyone assumes I was a school teacher but I wasn't. I was married to a farmer and I always loved animals.

### What advice would you give to younger people?

We are all really two people – you're the person other people know, and you are the person that you know yourself to be. Try to be yourself. I know life isn't perfect, but try to be kind and try not to worry.



# WHAT'S ON

## WALKS

There will be walks in South and East Belfast. If you are interested in taking part contact David Jamison for more details via phone on **07436 174793** or via email on [palproject@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:palproject@engagewithage.org.uk)

## KIT GROUP

Every Thursday 2pm - The Keeping In Touch Group (KIT Group)  
Dee Street Community Centre, 12-16 Dee Street, Belfast BT4 1FT.

## T'AI CHI

Every Friday 11am at Inverary Community Centre, Inverary Avenue, Belfast BT4 1RN.

## DANCE GROUP

Every Friday at 2pm. Contact David for details on this fun dance group.

## FAMILY TREE GROUP

Please contact David for details.

## DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COFFEE MORNING

Every fortnight, Café Refresh, Skainos Centre. For people living with dementia and their carers. Please contact David for details.

## PAL PROJECT COFFEE MORNING GET TOGETHER

Seasons Restaurant, The Mount Conference Centre, Woodstock Link on Wednesday 22nd February at 10.30am to 12 noon. Perfect for anyone not getting out and about. The coffee's on us.

**In all instances, please call/ email David to let us know you're coming. Call David on 07436 174793 or email [palproject@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:palproject@engagewithage.org.uk)**

## South Belfast Lifestyle Forum

Next meeting is 10.45am on 14th February. Contact Cathy for further information [cathy.chambers@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:cathy.chambers@engagewithage.org.uk)

# ONLINE EVENTS

## Chocolate Bingo

7.30pm Thursday 9th and Thursday 23rd February 2023.

For zoom link email [eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk)

## The Pub Quiz Without a Pub

Via Zoom, 7.00pm Tuesday 14th February 2023.

For zoom link email [eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk)

## Free IT Training

Engage with Age has a limited number of places for "over the phone" IT training. If you are over the age of 60, live in Belfast, and have a computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone, you are eligible.

The training is provided by Ignite IT and can help you with your email, getting online, online safety etc.

To avail of this, call Eamon on **07710 993036**.

**Have Your Say  
with the  
Greater Belfast  
Seniors Forum**



## Accessing Health Care

The Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (G6) is a forum that represents the voice of older people in Belfast. It meets decision makers from the public and private sectors every month.

Getting access to health services is a key issue for older people in Belfast. This situation has been made even more critical given the pressure on health services and the fact that Covid is still within our communities.

The British Medical Association (BMA) GP Committee in Northern Ireland has committed to meeting the G6 twice every year to give updates and get feedback. Updates include: meetings with political representatives in Northern Ireland to address the challenges to GP services; engagement with the Stormont All Party Group to ensure pharmacy services do not replace GP access; challenging proposals to charge for basic health services.

Age Friendly Belfast (Belfast City Council) ensures that the G6's and older people's views on healthcare are promoted. Belfast's "Age Friendly Plan" recognises that access to treatment is critical. It champions face to face health care treatment when needed instead of phone or video call contact, and Age Friendly Belfast will work with older people and the numerous health care providers to ensure that older people are able to inform policies and decisions.

G6 members and older people's

forums reflect a range of experiences of recent healthcare, from being able to speak to a GP on the same day of enquiry and good follow-up care, through to prolonged waits in A&E and older people being unable to get through on the phone.

Older people should continue to raise their voices to ensure they get the health support they are entitled to. Contact the PAL Gazette if you wish to contribute and pass on your opinions or your experiences. **Call us on 028 9073 5696 or email [info@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:info@engagewithage.org.uk)**

One of our readers recently phoned to try and get through to their GP. They had been on hold for quite some time, and while they were waiting, they penned this amusing poem: Enjoy!

### "Number 57"

I'm number 57 in the queue  
But do I wait? I've lots to do.  
My tablets are many and I need more,  
Oh heck, there's just been a knock on the door.  
I sign for a parcel, it's now on my knee.  
By now I'm probably number 93.  
It is the dress I sent for. I switch on the heat.  
I try the dress on. It fits a treat.  
I make myself comfortable on the couch.  
I make my phone call. I have to crouch.  
"It's what I expected" I hear you say,  
I'm told to phone back another day.

## Crafty Corner Easy Make Flowers

Easy Make Flowers that you can have all season long – these easy make beautiful flowers can be used to decorate presents, go on or in card, lovely fridge magnet or a pin to a noticeboard to brighten up your home

### What You Need:

- Cupcake or cake cases – coloured ones will make for bright flowers or you can paint them before making the flowers
- Floral wire
- Floral tape/crepe paper

### To Make:

- Get 4 cake cases and fold them in half and cut out petal fringe shapes
- Fold a piece of floral wire in half and

twist around to make a false flower stamen.

- Poke the wire through the centre of three to four paper liners.
- Finish it off by wrapping floral tape or crepe paper around the base of the liners and bringing it all the way down the stem. If using crepe paper secure with Sellotape.

### Extra Ideas

- You can use red cases and add a black dot to make poppies.
- Instead of wire you could attached a painted lolly pop stick to make the stem.
- You could add buttons to the middle of the flower.



## Can You Read This Paper Clearly?

If you need a magnifying glass  
**phone or text Eamon  
on 07710 993 036.**

We will send you one through  
the post for FREE.





# WORD SEARCH

W A N S P O D C A S T K L E  
 A D W Q F K B P S Z A F M C  
 L N A S P M A Q F N O L S P  
 K D H K F R O S T F J O B K  
 S G Y B A M E H M T Y W H P  
 R T F Q H X L O E A P E K B  
 D I A P C A T I X J B R O U  
 K C R I O F J G R J I N S T  
 C B M U N U G M Q V L X C T  
 G Z E R M L C O F F E E F O  
 V U R N C W V U Z Q W Y H N  
 S E Q T V O L U N T E E R S  
 F D W A Z I R X L S D L J V  
 T B E Y S E N I O R S Z P X

**Enter our Word Search competition for a chance to win a £10 Tesco voucher.**

Find the following 9 words hidden in the word square above:

- CAT • FLOWER • WALKS • SENIORS • PODCAST
- COFFEE • BUTTONS • FROST • VOLUNTEER

To enter, phone Lois Kennedy on **07595 261 253 on weekdays, 10am-6pm.** Please note due to the popularity of competitions all correct entries are placed in a draw and the winner chosen at random.

The winner will be announced in the next edition of The PAL Gazette.

**Entries for this edition's quiz need to be in by 26th February 2023.**

**The winner of January's Edition (Edition 33) was Win McConaghey.**

## Recipe Porridge

During the winter months, porridge will help warm you up, and will give you the energy boost you need

### Ingredients:

- 50g porridge oats
- 350ml milk or water
- You could add to the taste with one of the following suggestions: Greek yoghurt, honey, nuts, strawberries, raspberries or bananas.

**Preparing porridge will take only 5-10 minutes**

1. Tip the oats into a small saucepan with the milk and 100ml/3½fl oz water. Slowly bring to the boil, stirring. Reduce the heat and

simmer for 2-5 minutes, until thick and creamy, stirring regularly to prevent the oats from sticking to the bottom of the pan.

2. Remove from the heat, cover with a lid and leave to stand for 3-5 minutes. Add your desired toppings and serve.



## Stay Well Guide to Colds & Flu

### Rest up

and stay at home



### Drink plenty of fluids



### Blow your nose

Catch it. Bin It. Kill it.



### Wash hands regularly



### Talk to your Pharmacist



### Flu Vaccine

Get the free flu vaccine if you're in one of the 'At Risk' groups.



# Tea Time Quiz

Answer each of these five questions correctly for your chance to win a £10 Tesco voucher.

1. What famous explorer was the first to climb Mount Everest?
2. Who won the Oscar for Best Actor for his role in the 1982 movie 'To Kill a Mockingbird'?
3. Who was President of the United States from 1953 to 1961?
4. Who landed at 17 Cherry Tree Lane in a well known and loved Walt Disney movie in 1964?
5. In what year did Woodstock Music Festival take place?

To enter, phone **Lois Kennedy on 07595 261253 on weekdays, 10am-6pm.** Please note due to the popularity of competitions all correct entries are placed in a draw and the winner chosen at random.

**Entries for this edition's quiz need to be in by 26th February 2023.**

Winner of January's Edition (Edition 33) is Dolly Misra.

For all the quiz lovers Pub Quiz without a Pub - 7pm, Tuesday 14th February.

For zoom link email **Eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk**

**The answers to January's quiz were:**

1. The word incorrectly.
2. An Elevator.
3. Your age.
4. The word E starts with an E and ends with an E.
5. By adding The Letter 'G' we can make the Number One disappear. - Gone.

## Night Blessing

Submitted by Audrey Lynas

Restfulness and impatience change nothing except our peace and joy. Peace does not dwell in outward things, but in the heart prepared to wait trustfully and quietly on Him who has all things safely in his hands.

## New Volunteers Call Out

Engage With Age's PAL Befriending project is seeking new volunteers to provide support over the telephone to help address the impact of isolation and loneliness with older people. Full training is provided. To find out more please email Sarah on **befriending@engagewithage.org** or call her on **07423 702721**.



## WORDS ALIVE - "Cold Snap" by Denis Hyde

Cold cold day,  
 Jack Frost has done his work,  
 Scattered frost all over the grass.  
 Hear it crunching underfoot,  
 The clothes on the washing line  
 frozen stiff,

The pavement a skating rink to slip  
 and slide on.  
 The morning sun comes gleaming,  
 Beams on brittle Jack.  
 He groans and is gone... just like  
 that!

## OLD JOKES HOME!

**How many tickles does it take to make an octopus laugh?**

Ten tickles.

Submitted by our Anonymous Phone Caller who loves a joke.



# GET ACTIVE



CHOOSE TO LIVE BETTER



Engage with Age thanks its supporters and funders:

