

# The PAL Gazette

Published by Engage with Age, Charity Number 100718, Company Number NI39665.

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Edition No. 33 : January 2023



## Front Page Poems '2023'

by Anne Coulter

Just think, it's now 2023

A year full of surprises for you and  
for me.

Things may go wrong. Things may  
go right.

I hope I don't have any bad dreams  
tonight.

Last New Year's Eve I sat myself down

With pencil and paper and the trace  
of a frown.

Happy memories were what I had in  
mind,

There were many times people had  
been kind.

My list grew longer. My spirits rose,  
Will next year be better ? Who knows.



# DON'T GO 'TOO LOW'



Our main message this month is "Don't Go Too Low" with your indoor heating, though we appreciate that is easier said than done. We have been hearing stories of older people not putting the heating on, or staying in bed all day because it is the warmest place. While it is wise to try and save on your fuel bills, living in a cold home is bad for your health so if you can, it is best to try and keep some heat going.

### The cold and your health

Cold homes are harmful to their occupants. When we are cold, our blood vessels narrow slightly and this can raise blood pressure. Cold homes can increase the likelihood of stroke and heart attacks. Increased damp and condensation caused by cold homes affects breathing and is bad for people living with asthma, lung conditions and COPD. While staying in bed all day may keep you warm, lack of movement reduces blood circulation and can add to deconditioning of muscles. So all in

all, it is healthier to save money sensibly but important to stay warm.

### Safe and sensible

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has good advice on making sure you are staying safe while staying warm/ saving money on your fuel. It advises against using candles as a means of lighting or heating a room because of the number of house fires that occur from candles. This year there is also caution issued about that old Super Sir gas heater you may have in the shed, as many need serviced, so if planning on using one get it serviced beforehand.

### Stay warm and save

We've previously asked for your stay warm/ money saving tips. Here's your top three.

- Wear thermal underwear under your clothes as you go about the house. It really makes a difference.
- Don't forget your head. If you are

wrapping up warm in doors, wearing a hat helps. Contrary to legend, we don't lose 50% of our body heat through our head (many studies have dis-proved this myth), but you'll still feel toastier with a hat on your head.

- Learn how to use your heating timer. Ask a friend, neighbour or family member for help with it. Then, only heat the hot water you need. Over a series of days, reduce the amount of time you heat your water by 15 minutes per day. During this time continue to use your hot water normally. The first time you run out of hot water, turn your timer back up by fifteen minutes, and you will have set your water timer to heat just the amount of water you use.

We know this winter feels a bit stressful and we hope you will be able to strike that balance of affording your fuel bills while still keeping well. Here's hoping fuel prices go down!

## Quick-fire Phone Competition!

The 5th person to call **Lois** on **07595 261253** will receive a £10 Tesco voucher. **Calls will be taken 10am-6pm, Monday-Friday.** Competition closes 26th January 2023.

Winner announced in next edition.

Winner of the December Edition (Edition 32) was **Robert Reid**.



## 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**



# 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)



## TIP of the MONTH

Submitted by Robert Reid

**The best way to boil and egg is to prick a tiny hole in the bottom of the larger side to stop them cracking and it makes them easier to peel.**



# How to Beat the January Blues

The January blues or winter blues are something we are all familiar with. Gone is the colour and excitement of Christmas leaving behind credit card bills, cold weather and long, dark nights. Remember, you are not alone and a large proportion of the population experience the January Blues. There are also things you can do to beat the blues and have a happy start to the new year:

**1. Take or plan a holiday/trip/day out** - Having something to look forward to is always good and it could be anything from a walk with a friend to a trip or holiday.

**2. Start a new hobby** - Starting a new hobby can be a good way to take your mind off things and give yourself a bit of a challenge. Think of something you would like to do; maybe learn a new language, knit, play an instrument, just choose something that really interests you and is achievable.

**3. Practice Mindfulness or find a way to work on your mental health** - This will help you beat those

blues. There are many free online courses or try relaxation apps or podcasts. Yoga or Tai Chi can also help. See our What's On Section for info on Tai Chi classes.

**4. Make sure you leave your house** - When it's cold, dark and wet outside you can be tempted to stay indoors. This is not good for you. Make sure you get out of the house even for a quick walk or to see a friend. Plan your week ahead and build in activities that take you outside at least every other day. Fresh air can do wonders for your mood. Why not volunteer, local charities are always looking for help and this is a great way to meet people and get out and about.

**5. Spend time with those you love** - Surround yourself with family and friends. Plan a few trips out or meetings in January, even just for a coffee. This will stop you feeling so alone and you never know they might be feeling the same way; you will be helping them too. You could also do this virtually or pick up the phone and make a call.



**6. Avoid New Year's resolutions** - New Year's resolutions can put pressure on you and if you don't stick to what you promised yourself, you may end up feeling guilty about it. So don't force yourself into

doing things you don't want to do and instead take things one step at a time. Another tip is to write down your aspirations or goals with no set time limit - like a wish list. No pressure but still putting plans in place.

# The Questionnaire



**Name:** Anna Albrzykowska.

**Position:** The new Engage with Age Development Officer for East Belfast.

**Tell us a bit about yourself?**  
 I come originally from a city in

Poland called Rzeszow, which is in the south east of the country. I've been working in Belfast for the last fourteen years, working with community centres and older people's groups across the city.

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

I enjoy watching Netflix with my cats on my lap. My cats are called Casper and Konik. Konik means "small horse" in Polish, and when he was young, Konik used to run up and down the stairs and it sounded like a wee horse. On Netflix I love watching true crime and anything about history and nature. I enjoy reading, getting out in nature,

floristry and art. I am an artist by profession and I graduated with a diploma in metal sculpting. I love painting. I don't think I'm great at painting, but I still love it.

**Favourite music?**

Yes, my favourite recently is Mylie Cyrus and her new album "Plastic Heart". It has a wonderful 80s disco vibe. I love listening to classical music, particularly anything connected to ballet (my favourite ballet is "The Nut Cracker"). I'm not a great fan of jazz music, though. I just don't get it!

**Favourite film?**

My favourite film is "Stealing Beauty" by Bernardo Bertolucci. It's a lovely story about the magic of being young forever. It was one of the first movies that actress Liv Tyler was in, and it's a wonderful tale of outcasts living their

best life in the beautiful setting of Tuscany. It's a real rite of passage film.

**Favourite food?**

I love fruit. I love the texture, the smell and the fact that you don't have to cook it. I used to be vegetarian and I still love fruit and veg and my veggie dinners.

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

I am a fully qualified florist and I love making anything with flowers.

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

Try new things. Don't be shy, and remember, there is no such thing as failure.

# 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

Mondays 9th and 23rd January 2023 at 11am. At Café Refresh. For people living with dementia and their carers. Please contact David for details.

## COFFEE MORNING GET TOGETHER

11am Thursday 26th January. 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)

# ONLINE EVENTS

## Chocolate Bingo

7.30pm Thursday 5th and Thursday 26th January 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 Thursday 19th January 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**.



# Libraries NI

If you are looking for a way to beat the January blues and get involved in stimulating and interesting activities, we recommend your local library.

The Greater Belfast Area has 18 public libraries. Every library boasts an incredible reserve of books, music, films, games and more. Many people pop in to libraries to relax and catch up with the latest news through the free newspapers the libraries get every day. Most libraries also have a range of activities throughout the week. Activities include reading groups, local history groups, Knit and Natter, and art activities like crafting and Mindful Colouring. Libraries also have free wifi and most have computers which are free for members of the public to use.

Throughout the year all libraries have exhibitions of art by a range of artists and local groups, and libraries are

often focal points for launches of books by local writers. All libraries are on local bus routes and easy to get to, but if you are unable to make it to the library, the library can come to you. All libraries have an online service for activities, and book and item renewal can also take place online.

For people with ill health, disabilities or poor mobility the Libraries have a home call service where items can be delivered to you.

Given these chilly and expensive times, NI Libraries has issued invitations for people to come to the libraries and spend time in the warmth enjoying the libraries various facilities and services.

To find out more about what your local library can offer call **0345 450 4580** or email [enquiries@librariesni.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@librariesni.org.uk) Or simply call in to your local library.

# Crafty Corner Microwave Heating Bag

These microwaveable packs are just the ticket for any of your aches and pains. You can also keep them in the freezer to use as a cooling pad or freezer pack when needed.

## Filler Options

- Uncooked rice
- Wheat
- Barley
- Oatmeal
- Beans

## Filler suggestions for headaches

- Rice (or other grain listed above) and a mix of:
- Dried lavender
- Rose petals
- Cloves
- Rosemary

## Fabric Options

- Cotton: (plain, prints, flannels, denims)
- Alternate ideas: old socks (sew or knot end closed), washcloths, old towels
- Fabric Ideas: use old towels, fleece, velour knits, pretty fabric prints and flannels (don't microwave anything other than cotton fabrics). The softer & fluffier & better!

## Instructions

- Cut and sew the fabric in the size and shape you want (usually a large washcloth size works well).
- Leave an inch or two open on one side so that you can fill pouch with your choice of filler (about 1/2 to 3/4 full, more or less as you prefer). You don't want it too full though, the sack should be able to mold itself around your body when you apply it.
- Once it's full, sew opening closed either by hand or machine (keeping filler pushed to the opposite side of bag while sewing).

## Directions for Use

Heat for 1 to 3 minutes, depending on size. Do not leave unattended "just in case" the filler smokes or starts on fire. As a precaution, you can set a cup of water inside along with it to add moisture or spritz sack lightly with water first. If you add spices and herbs, this is a good idea to do.

**Caution:** Be careful before applying to body. Shake it first, feel around and check that it's not too hot and won't burn.



## 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.





# WEATHER WORD SEARCH



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

Find the following 15 words hidden in the word square above:

- SUN • STORM • THUNDER • SLEET • RAIN • HURRICANE
- LIGHTENING • FOG • SNOW • TORNADO • HAIL
- FLOOD • WIND • BLIZZARD • CLOUD

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 January 2023.**

**The winner of November's Edition (Edition 32) was Jean Crudden.**

## Recipe **Beef Stew** Method

This recipe is a traditional stew, in which the meat juices flavour the dish.

**Preparation:** 5-10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 95 minutes

**Serves:** 2 (you can also freeze this for a later date)

### Ingredients

- 340g/12oz cubed Stewing Beef (or you can use leftover meat)
- 1 tbsp Olive Oil
- 1 large Onion, sliced
- 85g/3oz Pearl Barley (You will need to boil the pearl barley in a saucepan of water, according to the package's cooking instructions. It usually takes about 1 hour).
- 1 heaped tbsp Plain Flour
- 900ml/1 1/2 pints Stock
- 225g/8oz Carrots, peeled and sliced
- 225g/8oz Potatoes, sliced in medium-sized chunks
- 1 finely shredded small Cabbage
- Ground Pepper to taste

1. Using a large pan, fry the meat in the oil to seal in most of the juices, and then add the onion for a few minutes until soft.
2. Sprinkle the flour over the meat and then add the stock and stir well until boiling.
3. Add the carrots and potatoes and leave to simmer on a low heat for 1 1/2 hours, adding more stock if necessary so that there is always a gravy in the stew.
4. Cook the pearl barley according to the instructions, so that it will be ready to add at the end.
5. Add the cabbage in the last 20 minutes. The meat will become more tender the longer it is cooked.

Just before serving, gently mix in the pearl barley.



## WORDS ALIVE - "The Street in Winter" by John Galbraith

Down the street a car draws away from the kerb, it passes my window, slush spurts from its tyres until it disappears.

The bedroom curtain across the street moves slightly, a lit cigarette glows behind it.

A face appears at the window, then vanishes.

A man beats his arms against the snow, he lifts his face to peer at the house numbers, then staggers up the path across the way.

Raised voices stretch along the street a door bangs of its hinges, then quiet descends, each house seeking its own peace.

# Tea Time Quiz

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

1. What word is spelled incorrectly in every dictionary?
2. What never asks a question but gets answered all the time?
3. What goes up but never comes down?
4. What starts with an 'e' and ends with an 'e' but has only one letter in it?
5. How do you make the number one disappear?

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 January 2023.**

Winner of December's Edition (Edition 32) is Sandra Napier

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

1. Seven Swans a swimming 2. Germany. 3. A coin 4. 4 5. 1952

## Night Blessing

Submitted by Audrey Lynas

As you ponder the world, may grace help you find beauty around you. Sometimes it is easy to see the wonder of creation - in rugged mountains, day breaks and dusks, but it can be hard to see beauty in ashes and joy in life's jumble. May you find beauty in your days.

## 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](mailto:befriending@engagewithage.org) or call her on **07423 702721.**



## Community information drop-in sessions

**FREE** drop-in sessions at some of our community / leisure centres. Residents will be able to access information on our small grants scheme, warm spaces, keeping warm and well through the winter and much more.

[www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community)

#BelfastTogether



## Antibiotics are not effective against simple infections

Most coughs, sore throats or earaches do not need antibiotics. Your body can usually fight these infections on its own.



HSC Public Health Agency

## KEEP YOUR EYES HEALTHY



**GET TESTED AND DON'T TAKE THE RISK**

HSC Public Health Agency

## OLD JOSES HOME!

Submitted by our Anonymous Phone Caller who loves a joke.

**What Happened to the person who stole a calendar on New Years Eve?**

They got 12 months



Engage with Age thanks its supporters and funders:

