

The PAL Gazette

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The Rain in Spain

by Anne Coulter

We rubbed our hands to keep them warm.
Winter is awful when you live on a farm.
Cattle are thirsty. Water turns to ice.
Snow turns to slush which isn't nice.
Enough of that. It's summer now,
There is a little calf beside each cow.
Our weather is better than it is in Spain,
But I must admit we get a share of their rain.
The birds are singing. The sun makes us brown.
We flock to the coast and avoid the town.
Life is for living and we're good at that.
Let's pose for some photos, wearing sun hats.

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.



DON'T "MISS THE BUS"

Every so often government departments hold consultations about laws and services. There is currently a consultation taking place on free and discounted fares on public transport, focusing on the 60+ SmartPass for free public transport.

The 60+ SmartPass entitles any pass holder in Northern Ireland to get free travel on public transport. It is currently available for people aged 60 to 64 years of age who have lived in Northern Ireland for more than three months. People aged 65 and over, who have lived in Northern Ireland for three months, are entitled to the Senior 65+ SmartPass that allows access to free travel on public transport throughout Ireland.

The Department of Infrastructure in Northern Ireland is currently reviewing ways to reduce the costs associated with the 60+ SmartPass. The PAL Gazette is encouraging all readers to take part in the consultation the department is now running. Make sure you have your say – don't "miss the bus", as they say!

The consultation is proposing a number of suggestions to save costs and is asking for feedback.

Suggestions include: raising the age at which people get free travel on public transport to 65 years of age; making the scheme only available at off-peak travel times; or only making it available for people living with disabilities or accessing health care.

The issue of discounted travel is not a black and white matter.

The PAL Gazette has spoken to a number of older people and there is a range of opinions. In times like these when we have varying points of view the one thing The PAL Gazette can advise is for people to get involved in consultations and make their voice heard.

Some older people have highlighted how the Covid-19 Pandemic has made

older people more reluctant to go out and about. This has led to reduced social contact. The point is made that reducing access to free public transport for people aged 60-64 years further increases the likelihood of isolation.

At a recent event, Eddie Lynch, the Commissioner for Older People, questioned if taking away free travel for 60-64 year olds could result in a corresponding reduction in spending in the local economy if people travel less. Will cafes, restaurants, and local shops be affected if there are fewer 60-64 year olds making journeys?

In other conversations, however, it has been raised that friends and relatives who live in Great Britain look over at Northern Ireland and wonder how we manage to have free prescription charges, no water charges, and free travel for those 60+. In England for example, bus passes are available once a person reaches State Pension age, and while there are Senior Railcards, train travel isn't free. It has been remarked "surely in Northern Ireland we'll have to pay for somethings at some stage."

It is hard to ignore the diversity of opinions on reviewing the 60+ SmartPass. This makes it more important to take part in the consultation. Government consultations help inform policy. If we don't take part, then our voice won't influence decisions that affect our lives.

There are many ways to take part:

There is an online survey. The link is here:

<https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/consultation-on-free-and-discounted-fares-on-publi/>

You can email:

niconcessionaryfaresconsultation@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

You can call telephone:

028 9054 2977



If you would like a copy of the link to the consultation emailed to you, email info@engagewithage.org.uk

If you would like a paper copy of the survey posted to you, please call Engage with Age on 028 9073 5696

The PAL Gazette has had feedback that the survey for this consultation is very long, but it will only take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Even if only the questions relating to age are completed they will still count. These surveys have to suit the whole population of Northern Ireland and it is one of the best ways to make your views heard.

The deadline to submit a consultation is 24th August 2023.

So play your part and please contribute to this important consultation. Don't "miss the bus". For an exotic travel related story, see inside for our article on "The Age of Steam".

Quick-fire Phone Competition!

The 6th person to call Lois on 07595 261253 will receive a £10 Tesco voucher. Calls will be taken 10am-6pm, Monday-Friday. Competition closes 20th July 2023.

Winner announced in next edition.

Winner of the June Edition (Edition 38) was Angela Coogan.



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**
- Eileen McQuillan 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



Anne's Crafty Corner DIY Corner Bookmarks in a Few Easy Steps!

Learn how to make DIY corner bookmarks with old cards or wrapping paper and tape. They're so easy to craft and very handy.

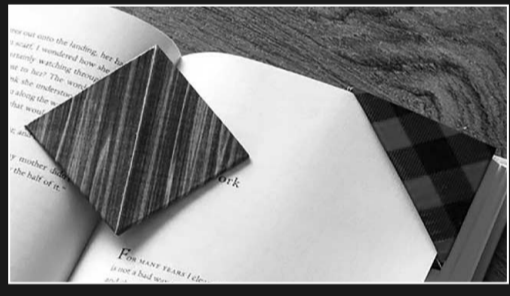
What you need:

- Wrapping paper
- Card
- Craft knife and mat
- Scissors
- Ruler

To make:

- Cut two squares that are 2½ inches wide/ tall out of the card using your ruler and craft knife
- Fold one of the squares in half diagonally and cut down the middle so you have a triangle.
- Cover the unfolded square in your chosen wrapping paper or draw your own design. Do the same with triangle piece.
- Tape the half triangle to the full triangle. This creates a pocket for your pages to go into.

This is your completed bookmark! The book page inserts into the corner. So fast and easy!



The Questionnaire

Name: Sheila Moffatt

Position: Secretary, Templemore Retirement Group

How do you enjoy spending your free time?

I like gardening. I love my garden. I like flowers but I also grow herbs and vegetables, potatoes and other veg. My best growers this year have been my tomatoes because of the weather. I'm having terrible problems with snails! Any suggestions?

Why are these activities important to you?

I have always been interested in gardening. Now I'm retired I have more time. I love pottering about. I'm not one for sitting in the sun, I'm always active, lifting a few weeds or clipping here and there.

What is the best thing about living here?

People will say the weather is horrible but if you look round the world we are very well off regards to weather. We get rain but we don't get hurricanes or anything like that. Where I live is quiet and very handy for everything. We've become a great wee city and I'm very proud of living here.

Other Pastimes?

Apart from swimming I like going out for something to eat with my friends. We always go for something to eat after swimming to a local café or somewhere. We always celebrate

birthdays. It's great to get together and enjoy company.

Favourite Food?

I am very soup orientated. I like trying all different types of soup. My favourite soup is vegetable soup, which I sometimes make with veg I've grown myself.

Favourite Film/ TV Show?

I like watching TV and films. My favourite film is "The Sound of Music". My favourite TV show at the minute is "The One Show". I never miss it. It gives you lots of information, not just for young ones but for older people as well. They cover Northern Ireland quite a bit.

Tell us something about you that not many people know?

I was in a group in Victoria Park that helped save the water in the river for local swans in the 1990s. I was walking my dogs and I could see a swan and its young getting into trouble. It turned out it was a male swan, and its female partner was away being treated for an injury, and the male was having difficulty looking after their young. The water in the river was being drained, and the young ones were on the glare (a country term for mud). The male was having difficulty keeping the young ones safe. So I was part of a campaign group to have the water level in the river reinstated, and that saved the swans. I was pleased to be able to do something to help those beautiful animals.



What advice would you give to younger people?

I would tell them to listen to older people. We've had so much life experience that it will help you if you listen.

The Templemore Retirement Group

meets at Templemore Avenue Baths every Tuesday and Friday between 10am-12noon. The group has the use of the "Heritage" pool, and group members come and swim or take exercise, sometimes as part of physiotherapy. There is an annual fee of £40 to join the group, after which session in the pool with the group are free. The group also holds occasional bus trips and get togethers. To join, just come down to the baths 10am-12noon Tuesdays and Fridays, or call Sheila on 07526 508692.

The recently re-opened Templemore Avenue Baths has just been renovated. It offers a range of facilities and is open every day. To find out more call **028 9693 0040** or visit their website on <https://www.better.org.uk/leisure>

Staying Safe in the Sun

Dear Reader – I really hope I don't put a jinx on all this lovely weather we are having by writing this article, but as lovely as the sun and heat are too much heat is not safe for anyone. It is even riskier if you are older or if you have health problems.

Hotter days can cause difficulty in the body's ability to regulate its temperature. This can be challenging for older adults who typically do not adjust as well as others to sudden temperature changes. Being overheated for too long or being exposed without protection to the sun can cause many health problems such as; heat syncope, heat cramps, heat rash, heat stroke, heat exhaustion, dehydration and sun burn.

If you are concerned about any of these heat-related illnesses, talk with your doctor.

Tips to stay safe in hot weather

Things you can do to lower your risk of heat-related illness:

- Drink plenty of liquids, such as water, fruit juices, or drinks that contain electrolytes. Avoid alcohol and caffeinated beverages.
- If you live in a house without air conditioning or fans, try to keep your space as cool as possible. Limit use of the oven; keep shades, blinds, or curtains closed during the hottest part of the day; and open windows at night, as long as it is safe and secure to do so.
- If your living space is hot, try to spend time during midday in a place that has air conditioning, for example, a shopping centre or a library.
- Dress for the weather. Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing. Natural fabrics such as cotton may feel cooler than synthetic fibres.
- Avoid outdoor exercising and other physical activity when it is very hot. Instead, try to find someplace you can be active while staying cool.



- If you must go outside, try to limit your time out and avoid crowded places. Avoid trips during busy times.
- Make sure to use sunscreen, SPF 30 or higher, and reapply it throughout the day, especially if your skin will have continuous exposure to the sun. Wear a hat and sunglasses. If you do get sunburned, stay out of the sun until your skin is healed and use after sun or moisturisers to treat the affected area.
- Ask your doctor if any of your medications make you more likely to become overheated or sunburned.

We should all be out and enjoying this lovely weather and this shouldn't discourage you, because being outside and active is good for your physical and mental wellbeing. By following the steps in this article, we can stay safe and well.

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

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.

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COFFEE MORNING

24th July at 11am, Café Refresh, Skainos Centre. For people living with dementia and their carers. Please contact David for details.

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

South Belfast Lifestyle Forum

Next meeting is the AGM, 10.45am on 12th September.

NB: The Engage with Age office is closed between Monday 10th and Monday 17th July 2023.

ONLINE EVENTS

Chocolate Bingo

7.30pm Thursday 6th and 20th July 2023. For zoom link email eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk

The Pub Quiz Without a Pub

Via Zoom, 7.00pm Thursday 20th July 2023. For zoom link email eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk

Free 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**.

“THE AGE OF STEAM”

by Nick Menkinick

Nick Menkinick has been a member of the G6 for many years, representing the views of older people on transport issues. As he retires from the G6, Nick recounts an overnight train journey he will never forget.

“It was winter 1983 or 1984. I lived in South Africa at that time and I was a member of the Railway Preservation Society. Steam trains were being phased out in South Africa in the 1980s in the same way they were phased out in England during the 1960s. Groups of us used to get together, visit locations with steam sheds, see the engines, stay on converted carriages and generally have lots of steam train related fun.

This trip took place in the railway town of De Aar, in the Northern Cape province of South Africa. De Aar is a meeting point for railway lines from across the country and the town exists largely because of the railways.

A group of us travelled the 400 miles from Johannesburg and had a wonderful time talking to the drivers and train staff. There were still some steam trains working back then, though

electric, gas and diesel engines were becoming more prevalent.

Those who know me will know that I enjoy a good chat. I ended up deep in conversation with the local staff, to the degree that I didn't realise that my group had left and got the last passenger train back to Johannesburg. I was stranded on a Sunday evening with no way back to “Jo-berg” that night.

A steam goods train was leaving for Jo-berg that evening and they allowed me on. But I had to travel on the foot plate – the place in the engine car at the front where the steam engine was driven and stoked with coal and kept going. Off we left and made our way through the South African winter night. It was crisp, but absolutely freezing cold. The train drivers were brilliant fun. At times through the night I was put to work shovelling coal and at one point was allowed to take over the controls. I had some whiskey to keep me warm and apologised to my fellow train drivers, assuming they would not be permitted to have a drink while on duty. No such luck. We passed the hip



flask round, warding off the winter cold together.

Sunrise in Africa is always an incredible experience. The light appears so bright and colourful. As the train rattled through the countryside the sun rose, revealing a chilly but beautiful new day and a stunning landscape we could see for miles. I had breakfast cooked on a shovel by my train mates, a mix of boerewors (sausage), braai mielies (corn on the cob) and eggs.

As it was a goods train making stops along the way, my journey to Jo-berg

took 12 or 13 hours and we arrived at 9am on Monday morning. I availed of the staff showers to tidy myself up a bit, though my clothes were covered in soot. I made my way back to my office by mid-morning with a reasonable excuse for being late in to work. My boss had no choice but believe me – he could see and smell the soot on my clothes from the night before.

Like many things in life, out of potential disaster came a wonderful experience I'll never forget: the time I helped drive a steam train through the night in South Africa.

Have Your Say with the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum

“Belfast Trust's Older Peoples Forum”

G6
Greater Belfast Seniors Forum

We are mostly aware of the older people's forums that exist across Belfast, and also the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum. These are excellent ways to collect together information and also views from older people that are essential for ensuring good services and a healthy city.

In June this year the Belfast Trust called together older people and workers from all over Belfast to form their own older people's forum.

The Belfast Trust has a range of departments and services supporting older people. These include Older People's Services, community-based services, and related support such as adult protection, carers'

services, psychiatry and mental health services.

The Belfast Trust's Connected Community Care Hubs reach out into the wider community to support older people's health needs. Other Trust initiatives include falls prevention workshops, Occupational Therapy Support, and even a Health and Wellbeing book for older people identifying the wide range of Trust and other supports.

The Belfast Trust's Older People's Forum is being established to improve communication and the quality of support for older people. At its inaugural meeting in June the Older People's Forum was attended by older people, carers, support

organisations such as Volunteer Now and Belfast City Council and Age Friendly Belfast. We heard from senior Trust staff about their hopes for the Forum, from the Commissioner for Older People, and also from carers and older people telling their recent experiences. The Belfast Trust is forming its forum's plans and will be meeting again later in the year.

If you would like information on the Belfast Trust's Older People's Forum, contact Ciara McClements, Belfast Trust Connected Community Care Manager, by email at ciara.mcclements@belfasttrust.hscni.net or contact Engage with Age on **028 9073 5696**.

WORD SEARCH

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

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:

- GREEK • SALAD • OLIVES • BOOKMARK • SUN
- READING • CARD • TEMPERATURE • BREEZE

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 20th July 2023.

The winner of June's Edition (Edition 38) was Fred Crawford.

I'm **not** feeling ok
 Talking really helps

Lifeline **0808 808 8000**
 Textphone 18001 0808 808 8000



Night Blessing

Submitted by Audrey Lynas

"There are far, far better things ahead than we leave behind." C.S Lewis

OLD JOKE HOME!

Submitted by our Anonymous Phone Caller who loves a joke.



What do you call a fish wearing a bowtie? Sofishticated.

Tea Time Quiz

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

1. What is the world's largest land mammal?
2. Rio de Janeiro is a city in which South American country?
3. Which Middle Eastern city is also the name of a type of artichoke?
4. With which sport is Silverstone most associated?
5. In mythology, Romulus and Remus were brought up by which animal?

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 20th July 2023.

Winner of June's Edition (Edition 38) is Win McConaughy.

For all the quiz lovers Pub Quiz without a Pub - 7pm, Thursday 20th July 2023.

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

The answers to May's quiz were:

1. Mary Quant
2. Fonda produced it while Hopper directed it
3. Andy Warhol
4. Marilyn Monroe
5. Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Recipe Greek Salad

The quick and easy Greek salad is just what you need on a hot summer day.

Ingredients

- Large vine tomatoes, cut into irregular wedges
- One peeled, deseeded and chopped cucumber
- ½ a red onion, thinly sliced
- 16 kalamata olives
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 85g feta cheese, cut into chunks (barrel matured feta is the best)
- 4 tbsp Greek extra virgin olive oil

Method

STEP 1

Place 4 large vine tomatoes, cut into wedges, 1 peeled, deseeded and chopped cucumber, ½ a thinly sliced red onion, 16 Kalamata olives, 1 tsp dried oregano, 85g feta cheese chunks and 4 tbsp Greek extra virgin olive oil in a large bowl.

STEP 2

Lightly season, then serve with crusty bread to mop up all of the juices.



WORDS ALIVE

"Forget Me Not" by Kate Glackin

Please don't ask me questions,

Don't expect me to remember-

I have lost all that,

I'm not the same.

Just let me stay quiet, close to you,

Let me hold your hand-

I can't help the way I am,

I don't even know my name.

Your face is familiar, like the warmth of the sun.

Your eyes make me feel I belong but

I am lost somewhere

I'm not to blame.

Don't be cross when I repeat myself,

Don't scold me when I'm loud and wrong,

Look close, the person deep inside,

Will always love you 'till

The best of her is gone.

Stopping Scams:

help to stop scams no matter how they are sent



Forward text messages for free to **7726**



Forward emails to report@phishing.gov.uk



Report scam websites at www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-this-website/report-scam-website

psni.police.uk

Report online. Call 101. In an emergency call 999

we care
we listen
we act

Police Service
of Northern Ireland

Engage with Age thanks its supporters and funders:



Belfast
City Council

