

# The PAL Gazette

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## Engage with Age

### Front Page Poems

Dementia Action Week was last month. We received this very thoughtful poem on that theme.

#### 'Magic On Another Day'

The sad mist of the dreaded dementia descends  
Dispelled by occasional blinks of recognition,  
The knowing smile for minor acts of kindness  
The morning joy of a muffin with marmalade  
Followed by the contented peace of relaxation.

A phone call to advise that the coach will soon arrive  
A smiling Anne will appear at the door  
Arms linked and a hearty greeting to board the waiting coach  
In the late afternoon the two Annes will return  
Exhausted after a weary day at the new school.

Anne is delighted with a cup of coffee and a sweet biscuit  
A limited recounting of how the class behaved,  
The day centre has worked its magic on another day  
The days of shared secrets and laughter are all but gone  
The rare moments of lucidity get fewer  
The priority now is caring and concern.

## Can You Read This Clearly?

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.

### Covid Response Contact Numbers

If you are in East or South Belfast and have any Covid related emergencies here are some useful numbers:

**East Belfast Covid Helpline:**  
07783 631114 (Mon-Fri 9.30am - 4.30pm)

**South Belfast Covid-19 Helpline:** 07394 569 155



## THE IMPORTANCE OF OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUMS IN BELFAST

The Belfast East Seniors Forum had its AGM earlier this month. This is the speech which Gillian McEvoy from Age Friendly Belfast gave, highlighting the role of older people's forums in the city. "Older people make up 20% of the population of Belfast. Older people are not a passive minority of people, they are a thriving growing population, and the needs of older people in Belfast represent an important part of the needs of people in this city.

Older Peoples Forums are a vital part of making sure that older people are respected and included in the life of Belfast.

In order for things to get better for older people in Belfast, decision makers need to hear directly from you. They need to know the issues and concerns that affect older people, as well as the good things that are going on in your local area and beyond. Attending your older people's forum every month helps change things for the better. As forum members, you represent the needs, concerns and interests of the older people's groups that you are part of.

The Belfast East Seniors Forum is one of six older people's forums operating across Belfast. Each forum is made up of older volunteers, who are representatives of many older peoples' groups, who meet once a month to look at issues affecting older people in their area. They consult with decision makers, pass on information to people within their groups, participate in trainings and workshops, and attend trips and outings.

Being part of an Older People's Forum allows you to directly influence policies



and decisions that affect your life. This forum, and the other forums across the city, have been actively involved in shaping The Age Friendly Belfast Plan, The Belfast Agenda, and new planning developments in local areas and the City Centre. Direct meetings with decision makers have influenced the work of the Health and Social Care Trust, the Department of Infrastructure, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and other key partners influencing our lives daily.

In addition to having your voice heard, people attending older peoples' forums have lots of fun, enjoy great comradery and friendship, and help build the links within communities that make us all stronger and better. The older people's forums across the city contribute to an amazing network, something which was vital over the last two years. When we all needed it most, there was nothing like the quick phone call, text message or zoom call during the Pandemic, just to check in with our fellow members and groups and ask how are you?

I would really encourage all older people, and all older people's groups, to

join their older people's forums and be part of a City where older people can live life to the full!"

So make contact with your local Older Peoples Forum and see what you can do to help.

**West Belfast 50+ Forum**  
deirdre.murphy@volunteernow.co.uk  
Tel: 028 90232020

**Greater Shankill Senior Citizens Forum**  
deirdre.murphy@volunteernow.co.uk  
Tel: 028 90232020

**Belfast East Seniors Forum**  
info@engagewithage.org.uk  
Tel: 028 9073 5696

**South Belfast Lifestyle Forum**  
cathy.chambers@engagewithage.org.uk  
Tel: 028 9073 5696

**North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum**  
olaf@northbelfastseniors.org  
Tel: 028 9075 5894

**Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum**  
genevieve.woods@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk  
Tel: 07827 310207

## 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)

## Quick-fire Phone Competition!

The 7<sup>th</sup> person to call Lois on **07595 261253** will receive a £10 Tesco voucher. **Calls will be taken 10am-6pm, Monday-Friday.** Competition closes 28th June 2022.

Winner announced in next edition.

**Winner of May Edition 25 was Sheila Boyd.**



# Support Numbers

If you need some support, the following services can help.

## Covid-19 Community Helpline:

For information, advice and guidance, from Advice NI. **Tel: 0808 802 0020**

## Age-friendly Belfast:

Call to get information on key Belfast City Council services. **Tel: 07713 684705**

## Check-In and Chat:

A new Age NI/ Commissioner for Older People telephone service for people over 60 who may be isolated and fancy a chat. **Tel: 0808 808 7575**

# 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:

**Eamon Quinn 07710 993036**

**John McCandless 07729 516576**

**Eileen McQuillan 07423 702721**

**Caleb Armitage 07436 174793**

**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)**



# The Real Northmen Vikings in Northern Ireland

There has been much excitement in Northern Ireland surrounding the recent release of *The Northman*. This action-packed epic Viking saga follows a young Viking prince on his quest to avenge the murder of his father. Starring big Hollywood names such as Nicole Kidman, Ethan Hawke and Willem Dafoe, much of the movie was filmed right here in Northern Ireland. Legions of local extras joined the Hollywood stars to invade a purpose built Viking village on Torr Head, the heart of the Mourne Mountains and Shanes Castle during filming. But it does make one wonder – did the Vikings really come to Northern Ireland?

The Vikings arrived in Ireland to raid and pillage in the late 700's. At that time, there were no true towns in Ireland but rather scattered communities near monasteries that served as 'safe houses' for valuables, food, and cattle. This made those locations prime targets for Viking raids. As the Vikings continued to raid, they began to settle. One of the first Viking settlements was at the mouth of the River Liffey, and from this the city of Dublin grew. The cities of Cork, Waterford, Wexford and Limerick also trace their history back to Viking settlements from this time.

But the Vikings had not confined their activities to the south-east of Ireland. In 795 AD, the Annals of Ulster record the "burning of Recru [Rathlin] by the heathens", an event that marked the first recorded instance of Viking activity in Ireland. Bangor, County Down, was raided in 824 AD, and around 832 AD there was a naval engagement between Vikings and Irish coracle fleet in Lough Neagh, and Armagh was subsequently raided. Although the Vikings did not establish large settlements as they did in the south, their influence can still be found in two well-known coastal towns today.

The port town of Larne was known in Old Norse as Ulfreksfjorðr, or the fjord of Ulfrek. Snorri Sturluson, an Icelandic poet, politician and historian in the

10th and 11th centuries, mentions Ulfreksfjorðr in his *Heimskringla* as the place where the king of Ireland, Connor, defeated the Orkney Vikings under the leadership of earl Einar in battle in 1018 AD. The name Ulfreksfjorðr was later anglicised to *Wulfrichford*, and eventually evolved into the surviving name *Olderfleet*. The ending fleet comes from the Norse fljot, meaning "inlet". Older may come from the Norse oldu, meaning "wave". In 1840, workmen constructing a railway line just one mile outside Larne unearthed a Viking warrior's grave. The male skeleton was found with his double-edged sword across his chest, the hilt pointing towards his right hand. It has been speculated that the man was in fact a warrior, whose hasty burial may have been connected with King Connors defeat of the Orkney Vikings. His grave also contained a spear head, a bronze ringed pin and a bone comb. The skeleton and grave goods disappeared for quite some time, until they were discovered in a collection at Alnwick Castle in Northumberland. You can now see these artefacts as part of the permanent display in the Saints and Scholars gallery at the Ulster Museum in Belfast.

A trip along the County Down coast takes us to the beautiful coastal town of Strangford. The original name of Strangford Lough was Loch Cuan, which means the quiet lough. When the Vikings arrived they renamed it Strang Fjord, which means the 'fjord of the strong currents'. The Narrows is renowned for fierce currents, while a fjord is a long narrow inlet of the sea formed by glacial action. Strangford was used as a base by the Viking longships while they were engaged in raids around the Irish Sea.

The Battle of Strangford Lough took place in 877 AD between two rival groups of Vikings, described in the Annals of Ulster as "the Dark Heathens" and "the Fair Heathens". Halfdan Ragnarsson, leader of the Great Heathen Army, was killed in an attempt



*The Battle of Clontarf*

to claim the Kingdom of Dublin from Norwegian Bárid mac Ímair.

One of the most significant Viking sites in Northern Ireland is at Downpatrick. The Vikings established settlements and controlled trade and commerce for about two centuries, until 1014. The last effort to establish Norse domination was by Magnus III, King of Norway. In 1103, Magnus Barelegs, King of the Vikings, was killed near Downpatrick. This was a murder of international significance. Magnus was a Viking adventurer who had become King of Norway in 1098. In 1102 he set off for Ireland and in that year took control of Dublin. He was ambushed and killed by the Ulaid — the native Irish — while in the process of acquiring cattle provisions for his journey home. He is buried near the town of Downpatrick and was the last Viking King to rule the Irish Sea, with his grave the only

recorded grave of a Norwegian Viking King outside Scandinavia. Magnus is remembered to this day in the area — the Magnus Viking Association, a living history group, have made their permanent home at a purpose-built Viking camp at Ballyduggan on the outskirts of Downpatrick where they host the Magnus Barelegs Festival every other year.

The Vikings continued to raid across Ireland until Brian Boru defeated them at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, putting an end to two centuries of fear. An Irish monk wrote in a poem:

"Fierce and wild is the wind tonight  
It tosses the tresses of the sea to white  
On such a night as this I take my ease  
Fierce Northmen course only the quiet seas"

A stormy night at sea meant the monks could sleep peacefully at night without fear of a Viking raid.

## WORDS ALIVE

### "Mother's Thimble" by Margaret Wilson

Amongst the spools and bobbins,  
rainbow hued  
Hidden under scissors, pins and tapes  
The silver thimble lies - I pick it up

How small it is - a little tarnished now  
The finger it protected, so fine boned  
Just like the lovely hand I held  
While Phoebe Angus left this world.

# WHAT'S ON

## WALKS

There will be walks in South Belfast on Tuesdays in June at 2pm and in East Belfast on Wednesdays at 2pm.

If you are interested in taking part contact Caleb Armitage 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, Inverary Community Centre. Contact Caleb for details on this fun dance group.

## FAMILY TREE GROUP

Meets at various locations so please contact Caleb for details.

## DEMENTIA FRIENDLY GROUP

Mondays at 2pm. Meetings alternate between Inverary Community Centre and Knocknagoney Community Centre. Contact Caleb for details.

## CLASSIC BOOK GROUP

A new book group, meeting monthly, reading titles we are all familiar with that are also freely available online. The group meets in Café Refresh in the Skainos Centre on Newtownards Road Belfast. June's book is "Animal Farm" by George Orwell.

In all instances above, please call/ email Caleb to let us know you're coming.

Call Caleb on **07436 174793** or email [palproject@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:palproject@engagewithage.org.uk)

# ONLINE EVENTS

## Chocolate Bingo

7.30pm Thursday 9th and Thursday 23rd June 2022.

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

## Jim's Pub Quiz Without a Pub

Via Zoom, 7.00pm Thursday 16th June 2022.

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

## Have Your Say with the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum June's "Hot Topics"

### Entitlements, not benefits!

Following on from last month's PAL Gazette, there is increased discussion on older people ensuring they are getting all of the financial benefits they are entitled to. Discussion at the various forums highlighted the stigma about older people getting "benefits". For some it sounds like getting a hand-out. With the increasing cost of living, perhaps it's time to stamp out the stigma associated with receiving financial entitlements. These entitlements have already been paid for by older people paying tax and national insurance throughout their working lives. These entitlements have been agreed by government. As one older person at the G6 commented, "it's not a free bus pass, I've earned it!"

### Age Discrimination in Northern Ireland

Do you know there are a number of laws and opportunities that protect the rights of older people in England, Scotland and Wales but don't apply over here? There are significant welfare of older people here. One difference of current importance, which arose in discussion, is the Warm Homes Discount Scheme. Older people in Great Britain who qualify for Pensions Credit benefit receive support in colder months. Although paid for by energy companies through extra costs on heating bills, this scheme doesn't operate in Northern Ireland. Surely this is not right! The Warm Homes Discount Scheme helps homes get up to £140 discount on

their electricity bills for the winter. Great if you are in England, Scotland or Wales and qualify, but if you are an older person in Northern Ireland? Tough luck; the scheme doesn't extend over here. Why not? What can we do? Time to talk to our MLAs. We need concerted NI Assembly action on issues like these that disadvantage older people in Northern Ireland. Call the NI Assembly Engagement Team on 028 9052 0321.

### Time for an Older People's Hub?

Is it time for a place where older people can gather, relax, and learn about opportunities that can benefit them? Isolation has become an increasing issue for older people, made worse by the Pandemic. Added to this, it will become increasingly more expensive for older people to spend all day in their homes as a result of the boom in the cost of heating. Is it time to kill two birds with one stone, and set up a Hub for Older People in the centre of Belfast? Somewhere centrally located, warm and welcoming, a place with friendly faces, and where older people can pick up useful information too? With changes in the "High Street" and more empty shop units, maybe now is a good time to set up an Older Peoples' Hub.



## Anne's Crafty Corner - Ladybird Leaves

### Materials

- Flat rocks • Small round pebbles
- Acrylic paints • Strong glue – UHU or similar

### Instructions

- Paint your flat rocks a leafy green. While they are drying, paint the small pebbles red.
- Once they have dried, use a dark green to paint on the veins of the leaves, and use black paint or a sharpie to add spots, eyes and other details to your ladybirds.
- When your rocks are all dry, glue the ladybirds onto your rocky leaves. Once the glue has set you can hide these little ornaments in your house plants.



# The Questionnaire

**Name:** Marianne Skelcher

**Position:** New Trustee with Engage with Age

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

I enjoy the garden. I love visiting gardens and pottering about in my own garden. I was at the Clandeboye Estate garden recently as part of the National Garden scheme and it was absolutely wonderful.

### Why are these activities important to you?

I guess what I really like is staying in touch with the seasons. I love how gardens change in line with the seasons and then watching them as they change back again. Spring will always come after winter. Sometimes we need to be reminded of that and gardens are a wonderful way of staying in tune with the cycle of every year.

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

There are two things that I love about living here. One of them is being close to my daughter and granddaughter, who also live here. I'm able to spend lots of time with them. The other thing is having lovely coast and countryside on my doorstep. Though I grew up by the coast in England, since my early twenties I lived in the middle of England near Birmingham, which is about as far from the sea as you can get. It's good to be back somewhere close to the sea; it feels really good for me.

### Favourite Pastimes?

I am a big reader so my Kindle is never far away from my hand. I read in every spare moment really. I really enjoy a good novel and a good memoir. And my word, Northern Ireland has some wonderful writers. I've just finished Louise Kennedy's novel "Tresspasses". It is a love story and it's just beautiful.

### Favourite Film?

I don't really have a favourite film. I like going to the cinema but I really struggle to find a favourite one. I recently went to see the film "The Quiet Girl", an Irish language film which is absolutely beautiful, it's just lovely. It's based on a

novel which may be why I found it so wonderful. I also really enjoyed watching Kenneth Branagh's "Belfast". There's something about watching it in cinema filled with people from Belfast. By the end there wasn't a dry eye in the house.



### Favourite Food?

Well, I would say it's very hard to beat a very good seasonal salad, especially if I've grown the salad myself. There's nothing quite like picking your own salad. I also love seafood which is something good about living here because there's such wonderful fish. I love a good bowl of chowder.

### Tell us something about you that not many people know.

When I first retired, my partner and I decided to take a gap year and we went to live on a Greek Island for nine months. Living somewhere completely different was a brilliant experience and it enabled both of us to really switch off from the working lives we had just left behind. If we had stayed in the UK it would have been easy to say yes to work when it was offered, but because we were in another country I had to say "sorry, I'm not available". It was very relaxing learning to speak another language and see how people in another part of the world live.

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

This is a hard question. I think the two things I try to encourage in my grandson is not to be afraid to be himself, even if he stands out from the crowd a little and not fit in with everyone else for a bit. Also, try to always be curious about the world around you, curious about your surroundings and other people. Do not be afraid to say hello to new people, and ask people about themselves and tell them about you.



# JUNE WORD SEARCH



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

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

- SUNGLASSES • GAZETTE • TOMATO • VIKINGS
- STRANGFORD • COCONUT • SUMMERTIME • HOLLYWOOD

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 28th June.**

**The winner of last month's Word Search was William Beatty.**

## Recipe Deli Pasta Salad

This delicious pasta salad makes a perfect light lunch on a warm summer day or can be served at a BBQ as a great side dish.

### Ingredients:

- 300g pasta bows
- 200g frozen peas
- 1 large tomato
- 10 sundried tomatoes in oil
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp white wine vinegar
- 1 garlic clove
- Large handful fresh basil leaves
- 85g pack prosciutto or salami

### Method:

**COOK THE PASTA:** Boil the pasta in salted water for 8 minutes then add the peas, return the water to the boil and cook for 2 minutes more until the pasta and peas are tender. Tip into a colander over the sink, cool the pasta and peas under the cold tap then drain really well.

**MAKE THE DRESSING:** While the pasta is boiling, roughly chop the tomato and put in a food processor with half the sun-dried tomatoes, the olive oil, vinegar, garlic and about 8 basil leaves. Season with plenty of salt and freshly ground pepper then whizz until smooth. Tip into a large salad bowl.

**TOSS AND SERVE:** Add the pasta and peas to the dressing, roughly slice the rest of the sun-dried tomatoes and add to the pasta with the remaining basil leaves. Tear in the prosciutto or salami and toss everything together.



## OLD JOKES HOME!

Submitted by our Anonymous Phone Caller who loves a joke.

**What is brown, hairy, and wears sunglasses?** A coconut on holidays.

**What kind of tree fits in your hand?** A palm tree!

**What is the difference between a piano and a fish?**

You can tune a piano, but you can't tuna fish!

## Jim's Tea Time Quiz

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

1. **The Watergate Scandal, one of the most infamous events in American History, forced which US President to resign in 1974?**
2. **What do you call a mythical creature with the lower body of a horse and the upper body of a human?**
3. **Which bird often steals shiny and bright items during their nesting season?**
4. **Which legendary hero in English Folklore is known for stealing from the rich and giving to the poor?**
5. **Who delivered the famous speech "I have a Dream" in 1963?**

The winner of last month's quiz was **Dolly Misra**. 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 28th June 2022.**

The answers to the last quiz were:

1. Fear of skin disease
2. Lex Luthor
3. 1815
4. Pierre Curie
5. Rose pill (purportedly protected against plague)



## The French Connection!

French influences in South Belfast by Nick Menhinick

I've always been a curious soul. I've travelled the world, lived in various countries including South Africa, and always enjoyed meeting people from other places, cultures and climates. I couldn't help but notice the French names adorning our public places in South Belfast where I live, so I did a bit of digging in the history books.

The name "Belvoir", pronounced locally as "Beever", has a French spelling, and its origins go all the way back to 1066. From what I can gather, the "Belvoir" story begins at the Battle of Hastings. William The Conqueror thanked his standard bearer, Robert De Toden, by bequeathing him land in England just outside Grantham. On that land the original Belvoir Castle was built in 1067. The castle and its succeeding castles that were built there were destroyed variously by insurrections and fire. The last castle was built there between 1801 and 1832 and is now open to the public. A descendent of Robert De Toden, called Lady Middleton, acquired land up on a hill outside of the then new metropolis of Belfast. Because the land had a good view she borrowed the castle name "Belvoir" and gave the property and place to her favoured second son Arthur. It is thought by some that because the locals couldn't pronounce "Belvoir" they pronounced it as "Beever". The land and property was later passed over to Belfast Council and eventually became a significant public space for the denizens of the city.

Similarly the name "Ormeau" has Gallic origins. In its original French, "Ormeau" has numerous literal translations, known variously as 'Young Elm', 'Elm by the water',



or as another word for an abalone, which is a shellfish. Ormeau House was originally owned by the Marquis of Donegal. For the spelling of the name Donegal, some people spell it with a single 'L' (Donegal) and some with two 'L's (Donegall). Ormeau House was built in 1823, replacing a modest cottage on the site. Ormeau House was a true 'des res' outside of the city centre, separated from the rest of the city by the River Lagan. The house was demolished in 1870. As was a common experience, the family fell on hard times, accumulating a debt to the equivalent of £40 million in today's money. The land was bequeathed to Belfast Council in the 1840s/50s and Ormeau Park, as we know it today, was opened by the Council in 1871. Ormeau Park was the first open green space for the people of Belfast. On its opening day there was a huge public parade, starting at Carlisle Circus, taking a circuitous route through the city and making its way to Ormeau Park gates for a ceremonial opening.

Two wonderful examples of how 'the local' is influenced by the international. These are signs of connections across the world.

COVID-19  
vaccine



## Spring Booster

Immunosuppressed individuals are eligible for the spring booster

HSC Health and Social Care Board



## Night Blessing

Submitted by Audrey Lynas  
*There's never a teardrop that God doesn't see. He knows when a sparrow falls from a tree. There's never a moment that God doesn't care. Never a time when he doesn't hear our prayer.*

Engage with Age thanks its supporters and funders:



Belfast  
City Council

