

# The PAL Gazette

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## Engage with Age Front Page Poems “Back Then”

by Anne Coulter

We had never seen a banana.

Holidays were spent in Portrush.

We queued for the cinema  
but there was always a crush.

Dad wore a helmet  
while in the A. R. P.

I was sheltering under the table  
when he peeped in at me.

Bangor had few air raids  
but we knew what to do

It was a challenge,  
something new.

Mother was in the kitchen  
making jam,

For tea they knew

they'd get salad with spam.

It was during the war  
and they'd heard a bomb drop.

Chocolate was rationed  
in the sweet shop.

We scrunch through grass  
dusted with frost,

But we still have flowers.

All is not lost.

Roses still bloom

when the weather is cold

And are a welcome gift

for both young and old.

# PLAN NOW AND STAY WARM LATER

We've certainly noticed the drop in temperature. We had such an unusual summer, with so much rain but quite high temperatures. Now that we are back to more usual weather and temperatures for autumn it's important to get ready now for chillier times as we make our way towards winter.

### Why staying warm is important

Last year we received many reports of people keeping their heating off to avoid spending money on heating bills. Being cold is not good for one's health so we encourage you to find ways to keep your home warm, stay warm yourself, and take advantage of warm spaces throughout our communities.

### Keep your home warm

Some of this will be second nature, but it is worth repeating, particularly if you are keeping track of your fuel bills. In your home, try to keep a steady temperature. Age UK recommends 21°C/70°F in your living room and 18°C/64°F in your bedroom before you go to bed. Heat the rooms you use and turn off or turn down the heating in any rooms you don't use. Learn how to use your heating system's thermostat so that it comes on when you need it. Check your radiators are working efficiently - if they need “bled” do it now. Draw curtains in the evening to stop heat leaking out, and tuck long curtains behind radiators to get as much heat as possible into your room. Keep radiators clear from furniture so heat can circulate. Draft excluders are always a good idea to stop the cold getting into your room. Bryson Energy has a handy person scheme that can

help with small jobs to make your home warmer. Contact them on 0800 1422865.

### Keep yourself warm

Moving about is a great natural way of staying warm. Take opportunities to move about during the day. If you are seated for a period of time, wrap up in a throw or a blanket. Hot water bottles are an excellent and efficient way to stay warm, but use one with a cover or a “cosy” to avoid getting burned. Layers of clothing can keep you warm, particularly if you are cold in bed – think thermal socks and underwear, an extra T shirt, and even a hat when it's really cold. If you are using an electric blanket in bed make sure it's safe and good to use.

### Visit warm spaces

If you are finding it difficult affording to keep your home warm throughout the day, why not take advantage of the many public spaces that will welcome you to stay snug. You might also meet others and enjoy some company.

Libraries across Belfast are welcoming warm spaces with lots of facilities, including free newspapers to read, free wifi, and a range of activities and services. You can also get a lend of books and movies from an extensive range. **To find out more about what's on in your local library call Libraries NI on 0345 450 3580 or log on to [www.librariesni.org.uk](http://www.librariesni.org.uk)**



Belfast's community centres have consistently offered a cosy open door to local residents, and some of them will be offering their Warm Spaces Warm Welcome scheme this year.

**To find out more, call 028 9032 0202 or log on to <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/communitycentres>**

2 Royal Avenue, Belfast's “indoor park”, offers a comfortable warm space, a café, exhibitions and also a range of activities. Call in any day between 10am-5pm.

With the seasons well ‘on the turn’, now is the time to prepare for the colder times ahead.

## Quick-fire Phone Competition!

The 11th person to call Lois on **07595 261253** will receive a £10 Tesco voucher.

**Calls will be taken 10am-4pm, Monday-Friday.**

Competition closes 8th November 2023.

Winner announced in next edition.

Winner of the October Edition (Edition 42) was **Margaret McDougal**.



## 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 516676**

**Eileen McQuillan 07423 702721**

**Cathy Chambers 07468 695593**

**Paul Hendry 07436 174793**

**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 Microwavable Heat Pad

Keep nice and warm this autumn with a home made and reusable microwavable heating pad. These are easy to make and will make a lovely gift too.

**What you need:**

- Fabric (roughly 12 inches square)
- Thread
- Sewing machine or needle
- Scissors
- Uncooked white rice
- Clothespins

**To make:**

1. Fold and press a 1/4 inch hem at the top of your fabric.
2. Fold the right sides of the fabric together with the hemmed edges at the top.
3. Make a basic stitch around the sides like you're creating a pocket, leaving the hemmed sides open.
4. Next, turn it right side out so that the right side of the fabric is showing. Fill the bag with the rice.
5. Use clips or clothespins to keep the rice in while sewing. Use a basic stitch and sew the two hemmed sides together.

**NB - These can be frozen to make a cooling pad.**



### Can You Read This Paper Clearly?

If you need a magnifying glass phone or text Paul on 07436 173793.

We will send you one through the post for FREE.



## The Questionnaire

**Name:** Paul Hendry

**Position:** The new Development Officer for the PAL Project Activity Groups

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

At the minute my "time out" is going to the gym. I'm an avid gym goer. I fell into it a long time ago and I got the bug. I go a few nights a week. I have a very busy life and there's rarely a day when I have lots of spare time, but getting to exercise is a great form of escape and a good way to stay well.

**Why are your pastimes important?**

Exercising gives me a release, and gives me a chance to switch off from stresses, strains and worries of everyday life. The theory is that it's hard to think about anything when you're absolutely exhausted! Exercise is a very good distraction. I think it's important to have time out and to do something you can engage with that takes you away from your day-to-day concerns.

**Favourite Food?**

I'm a big sea food fan. I love any type of sea food. And as the joke says, if I "see food" I eat it.

**Favourite Film/ TV Show**

Oh jeeppers! I am a film buff and I've been asked this before. I like different films from different eras and for different reasons. My regular go-to films are "The Shawshank Redemption", "Gladiator" and "The Quiet Man". From the days of my youth I have always loved the film "Quadrophenia" by the band The Who. I've quite a broad interest in the movies.

**Best Thing About Living Here**

It's the people here, definitely. Over here we have a friendly and slightly forward nature. You could walk into a room with most people and within a few minutes be able to crack away with people, give and take a bit of banter. I think we're pretty unique over here that way.

**Tell us something about you that not many people know:**

I've been to the South Pole. It is a



brilliant and beautiful part of the world. I am a great admirer of the explorer Shackleton and when I was at the South Pole I followed his journey.

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

Take your time and look around. When you are young you have more time than you think you do. See around you as much as you can, travel about, see things, because when you get older it becomes more difficult. Also, try not to worry too much.

## The Phone Box by Gerry McCool

When the phone box was broken, we had to wait for the pub to open or get the bus or a taxi to talk to someone. You might be too late or early, there was no way of knowing and the day could be wasted by the time you were done.

Now things have moved on, and cell phones abound, communication is instant, you can always be found. You dare not forget it wherever you go, why did you not answer they all want to know?

Big Brother had nothing on these little critters, there's hi-fi and wi-fi and facebook and twitter. No need for writing or letters or stamps. Keep up with your email, leave nothing to chance.

The banks are all closing, you can do



it online, manage debts and pay bills, it's your own chance to shine! If you

know just nine numbers, you can be your own boss and watch columns of zeros march across and across.

Now, could I find me a phone box, they're almost extinct, how to work the damn thing, I blinked and I blinked. Ten pence for three minutes, I seem to recall, now one seventy-five to make that same call!

Rang my brother in Melbourne on this new thing called Skype, a technological miracle if you believe all the hype. You can look at each other while talking away, God you've piled a few stone on and your hair is so grey.

Now when I call them my camera's not on. I'm fed up with these Aussies, so slim and so bronzed. I'll go back to my letters, I can still read and write, but there's so much to say, it takes you all night.

### Night Blessing Submitted by Audrey Lynas

The old saying is true: count your blessings. May you be able to settle your heart and soul on gratitude as a given the gift of thankfulness. Whatever challenges you face or uncertainties you are encountering, may you be thankful heart is a happy heart.

# WHAT'S ON

## WALKS

There will be walks in East Belfast. If you are interested in taking part, contact Paul on **07436 174793** or email [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 Dee Street Centre, 12-16 Dee Street, Belfast BT4 1FT.

## DANCE GROUP

Every Friday at 2pm. Contact Engage with Age for details on this fun dance group.

**In all instances above, please phone Paul first on 07436 174793 or email [palproject@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:palproject@engagewithage.org.uk) for details**

## South Belfast Lifestyle Forum

Next meeting is 11.00am on 14th November 2023.

Email [cathy.chambers@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:cathy.chambers@engagewithage.org.uk) for further information.

## ONLINE EVENTS

### Chocolate Bingo

7.30pm Thursday 9th and 23rd November 2023. Via zoom.

Contact [eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk) for the link.

### The Pub Quiz Without the Pub

7.00pm Thursday 16th November 2023. Via zoom.

Contact [eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk) for the link.

### Free IT Assistance

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 Paul on **07436 174793**.

## Have Your Say with the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum

## Age Friendly Convention and Transport



This column seeks to keep you up to date with the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (G6), but occasionally we will update you on other initiatives.

The Age Friendly Convention was part of the Positive Ageing Month programme and took place on 25th October 2023. The theme was reconnecting older people to services to improve health. Opened by the Lord Mayor, there were presentations by the G6, the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership, and Belfast Trust. Further information was provided by Libraries NI, Community Centres, Leisure Centres, and 2 Royal Avenue. Over 100 older people availed of the opportunity to consult and get information.

### Transport Update

An update on the 60+ SmartPass consultation was provided at the Age Friendly Convention by Rita Murray, Chairperson of the G6. Delegates were informed of G6 co-ordinating the submission of 250+ written submissions to the consultation from older people's groups and

forums across the city. The G6's own response to the consultation was to oppose any changes to the scheme, highlighting potential negative impacts on loss of social connections for people aged 60-64, loss of income for businesses, the environmental impact, and the threat to routes and jobs. G6 also participated in the protest against any changes to the scheme, issued media statements, and held a photocall handing in written responses to the Department of Infrastructure.

Over 7,000 responses were made to the consultation. The results are still being compiled and considered by the Department of Infrastructure. It is not clear if the result of the consultation will influence any decision, or if any decision will be made in the absence of a minister. What is clear is that it will be difficult to ignore the views of 7,000+ people. We will keep you posted.



# The Healing Power of Pets for Seniors



For some, getting older can be very lonely. This is because loved ones and friends move or pass away, and it becomes increasingly difficult to leave the house and participate in your favourite activities. There can be one source of comfort and companionship that benefits seniors in countless ways: pets.

According to a study published in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, pet ownership is common in older adults. Some estimates say that over 50% of individuals over the age of 50 own a pet. Why is this? Well there is evidence that supports the contribution of pet ownership to some aspects of successful ageing. Having pets can:

- reduce stress,
- lower blood pressure, and
- increase social interaction
- increase physical activity.
- pets can also have an astounding effect on symptoms of depression and feelings of loneliness.

But animals provide other intangibles, too.

"Dogs and cats live very much in the present," says Dr. Jay P. Granat, psychotherapist. "They don't worry about tomorrow, which can be a very scary concept for an

older person. An animal embodies that sense of here and now, and it tends to rub off on people."

Animals can also have the ability to prompt better memory recall in their elderly owners. It has been documented that those with memory loss interact with an animal and regain access to memories from long ago. Having a pet can help you focus on something other than their physical problems and negative preoccupations about aging.

The animals benefit too, particularly when seniors adopt older pets. Seniors tend to have lots of time to devote to a previously unwanted pet, forming a lasting bond.

If you are interested in having a pet please remember that whist breeders are a good source, adopting from shelters is usually much less expensive and comes with the added benefits of giving an unwanted animal a home, it already being house trained and possibly saving it from euthanasia.

Pet ownership is not for everyone and that's ok, there are other ways to find companionship and get out and about. Why not try one of the activities scheduled in the PAL Gazette or visit with a friend who has a pet and help to look after theirs.

# WORD SEARCH



## 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:

- SAUSAGE • CASSEROLE • HEAT • RICE • GIFT
- NOVEMBER • COMFORT • SUPPORT • ANIMALS

To enter, phone Lois Kennedy on **07595 261 253 on weekdays, 10am-4pm**. 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 8th November 2023.**

**The winner of October's Edition (Edition 42) was Mrs Kathleen Hart.**

## Christmas Card Photo Competition

After 10th of November, Google 'Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland Christmas Card Photographic Competition'. To be in with a chance to be the cover for their Christmas Card, you have to be over 60 to enter.



## AUTUMN VACCINES

The flu and COVID-19 vaccine will be offered to:

- Adults aged 65 years and over
- Residents in a care home
- Pregnant women
- Individuals in a clinical risk group\*
- Persons aged 12 to 64 who are household contacts\* or carers\*



**HSC** Public Health Agency

\*as defined by green book

# Tea Time Quiz

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

1. Where in the world is Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa exhibited?
2. What year was William Shakespeare is born
3. How many Bond films did Roger Moore appear as 007?
4. Which metal was discovered by Hans Christian Oersted in 1825?
5. What is the capital of Portugal?

To enter, phone **Lois Kennedy on 07595 261253 on weekdays, 10am-4pm**. 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 8th November 2023.**

Winner of October's Edition (Edition 42) was Dolly Misra.

**For all quiz lovers, join the Pub Quiz Without a Pub. 7pm, Thursday 16th November 2023.**

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

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

1. Knee 2. Iago 3. Tin 4.3 5. All the President's Men.

## Recipe One Pot 30-minute Sausage Casserole

### Ingredients

- 1 lb of beef sausages (I used half and half beef sausages and beef sausages with cracked black pepper)
- 1/2 lb smoky bacon cut in lardons/strips
- 1 onion roughly chopped
- 3 carrots peeled and finely sliced
- 1 bag of cooked baby potatoes
- 1 beef stock cube made up with half pint of boiling water
- 1 tablespoon of Bisto powder dissolved in a little cold water
- Chopped fresh parsley or dried parsley to garnish
- A good dash of red wine (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Method

**STEP 1:** Cut the sausages in bite-size pieces and put into the pan, add in the roughly chopped onion and finally sliced carrots.

**STEP 2:** Cook for 15 minutes on a medium heat with the lid on, checking occasionally that nothing sticks.

**STEP 3:** Remove the lid and stir. Check that the sausages are brown, and the onion are caramelised.

**STEP 4:** After 10 minutes add the stock and Bisto to thicken. You can also add a dash of red wine if desired.

**STEP 5:** Add the cooked baby potatoes mixing. Garnish with parsley and eat.



Northern Ireland  
Fire & Rescue Service

**STOP**

**PLAN YOUR ESCAPE**

**STOP  
FIRE**

**SMOKE ALARM  
TEST ALARMS WEEKLY  
OBVIOUS DANGERS  
PLAN YOUR ESCAPE**

**A SAFE ESCAPE  
Saves Lives**

#BeReadyNI

Safer  
Together

## Spotted a suspicious email?

If you have received an email which you're not quite sure about, forward it to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS):

[report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)



ActionFraud  
[www.actionfraud.gov.uk](http://www.actionfraud.gov.uk)

## OLD JOKE HOME!

Submitted by our Anonymous Phone Caller who loves a joke.



Why did the apple pie go to the dentist?  
Because it needed a filling.

Engage with Age thanks its supporters and funders:

**HSC** Public Health Agency

**HSC** Belfast Health and Social Care Trust



Belfast City Council

**HALIFAX  
FOUNDATION**  
for Northern Ireland

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