

The PAL Gazette

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Edition No. 42 : October 2023

Engage with Age Front Page Poems

“Agnes”

by Anne Coulter

I watched Agnes as she tossed things about
I looked out the window glad not to be out
I had heard the weather warning on the TV
And was glad I wasn't in a boat on the sea,
The news showed a lady rescued from her car
It was just in time. The 11th hour.
We saw the car being swept away
Goodness knows where it is today.



OCTOBER IS POSITIVE AGEING MONTH



Belfast City Council/ Age Friendly Belfast's Positive Ageing Month kicks off with a huge variety of activities for older people throughout the month.

Positive Ageing Month is a month-long festival celebrating the contribution older people make to their communities and to Belfast City. Now in its eight year, Positive Ageing Month begins on 1st October, which is actually the International Day for Older People.

The programme for the festival sees events across the whole city and also online. The range of events is impressive, spanning information events, promotions for services for older people, history and cultural activities,

entertainment, film screenings, dancing, art sessions, and more.

Regular favourites are back, including the “Be Prepared” Drop In event at 2 Royal Avenue on Tuesday 3rd October, walking tours of Belfast City Hall and Queen's University, a virtual Tea Dance on Friday 13th October with Victor Mawhinney, and an in person Tea Dance at 2 Royal Avenue on 17th October.

The Belfast Age Friendly Convention takes place on Wednesday 25th October in the morning, with speakers from Libraries NI, Belfast Community Centres, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, and more.

Engage with Age and our Dementia Friendly colleagues have a great selection of events including Online Interactive Dementia Training on 11th October, and the ever popular “Spooky Slipped Disco™” on 30th October 2023.

To pick up your programme call in to Belfast City Hall, any council community centre or leisure centre, or 2 Royal Avenue. The programme can be viewed online at <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Events/Positive-Ageing-Month> and for information call 028 9032 0202.

There are tons of activities on in October. Enjoy Positive Ageing Month.

Quick-fire Phone Competition!

The 4th person to call Lois on **07595 261253** will receive a £10 Tesco voucher.

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

Competition closes 15th October 2023.

Winner announced in next edition.

Winner of the September Edition (Edition 41) was **Ann Dickson**.



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

Cathy Chambers 07468 695593

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 Pinecone Bird Feeder

What you need:

- Large open pinecones
- Peanut butter
- Twine
- Birdseed

To make:

- Cut out a piece of twine or string about 10 inches long and tie it to the top of your pinecone. Then tie the ends of the twine together to make a loop to hang the pinecone from. Make sure you attach the twine to the pinecone before you add the peanut butter and birdseed. Otherwise, your hands are going to get really messy.
- Place a scoop of peanut butter, about a tablespoon, but feel free to add more, on a plate or paper towel.
- Then carefully spread the peanut butter onto the pinecone, making sure you get a little bit on each one of the pinecone scales. Keep the mess down by making your pinecones on a paper towel or paper plate.
- Once you're happy with the amount of peanut butter, grip the pinecone at both the top and bottom, and dip it into a bowl of birdseed.
- Dip and roll all sides of the pinecone until the peanut butter is completely covered with birdseed. Hang in your garden or back yard and enjoy watching our feathered friends feed.



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.



The Questionnaire

For this latest in our series of profiles we share a great adventurous life story.

Name: Jackie Robinson

Position: Tenant at Sydenham Court, former Tank Driver.

How do you enjoy spending your free time?

I don't have many pastimes these days but I enjoy talking about my adventures from my earlier life.

Favourite Food?

Fish and chips, they're hard to beat. Paddy Spencer's Fish and Chip shop does a really great fish supper.

Favourite Film/ TV Show?

I'm a big John Wayne fan. My favourite film of his is "Back to Bataan".

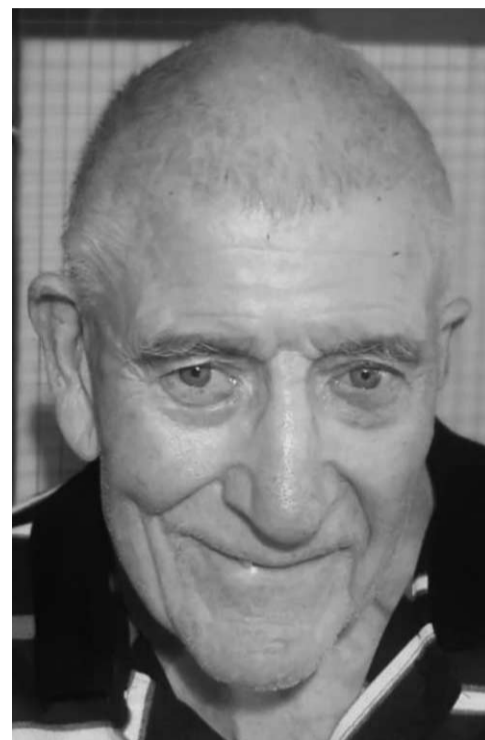
Tell us something about you that not many people know:

I was a tank driver for the army in the 1970s and 1980s, and I spent many years with my tank pointed towards Russia during the Cold War. Back then relations with Russia were not very good and I was stationed in Spangdahlem in Germany, one of the largest bases in Europe.

I drove a Centurian Tank. These were four person tanks, with a driver, which was me, and three gunners. I was also trained as a gunner so if there were enough tank drivers but not enough gunners I could switch roles.

Throughout this period we were positioned against Russia. There wasn't a lot of active service but we had to be ready. Occasionally we might have strayed into territory we weren't supposed to be in, but if no-one saw us it would have been difficult to prove we'd been there. In typical army fashion it always took us far less time to get out of somewhere than it took to get in there in the first place.

One time when we were crossing rough terrain I almost toppled the tank. We went head first down into a bog, and I was so mesmerised by what was happening, pitching forward towards the ground, that my tank mates had to shout at me to get me to take emergency action and get us out of there. We survived. Sometimes tanks went over and it took a whole company of soldiers



several days to dig the tank out.

It's amazing to think I had been near the front of the Cold War at such a perilous time.

What advice would you give to younger people?

Live your life. Make sure you use every single minute that you have. Make sure it's worthwhile. That's what I would tell them to do, don't waste it.

Join Your Local Older People's Group

Belfast is full of active older people's groups. After the Covid-19 Pandemic some groups have experienced a fall in membership, so Engage with Age is urging older people to get out in to their community and get active.

There are groups to suit all interests and tastes including social groups, community based groups, walking, swimming, book groups, and groups involved in creative activities such as crafting.

Engage with Age can point you in the right direction. Call us on **028 9073 5696** or email info@engagewithage.org.uk

Ann Kearny took the leap to get involved in local groups and hasn't looked back. Ann was looking for new things to do. Her family had all grown up and had moved away from Northern Ireland, so Ann wanted to take part in enjoyable activities and meet some new people.

"You have to be prepared to take the



first step and join a group" says Ann. "When you do, you find that everyone else who's there is in the same boat as yourself."

Ann joined the Words Alive group, which meets most weeks in South Belfast. Part of the group's activities involve doing readings in supported housing centres. "Last week I was in

Taughmonagh doing a reading, and I got so much out of it."

Joining Words Alive led to finding out about Ann's local library's Knit and Natter Group, and through this, Ann got involved in making a quilt that was displayed at the Cop 26 Conference in Glasgow. Ann and her pals travelled to Scotland and proudly showed off their work.

Ann says, "There are a lot of people out there who are very isolated, and going to groups really helps, though you have to make the effort. If you're waiting for someone to knock your door, you'll be waiting a long time.

Getting involved in groups has opened up all sorts of possibilities I didn't have before. I can't recommend it enough.

To find out more about groups in your local area call Engage with Age on 028 9073 5696 or email info@engagewithage.org.uk

Night Blessing Submitted by Audrey Lynas

May you trace the rainbow through the rain. When tears flow may you see colours of mercy, grace and courage. When despair falls like a deluge may you be

reminded that the night does not last forever, dawn always breaks eventually. May pain and loss give way to hope.

WHAT'S ON

WALKS

There will be walks in East Belfast. If you are interested in taking part, phone **07436 174793** or email 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.

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COFFEE MORNING

11am on 3rd and 17th October, Café Refresh, Skainos Centre. For people living with dementia and their carers. Please phone **07436 174793** or email palproject@engagewithage.org.uk for details.

In all instances, please phone **07436 174793** or email palproject@engagewithage.org.uk for details

South Belfast Lifestyle Forum

Next meeting is 11.00am on 10th October 2023.

Email cathy.chambers@engagewithage.org.uk for further information.

"Remember I Forget" Exhibition

1st - 31st October 2023. 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast BT1 1DA.
Open every day 10am - 6pm so you can just call in.

MOT for Older People's Groups

5th and 19th October. Contact John McCandless 07729 516576 for details.

ONLINE EVENTS

Online Interactive Dementia Training

7.00pm Wednesday 11th October 2023. Via zoom.
Contact eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk for the link.

Chocolate Bingo

7.30pm Thursday 5th and 26th October 2023. Via zoom.
Contact eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk for the link.

The Pub Quiz Without the Pub

7.00pm Thursday 19th October 2023. Via zoom.
Contact eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk for the link.

The Spooky Slipped Disco

7.30pm Monday 30th October 2023 at The Oh Yeah Centre, Belfast.
Telephone 028 9073 5696 or book online at
<https://TheSpookySlippedDiscoOct2023.eventbrite.co.uk>

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 Eamon on **07710 993036**.

Have Your Say with the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum

Your Voice in Belfast City Council



The Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (G6) is well known for its work across the city. Maybe not be so well known is how Belfast City Council engages with older people. Positive Ageing Month is an ideal time to highlight the Council's support for older people, and how you can have your voice heard.

Belfast City Council and the Belfast Health Development Unit collaborate to deliver the "Age Friendly Belfast" initiative. Age Friendly Belfast seeks to enable older people in Belfast to live their lives to the full, and its work includes the Age Friendly Belfast Plan, engaging older people in forums such as the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership, and delivering Positive Ageing Month. Age Friendly Belfast promotes home safety, access to services, and a host of other activities. Last year it worked with community centres for the Warm Welcome programme, and the views of older people feature in the Belfast Agenda, Belfast City Council's corporate plan.

Belfast City Councillors also collaborate on the All Party Reference Group on Older People. This is a formal committee of councillors engaging with older people throughout the year, seeking views and reporting on activities. At their September meeting, the All Party Reference Group met with the G6 to discuss the 60+ Smart Pass Consultation, Age Discrimination Legislation, and the Cost of Living Crisis. The group will be following up these issues in the weeks to come.

How does one make one's voice heard within the Council? Speak with your local councillor. If you don't speak up, they won't know. To find out who your councillors are call **028 9032 0202** or visit: <https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>

It's a good time to get older in Belfast, so take part and make your voice heard.



Is the Commercialisation of Halloween More Scary than the Ghosts?

Since mid-August, every supermarket has been slowly filled with Halloween supplies. What used to be a few shelves with plastic masks, brooms sticks and capes is now impossible to miss. You will see full aisles of sweets, pumpkins, witches' broomsticks, fake spiders' webs and more. Some people even dress their Christmas Tree's in Halloween Decorations. This is a great change from the original Celtic festival that Halloween grew from. Some people view this modern commercialisation of Halloween as a betrayal. Traditions such as apple bobbing have been lost.

Halloween dates back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, over 2,000 years ago. This festival marked the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter. It was believed that this was also the time that the barrier between our

world and the world of the ghosts was at its thinnest. Some believed that ghosts could travel from their world into ours. In order to ensure the survival of the family and livestock throughout the winter, people would leave out offerings of food, drink, or a proportion of their crops to appease the spirits.

By the seventeenth century the Christian church Christianised this tradition and named it 'All Hallows' Eve'. All Hallows' Eve began to become more recognisable as the celebration we have today. The idea of ghosts coming back from the dead to haunt the living remained, and children would go from house to house with masks or painted faces threatening to do mischief if not appeased. This was the past version of 'trick or treat'. There were also people known as 'Soulers' who would go from

parish to parish begging the rich for food or money in return for prayer. Mummers would wear costumes and go from house to house requesting food. This links well with the modern tradition of going between houses getting sweets or other treats.

One aspect that has grown and evolved is the costumes. Traditional costumes were ghosts, vampires, and witches. They are still common today, however increasingly the United Kingdom is taking after America. Gone are the bed sheet ghosts. Time and money is now spent on elaborate costumes, and not just for children and adults – pets are also getting kitted out.

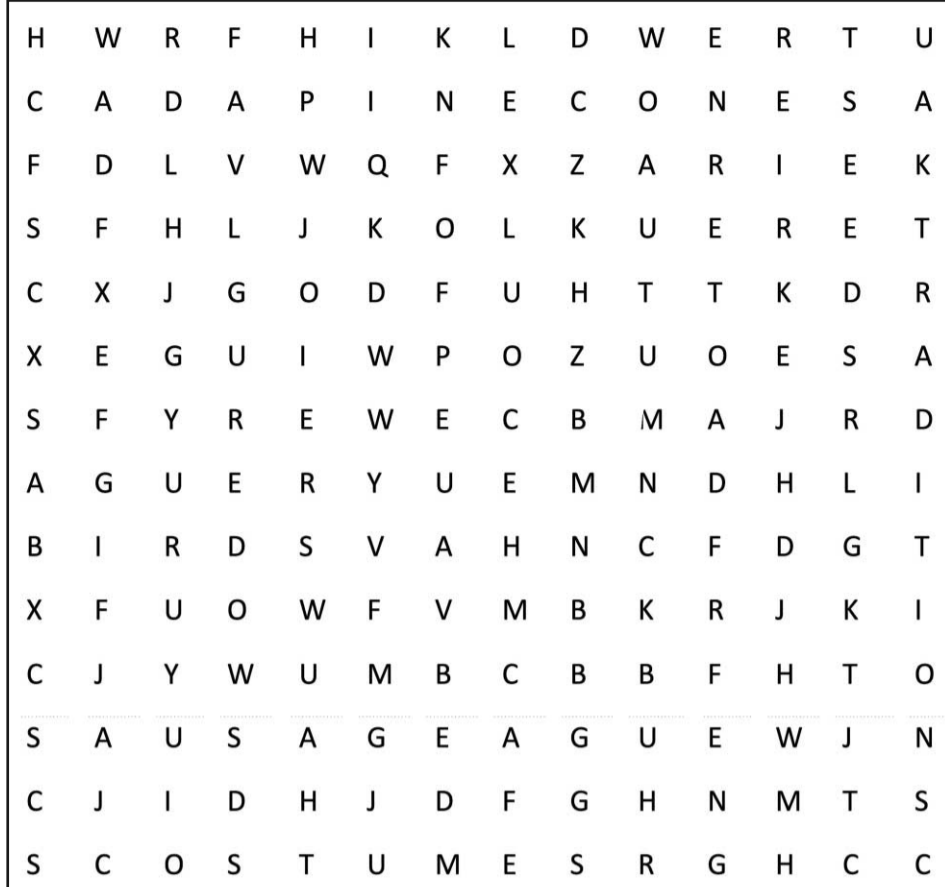
Is this a bad thing? It might be hugely profitable for companies around the world, but ultimately it's about allowing both children and adults to dress up and



have fun. You can, and many do, still look back at older Halloween traditions, as can be seen by the annual Edinburgh Samhain fire festival. People still do have apple bobbing or carve turnips rather than pumpkins.

While commercialisation may not be ideal, we have a changing Halloween for a changing world. Celebrate it as you wish, have fun, and remember it can be a holiday for everyone to enjoy regardless of background or age.

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:

- TOAD • SAUSAGE • AUTUMN • PINECONES • SEEDS
- BIRDS • HALLOWEEN • TRADITIONS • COSTUMES

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 15th October 2023.

The winner of September's Edition (Edition 41) was Frances Murphy.

Shingles Vaccination



Who is eligible for the vaccine?

50 and over and identified as having a severely weakened immune system	Two doses of Shingrix®, 2 months to 6 months apart.
Age 65 on 1st September	Two doses of Shingrix®, 2 months to 6 months apart.
Age 70 on 1st September	Two doses of Shingrix®, 2 months to 6 months apart.
Age 71-79 never vaccinated	Either one dose of Zostavax® or two doses of Shingrix®, 2 months to 6 months apart.
Age 80 or over	No longer eligible for first dose, but if you have already received one dose of Shingrix, you may still receive a second dose up to your 81st birthday.

www.pha.site/shingles

HSC Public Health Agency

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

Tea Time Quiz

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

1. In which part of your body would you find the cruciate ligament?
2. What is the name of the main villain in the Shakespeare play Othello?
3. What element is denoted by the chemical symbol "Sn" in the periodic table?
4. How many of Henry VIII's wives were called Catherine?
5. What is the name of the 1976 film about the Watergate scandal, starring Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman?

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 15th October 2023. Winner of September's Edition (Edition 41) is Elizabeth Reid.

For all quiz lovers, join the Pub Quiz Without a Pub. 7pm, Thursday 19th October 2023.

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

The answers to May's quiz were:

1. Neil Armstrong
2. New York
3. James Bond
4. Agatha Christie
5. Rome.

Recipe Toad in the Hole

Ingredients

- 12 chipolatas / small sausages
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil

For the batter

- 140g plain flour
- 175ml semi-skimmed milk

Method

STEP 1

Heat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas 7. Put the chipolatas in a 20 x 30cm with the oil and bake for 15 mins until browned.

STEP 2

Meanwhile, make the batter. Tip the flour into a bowl with ½ tsp salt, make a well in the middle and crack the eggs into it. Use an electric whisk to mix it together, then slowly add the milk, whisking all the time. Leave to stand until the sausages are nice and brown.

STEP 3

Remove the sausages from the oven – be careful because the fat will be sizzling hot – but if it isn't, put the tin on the hob for a few minutes until it is.

STEP 4

Pour in the batter mix, transfer to the top shelf of the oven, then cook for 25-30 mins, until risen and golden. Serve with gravy and your favourite veg.



Over 55's Armchair Aerobics

- Men & women over 55 welcome
- Suitable for all abilities
- We have a lift to get upstairs to the main hall
- No booking necessary - just come along
- 45 minutes of gentle chair exercises followed by a cuppa and a chat
- Normal clothes & shoes are suitable (sports gear not necessary)
- FREE programme!

- Monday 23rd October
- 1-2.30pm for 4 weeks
- at Taughmonagh Gym (beside the Social Club)



Taughmonagh Community Forum

FORWARD SOUTH PARTNERSHIP

HSC Public Health Agency Project supported by the PHA

Engage with Age

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

COMMUNITY FUND

OLD JOKES HOME!

Submitted by our Anonymous Phone Caller who loves a joke.



What did the vet say to the witch's cat?
How are you feline.

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