

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

www.engagewithage.org.uk info@engagewithage.org.uk Facebook: EngageWithAgeBelfast Twitter: @Engage_With_Age All information correct at the time of publication.

Edition No. 63 June 2025

Engage with Age

Front Page Poems Summer by Annie Coulter

When the sun rises the flowers lift their heads,
Making a carpet of colour in flower beds.
Petals uncurl and are visited by bees
And shade is provided by sycamore trees.
Tiny birds from nests learn how to fly
As there is plenty of room in the sky.
And in the UK we get lots of showers
Made welcome by our many flowers.



Quick-fire Phone Competition!

The 3rd person to call **Lois** on **07595 261253** will receive a £10 Tesco voucher.

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

Competition closes 11th June.

Winner announced in next edition.

The winner of May's Edition (Edition 61) was **Richard Sloan**.



VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE WORLD GO AROUND

Volunteers' Week runs 2nd - 8th June 2025 and this month's PAL Gazette celebrates the incredible contribution volunteers make to our communities.

A study by the Commissioner for Older People estimated that the value of volunteering and undertaking unpaid work by older people in Northern Ireland is worth an annual £50 million profit to the Northern Ireland economy.

There is so much volunteering taking place across Northern Ireland that much of it is happening un-noticed under our very noses. Think about the support you get visiting a hospital from a person who greets you at a welcome desk, or the person at the football game who sells your matchday programme, the person behind the counter in the charity shop, and the people behind them sorting out donations in the back room. The number of volunteers and the range of jobs they do is astounding. Every year 772,000 people dedicate their time to volunteering in their local communities.

Volunteers' Week takes place between 2nd - 8th June 2025. Volunteer Now is the lead agency for promoting and enabling volunteering to take place across Northern Ireland. Throughout Volunteers' Week there are information sessions, celebration events, and training sessions for groups and people who volunteer their time.

To find out more visit www.volunteernow.co.uk

Most major Northern Ireland events can only take place because of volunteers. The Belfast Marathon is a wonderful event for the city but is only possible because of the thousands of people volunteering to help with stewarding, giving out water, organising packs for runners and cleaning up after the event has happened. Volunteers will help make the 153rd Open Golf Championship happen at the Royal



Portrush Golf Club in July. And Volunteer Now is already recruiting for volunteers for next year's Fleadh Cheoil in Belfast. **Contact Volunteer Now on 028 9023 2020 to learn how you can take part and make a difference.**

At Engage with Age, we need the support of volunteers to help organize weekly activity groups, set out tables, and welcome the people who turn up. We are always looking for new volunteers and love hearing from anyone who can help. **Call us on 028 9073 5696.**

Our Telephone Befriending volunteers make a huge difference to the lives of older people isolated at home. This volunteering only takes about an hour a week, and it's simply calling up a lonely older person and sharing some craic and news with them. One of our Befrienders recently said: "I really feel like I am serving a purpose and helping to bring a smile to someone's face."

Volunteers are brilliant people. They help make the world go round. We would be lost without them. Join in, volunteer, and help make the world a better place! **Give us a call on 028 9073 5696.**

Can You Read This Paper Clearly?

If you need a magnifying glass **phone or text Paul on 07436 174793.**

We will send you one through the post for FREE.



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



Anne's Crafty Corner Easy DIY Garden Markers Spoons

Ever wondered what you have planted and where? These DIY garden markers use upcycled spoons to stylishly create a sign to indicate what you are growing.

Materials you will need for your plant markers:

- Metal spoons (charity shops sell them or maybe you have a collection of them in your drawer)
- Hammer
- An old towel
- Indoor/outdoor craft paint
- Paper cups to use as spoon holders while paint dries
- Black paint, or broad tipped permanent marker
- Varnish

To make:

Step 1

Lay your old metal spoons rounded side up on the towel. Fold part of the towel over the spoon and pound the spoon with the hammer until flat. You may have to flip it over a few times to get it completely flat. Be patient!

Step 2

Lay the spoons on the newspaper and paint each one the desired colour. You will probably need two to three coats. Let it dry between coats by putting the spoon into the cup.

Step 3

Add the plant names to your garden labels. Use the black paint, pen or permanent marker to write the name of each plant on your spoon.

Step 4

In order to make weatherproof plant markers, you need to protect the paint. Apply a coat of varnish as directed on container. Let the DIY garden markers set for 24 hours before placing them in the garden.

Top Tips

- Make them sparkle by adding glitter.
- No plants to mark? – you can paint the round spoon and place throughout your garden as decorations, for example a lady bird design.
- Use for house plants – so that you can easily look up their name and how to care for them and they make a stylish.



HERE TO HELP

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



we're getting closer to the time when all our divisions don't matter anymore. And Northern Ireland so beautiful. I live near the sea and we have a beautiful coastline here. And we are blessed with fantastic mountains, hills and greenery. It does your heart good to get out and walk in it.

Favourite Food:

Something spicy, with a kick. I like hot sauce and crispy chilli oil. I'm a big fan of Boojum, the burrito place. At the other end of the scale, I love smoked salmon omelettes with slim (potato bread) fried in butter.

Favourite Film:

It's the great 1980s film "9 to 5" with Lilly Tomlin, Jane Fonda and Dolly Parton. It's the story of three women taking revenge on their evil boss. It rattles along at a great pace, and there is a brilliant acerbic energy about it. It has an amazing cast and the script is fantastic.

Tell us something that not many people know about you?

I was a judge in a regional heat of "The Rose of Tralee". My best mate was due to do it and something came up so he phoned me and asked if I'd take his place. What on Earth do I know about these kind of things? So I did it, and met twenty brilliant young women. We had to interview each of them and I asked lots of questions

about their ideas for smashing the patriarchy. They were a great bunch. The winner was someone who, as a trainee social worker, spent the night in a police cell with their client because they were worried about them. Soon as I heard that I thought "there's the winner".

Favourite memories of Engage with Age

The crazy tea parties we used have in the East Belfast Network Centre, the warm welcome and fun from all of the groups, the discos, the bingo and the craic at the G6 meetings... the great camaraderie with everyone working in the sector. Belfast is stuffed with brilliant older people and brilliant workers supporting with them! They are an inspiration.

What advice would you give to a young person?

Spend time hanging out with older people. You'll learn a lot and you'll also feel better. And look after your teeth.

The Questionnaire

Name: Eamon Quinn

Role: Outgoing Director of Engage with Age

Favourite pastime:

I love cooking – I'll try making anything. I'm not the best cook, but I'll have a go. One of the nicest things a person can do for another is make them a meal. I spend lots of time with my friends. Some pals go back to school days (forty plus years ago!). We don't necessarily do much when we get together, but having coffee and enjoying the company is really important. I spend lots of time with my mum. She's a star.

Why are your pastimes important?

Cooking is relaxing and a good way to concentrate on something enjoyable. My friends are very grounding. On my first day at the Christian Brothers in Newry, the Headmaster said "look around you, some of the boys you meet here for the first time today will be with you your whole life." How right he was. And spending time with your mammy is always enjoyable! We watch "Bargain Hunt" and the soaps together.

What is the best thing about living here?

The people and the landscape. The people are brilliant fun and warm, and

Have Your Say with the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum

G6
Greater Belfast
Seniors Forum

G6 Members were busy promoting the needs of older people last month to health professionals.

A meeting was held with a representative of the Local Medical Council to discuss access to GPs services. Frustration getting GP appointments is high on the list of issues raised by older people.

Problems faced include all the appointments being gone by the time people call GP practices at 8.30am in the mornings, not being able to pre-book appointments when receiving a series of treatments, not wanting to give private medical information to non-medically trained reception staff, and being turned away from GP services and sent to hospital Emergency Departments. Many older people

tell us ED staff in hospitals become frustrated having to deal with non-emergency medical matters sent their way by GPs.

A very frank and useful discussion was held. The Local Medical Council highlighted financial pressures due to funding cuts from the Department of Health, and non-payment of pay increases until the very end of the financial year. Regarding having to make a phone call to book appointments, it was highlighted that pre-Covid there was an existing risk of infection spread with scores of people turning up in person to GP practices to get appointments, so it's safer with a telephone booking system.

We were informed about a forthcoming "Save Our GP Services"

campaign that is being launched by GPs. Though the meeting made clear that older people couldn't at this point say whether they would support such a campaign. Both sides committed to increase communication.

In addition to the GP meeting, the Belfast Senior Voices BHSCT Forum also took place in May, meeting with over 60 older people and health professionals. Presentations were made on accessing palliative care, and there was also more consultation on what older people need from their health services. Belfast Senior Voices will use this feedback and opinions to continue to promote the needs of older people to those providing older people's healthcare in Belfast.

WHAT'S ON

WALKS

There will be walks in East Belfast every Wednesday afternoon at 2.00pm. If you are interested in taking part, contact Paul on **07436 174793** or email palproject@engagewithage.org.uk

South Belfast Walking Group, weekly on Mondays at 11.00am in Botanic Park. To join in, contact Paul on **07436 174793** or email palproject@engagewithage.org.uk

THE KEEPING IN TOUCH GROUP (KIT GROUP)

Every Thursday 2.00pm. Dee Street Community Centre, 12-16 Dee Street, Belfast BT4 1FT.

Every Friday 2.00pm at Finaghy Community Centre, 1-6 Geeragh Place, Belfast BT10 0ER. To join in, contact Paul on **07436 174793** or email palproject@engagewithage.org.uk

T'AI CHI

Every Friday 11am at Dee Street Centre, 12-16 Dee Street, Belfast BT4 1FT.

DANCE GROUPS

Every Friday at 2.00pm. Contact Engage with Age for details on this fun dance group.

Tuesdays, 2.00pm at Morton Community Centre, Lorne Street, Belfast BT9 7DU (Line/Sequence Dancing)

Dementia Friendly Coffee Morning

11.00am Thursday 12th and 26th June 2025.

To attend, RSVP to Paul at palproject@engagewithage.org.uk

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

'The Grapevine' - Connection Hub

Tuesdays 11am - 1pm in 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast City Centre. Drop in event each week. An opportunity to enjoy a chat, meet new people, become involved in events and learn about new services.

ONLINE EVENTS

Chocolate Bingo

7.30pm Thursday 12th 2025. Via zoom. Contact eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk for the link.

The Pub Quiz Without the Pub

7.00pm Thursday 19th June 2025. Via zoom.

Contact palproject@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**.

Swimming with Volunteers

The better weather is often a prompt for people to go out and take a bit more exercise. Sea swimming is a very fashionable way of getting mobile. For those less inclined to open water, the Templemore Avenue Baths offer a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a swim and a paddle, to spoil yourself with their spa facilities, and there's even a volunteer lead group that you can visit the baths with.

The Templemore Avenue Baths have recently been renovated through a £16.8 million Heritage Lottery Fund grant. The baths were built in response to the 1846 Baths and Wash House Act that encouraged local authorities to open up washing facilities to promote public health. The baths on Templemore Avenue were designed by architect Robert Watt, built in 1891 and opened in 1893. It was originally known as the "Ballymacarrett Baths".

The building has a number of entrances, though anyone can now use any of these. Historically, they separated people from "first class" and "second class" through to ladies and men's entrances. Originally the bathhouse housed a number of swimming pools, and baths for bathing. The baths were an essential facility for Harland and Wolff workers and their families who didn't have access to hot water at home. During World War II it was used as a makeshift morgue. Its swimming pools were later extended in length to accommodate the training of Olympic hopefuls. The baths have been immortalised by local singer Anthony Toner in his song "Six Inches of Water". He writes: "When Friday comes and my bones are sore, I join the queue at Templemore, and get a chance to be as clean as the day we were born."

Templemore Avenue Baths is an elegant



Victoria building. It has lots of quirks and characteristics including glazed brickwork, an atrium with a restored Victorian fountain, as well as modern spa facilities and a sauna for post swim relaxation.

The volunteer-lead Templemore Retirement Group meets every Tuesday and Friday at the baths for swimming in the Heritage Pool. The group has an

annual joining fee of £40 after which all visits to the pool with the group during its sessions are free of charge. This group is a wonderful example of volunteers in the community bringing people together and improving health within their neighbourhoods.

To find out more about Templemore Retirement Group contact Sheila on 07526 508 692. To find out more about Templemore Avenue Baths telephone 028 9693 0040.

Get your swimming coozie and your rolled-up towel out, and give it a visit this summer.



details lingers in the mind... the warmth of the day, the thrill of collecting shells, and the quite awe of watching the sun sink below the horizon, painting the sky in deep reds and golds, and then, the journey back home to Attard, carrying the day's treasures back, and the lingering happiness of family times spent by the shore, at Golden Bay Beach.

Thank You Eamon

After nine years at the helm of Engage with Age, our Director Eamon Quinn is moving on to pastures new. Thank you Eamon for all of your hard work and dedication, you leave a great legacy behind you. For more info on the new Engage with Age Chief Executive, watch this space...



GODDERS' CORNER: Hazy Days in Malta

This is a perfect blend of nostalgia and sunshine. Golden Bay in Malta is known for its stunning sandy shores, dramatic cliffs, and breathtaking sunsets - an ideal setting for unforgettable summer memories.

I'm 77 years old and I'm remembering myself as a 10-year-old living in the village of Attard in Malta in 1958. My father was posted to Malta in the R.A.M.C., the Royal Army Medical Corps.

I'm attending the RAF Luqa Infant School. It's the Summer Holidays and we are spending a day with my parents and siblings at the Golden Bay sandy beach. This is such a vivid and beautiful memory. It was truly Golden times - Malta in the late 50s with sun-drenched beaches, before the crowded flights and commercial hotels, and the warmth of family and the carefree joy of childhood.

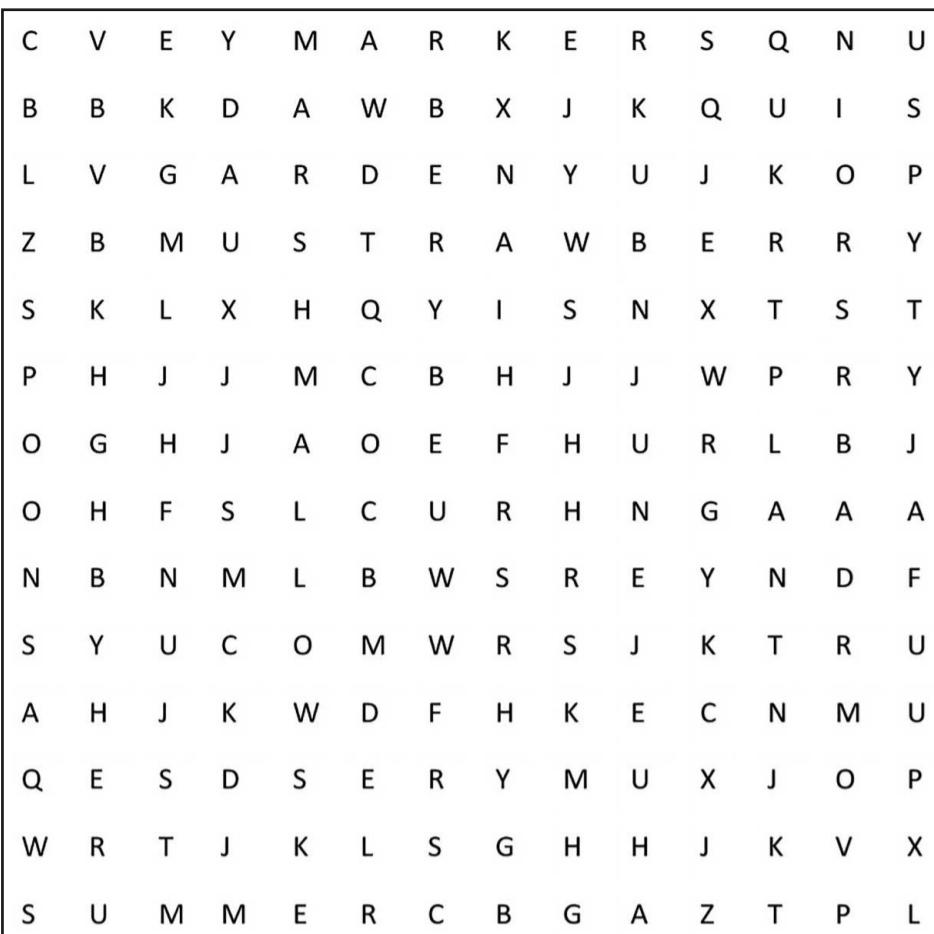
Golden Bay with its soft white sands and gentle waves was paradise for me, a 10-year-old, running through the shallows feeling the sun on my back, and hearing the laughter of my siblings echo in the summer air. The world seemed so big and full of adventure, yet so safe under the watchful presence of my parents.

I remember the white soft sand, the sights of the colourful houses, bright and white. We collected some shells from the beach. One large shell we put to our ears and could hear the sea waves in it.

When the bright red sun went down and disappeared under the horizon, we collected all our things and went home to our flat in Attard village.

There's something enchanting about childhood summers, the way every little

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:

- STRAWBERRY • MOUSE • MARSHMALLOWS
- SUMMER • JUNE • GARDEN
- SPOONS • PLANT • MARKERS

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 word search need to be in by 11th June 2025.

The winner of May's Edition (Edition 61) was Dolly Misra.

Get active



Physical activity will boost your physical and mental health

Public Health Agency

ActionFraud

Email and social media hacking is the most common form of cyber crime

Passwords

Email and social media account passwords should be **strong and different from all your other passwords**.

2-Step Verification

Enable **2-step verification (2SV)**, it will keep criminals out of your account even if your password is stolen.

For more information, visit: www.gov.uk/stophinkfraud

OLD JOKES HOME!

Submitted by our Anonymous Phone Caller who loves a joke.

Why do fish swim in salt water?
Because pepper makes them sneeze!



Tea Time Quiz

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

1. **What is the capital of Australia?**
2. **Who painted the Mona Lisa?**
3. **Which actor portrayed Inspector Morse?**
4. **In which year did World War II end?**
5. **Which animal is known as the "King of the Jungle"?**

To enter, phone **Lois Kennedy on 07595 261253 on weekdays**. 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 11th June 2025.
Winner of May's Edition (Edition 61) was **Violet Millar**.

For all quiz lovers, join in The Pub Quiz without a Pub, 7pm Thursday 19th June 2025.

For zoom link email palproject@engagewithage.org.uk

The answers to August's quiz were:

1. "Oooh Betty!"
2. Mount Everest
3. George Washington
4. Lion
5. The Queen Vic (The Queen Victoria)

Recipe Angela's Easy Vegetable Soup

This recipe is so easy to make, even people who don't cook can make it.

Ingredients:

- 100g of "Soup Mix" (a bag you can buy in the shops with mixed barley, lentils and peas)
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and finely sliced and diced
- 1 bag of pre-washed soup veg mix
- 2 chicken stock cubes

Method

1. Boil the soup mix in simmering water for 40 minutes. When cooked, strain and reserve the cooked soup mix.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and the soup mix into a pot of 1.5 liters of water, bring to a boil and then simmer for 20-30 minutes. The potatoes should disintegrate and make the soup creamy.

3. Season with a little salt and pepper.

To make a vegetarian version replace the stock cubes with vegetable stock cubes.

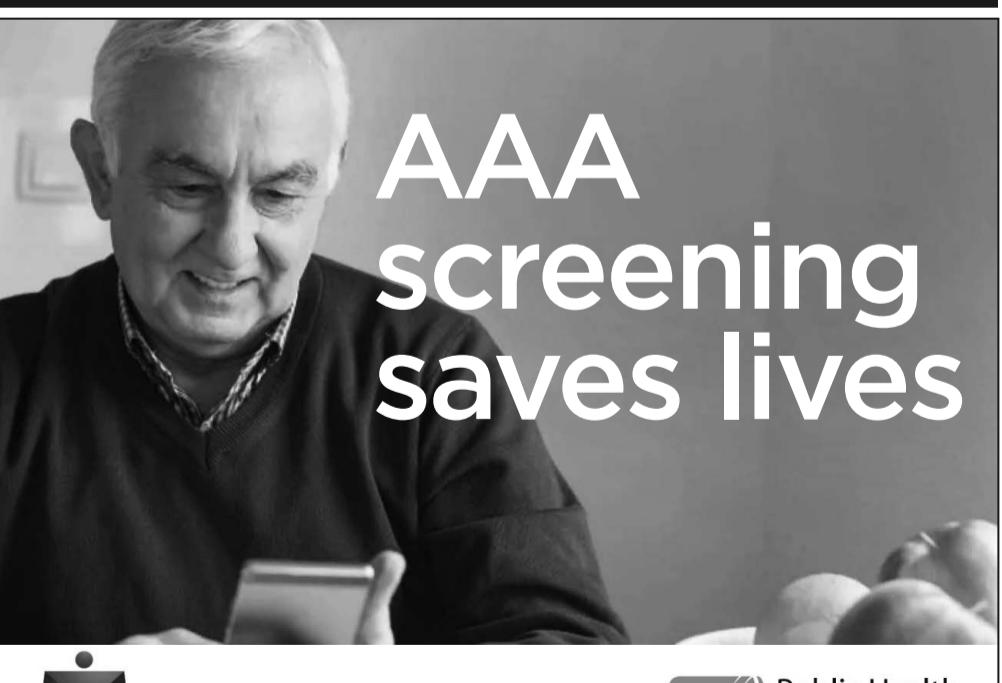


Night Blessing

Submitted by Audrey Lynas

As you close your eyes tonight, may your worries fade away and your dreams be peaceful. #niteblessing

AAA screening saves lives



Engage with Age thanks its supporters and funders:

Public Health Agency

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust



Belfast City Council

HALIFAX FOUNDATION for Northern Ireland

COMMUNITY FUND