



Front Page Poems

Irises

by Annie Kate Kearney

A gift from a sister on an off day
Green spears with lilac hats
Fanned out in a vase, looking skyward
Sleeping in the dark
Morning breaks to a wonderful view of
Trifold lilac blossoms with yellow hearts
A sight for sore eyes
Touching my heart
Hearing my need
Healing my pain
Reaching heavenward once more.



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 14th May.

Winner announced in next edition.

The winner of April's Edition (Edition 60) was **Margaret Reid**.



CITY OF FESTIVALS



Belfast is often called the City of Festivals. Throughout the year there are over 100 festivals taking place. These range from large scale events such as the NI Science Festival, the Belfast International Arts Festival, through to smaller community based events. Festivals are a significant attraction for tourists outside of the city. They also provide people who live and work in Belfast with opportunities to experience all kinds of sporting and cultural activities, as well as celebrating their own traditions.

In May there is a huge range of festivals and events, and here are some you may be interested in.

The start of May sees the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival (1-11th May www.cqaf.org), and the Festival of Fools – a street based festival of clowning, with free outdoor events

throughout the city (3-8th May <http://www.foolsfestival.com/>).

The 80th anniversary of VE Day is celebrated at Belfast City Hall by a short festival between the 7th and 8th May 2025. The range of events includes dances, talks, walking tours and a replica spitfire visiting Belfast City Hall.

The Continental Market is back in front of Belfast City Hall, between 22nd 26th May offering a fantastic range of crafts and foods from around the world.

The month of May sees a tremendous amount of walks and tours available throughout the city. These include Titanic Maritime Walking Tours, a Mary Ann McCracken walking tour, a Titanic Belfast Bike Tour, the Belfast Traditional Music Trail, and many more. For more

information on these, go to Visit Belfast on <https://visitbelfast.com/> or telephone 028 9448 4677.

One of the most charming events taking place is the Wildflower Alley Open Day, which takes place in South Belfast between 3-4pm on Thursday 29th May 2025. Wildflower Alley is a “green” back alley, which is off University Avenue. The Open Day celebrates the emergence of this urban idyll. See inside this month's PAL Gazette for more information on the Wildflower Alley movement. To find out more search Wildflower Alley South Belfast on Facebook or click on their page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/367168376823217>

Here at the PAL Gazette, we are advocates of getting out and about and enjoying your city. Let's enjoy Belfast!

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 Pinecone Flowers

Whilst having a lovely spring walk in the park, why not collect some Pinecones and turn them into flowers for spring, to brighten up your home.

Materials you will need for Pinecone Flowers:

- Pinecones (you can collect these from your local park or buy online)
- Acrylic craft paint in yellow and other bright colours
- Paint brushes

To make:

Step 1

Paint a small circle of yellow on the underside of a pine cone with the smaller paintbrush. With the larger paintbrush, paint the rest of the pinecone a bright colour.

Step 2

Paint between the pine cone "petals" and underneath each. Let dry on a tray lined with wax paper. If needed, paint a second coat. Let dry and arrange in a bowl.

Top Tips

- Use green card to make petal holders for them to sit in.
- String them together to make a pinecone flower garland.
- Make them sparkle by adding glitter.



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.



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 516576

Colin McKinty 07468 695593

**Hannah Lockhart/Sarah Gordon
07423 702721**

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



The Questionnaire

Name: Brid Ruddy

Role: Founder and volunteer with
"Wildflower Alley".

Favourite pastime:

Mainly I enjoy working in Wildflower Alley. I love gardening, planting, and organising events. Our open day in May will be special. The Lord Mayor is attending, a local school is participating, we'll have old friends and new coming along. It will be a lively day with music and art. Before then there's work to do, so I'll be helping with clean-ups, weeding, and bringing the garden back to life. We have a team of student volunteers from Queen's University called the "Handy Helpers" and they look after the publicity. It is shaping up to be a great event and it's fantastic to have a mix of people of all ages.

Why are your pastimes important?

A project like this is important on a community level because Belfast's Holyland is a very historic and architectural part of the city but it has been allowed to get run down. There's been lots of money spent to address the issues in the area, but it's taken a simple project Wildflower Alley to spark a community spirit and to contribute to the area. There are other spaces that need attention in the Holyland and I hope the public agencies can get behind them as you can't always rely on volunteers all the

time. Our project has thrived because we did it ourselves – it's a great example.

What is the best thing about living here?

I think Belfast is a lovely city. My area is particularly attractive to live in. We're close to Botanic gardens, Queen's University, and all of the local amenities. Belfast is a good sized city, not too large or small, and I think there's lots to do. Even our Wildflower Alley attracts people, including international visitors.

Favourite Food:

My favourite food would probably be pastas, of all kinds. I'm quite a good cook and I can knock up a pasta from tomatoes or cream sauces. It's always easy to do and my grandchildren love them.

Favourite TV Show:

Recently I loved "Conclave", and I guess many more people will have watched it these days. I live near the Queen's Film Theatre and I'm a member, so I keep up to date with the latest releases. "Conclave" now has great resonance these days. (<https://queensfilmtheatre.com/>)

Tell us something that not many people know about you?

I went to Primary School until I was 15 years of age. The area I grew up in had the last two un-reorganised Primary Schools following the 1944



Education Act into Northern Ireland, which brought in secondary school education. I enjoyed a really varied education until I was 15 years old. At our school there were no classrooms, so we went to the local Parochial Hall and used a billiard table as our desk. There were only about eight of us at this time. It was an unusual education but I enjoyed it.

What advice would you give to a young person?

I'd advise young people not to take narrow a path on choosing university or vocational work. You can learn throughout life. I had a varied and unconventional path for education and it left me curious and interested in the world. Life should be a lot more enjoyable. Education is life long, so enjoy it.

Have Your Say with the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum



While the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (G6) undertakes work on issues that affect older people, recently some forums have undertaken work based on the health needs of their members.

The Belfast East Senior's Forum has been busy with training and discussions on a range of health issues.

Sight impairments affect a wide range of people including older people, and in April, the Forum hosted training from the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB). The training provided an interactive view of what it is like to have a visual impairment. Participants learned about the

varying kinds of impairments, including reduced clarity of vision, age-related macular degeneration, the impact of diabetes on sight, and narrowed fields of vision. The training highlighted that it is often not possible to discern if a person is living with a visual impairment.

The RNIB has lots of good advice and strategies to cope with visual impairments. These include: adjustments to your home (such as colour contrasts for surfaces and furniture); organising ones belongings; preparing for emergencies; and communicating with friends and family about visual limitations so they understand what you need.

Organisations can also play their part with improved print materials and staff training.

**For more information log on
to <https://www.rnib.org.uk/>
or telephone 0303 123 999.**

The Belfast East Forum is continuing with its training programme, and this year has trained 30 people in First Aid Skills. In the summer months the Forum will embark on mindfulness and mental health training.

**For more information on the
Belfast East Seniors
Programme contact Anna on
028 9073 5696 or
info@engagewithage.org.uk**

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 8th and 22nd May 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. Closed Tuesday 22nd April 2025.

ONLINE EVENTS

Chocolate Bingo

7.30pm Thursday 8th and 22nd May 2025. Via zoom.

Contact eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk for the link.

The Pub Quiz Without the Pub

7.00pm Thursday 15th May 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**.

Wildflower Alley South Belfast

South Belfast is host to a beautiful urban green space known as Wildflower Alley. The project started in 2015 and is an initiative by people in the area to reclaim a disused and unkempt alleyway between houses and turn it into a green space.

The locals shifted tons of rubbish, brought out plants from their own houses, and painted the doors to their back yards in colourful patterns. Over the years it has grown and flourished, and locals have made a beautiful place.

Wildflower Alley is part of a global movement and it has drawn on research from as far away as Chicago.

The alleyway is not just beautifully adorned with flowers and plants, it also serves a "green" purpose. The ground in the alleyway has been covered with a sustainable urban drainage surface, which is a particular kind of paving that helps to prevent flooding.

Green spaces are very good for

our health. Urban gardening helps promote good physical health, and the overall effect improves the mental health of those who visit and live there. There are at least twenty projects like this all over Belfast. Wildflower Alley has been praised in the media. It has featured on BBC TV's "Monty Don's British Gardens", on RTÉ TV, and in newspapers and on the internet.

Founder and volunteer, Brid Ruddy says: "Although it looks small, this is a major step towards the creation of a greener and safer world."

The Wildflower Alley in South Belfast is just off University Avenue, and the group can be found online on their Facebook page by searching Wildflower Alley South Belfast.

Wildflower alleyways are a simple and effective way of brightening up your world. Perhaps readers of the PAL Gazette might start up Wildflower Alleys of their own?



GODDERS' CORNER: Occasional Observations On Life

'English Quotations'. Here is a series of quotations from all kinds of different situations that might help as we make are way through the world!

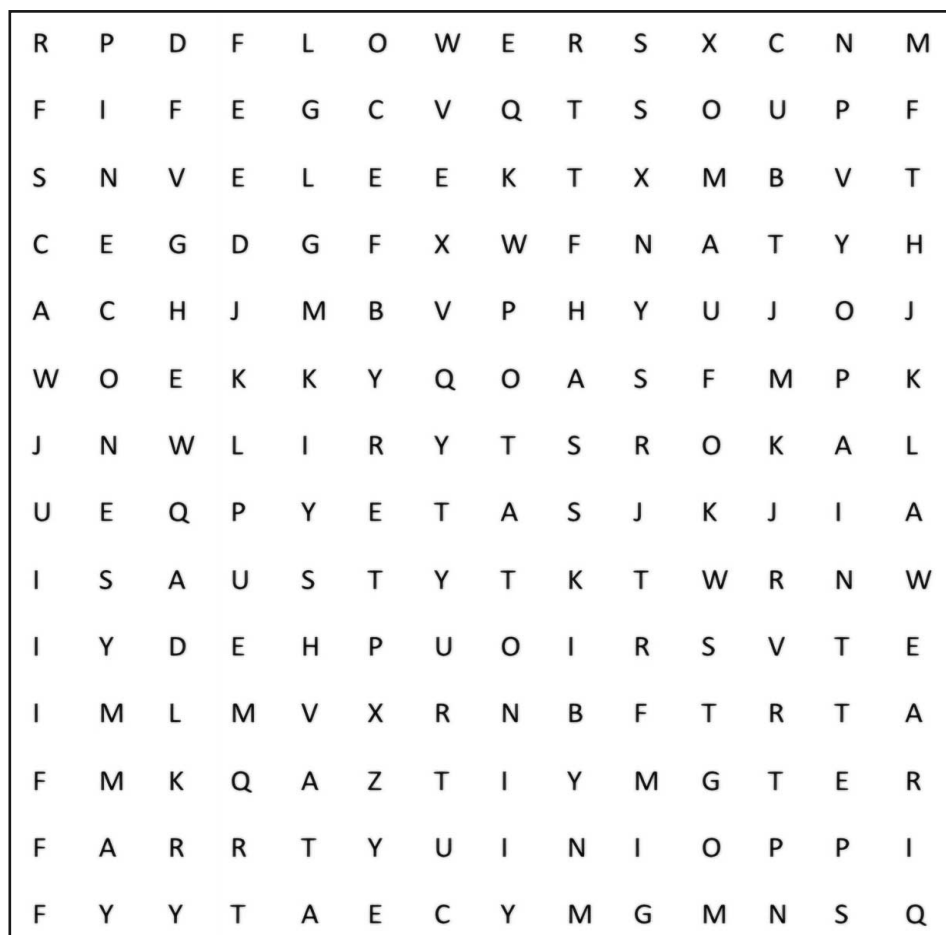
1. Attempt doesn't necessarily bring success, but giving up definitely leads to failure.
2. Dare to try, means you have already taken the first step to success.

3. Learn to choose, to forsake, to endure loneliness, to resist temptation.
4. Life is like flowers, because everyone blooms at different times.
5. I want you to be happy. But I want to be the reason.
6. Never expect, never assume, and never demand. Just let it be, because if its meant to be, it will happen the way you want it to.

7. Today is an opportunity to get better. Don't waste it.
8. You don't need to look up to others, for you yourself are a spectacle.
9. After doing my best, I chose to follow the lead.
10. The best feeling in the world is when you know your heart is smiling.



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:

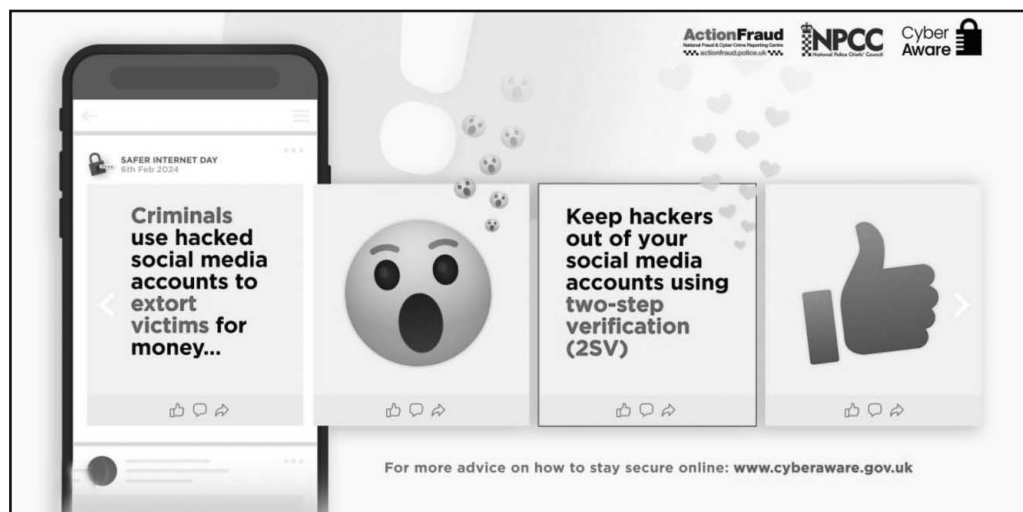
- MAY • SPRING • SOUP
- LEEK • POTATO • PARK
- PINECONES • FLOWERS • PAINT

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 14th May 2025.

The winner of April's Edition (Edition 60) was June Patterson.



Tea Time Quiz

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

1. What was the catchphrase of Frank Spencer in "Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em"?
2. What is the tallest mountain in the world?
3. Who was the first President of the United States of America?
4. Which animal is known as the "King of the Jungle"?
5. What is the name of the pub in "EastEnders"?

To enter, phone **Lois Kennedy on 07595 261 253 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 14th May 2025.

Winner of April's Edition (Edition 60) was **Violet Millar**.

For all quiz lovers, join in The Pub Quiz without a Pub, 7pm Thursday 15th May 2025.

For zoom link email palproject@engagewithage.org.uk

The answers to August's quiz were:

1. Easter Bunny 2. Palm Sunday 3. Simnel Cake 4. Cadburys 5. Bonnet/Hat

Recipe Spring Leek and Potato

A smooth, creamy leek and potato soup that's ready in 15 minutes and full of flavour and will keep you warm. Make it into a meal with plenty of bread and butter.

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, sliced
- 225g/8oz potatoes, cubed
- 2 medium leeks, sliced
- 1.2 litres/2 pints vegetable stock
- 150ml/5fl oz cream or milk
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

Step 1

Heat the oil in a large pan and add the onions, potatoes and leeks. Cook for 3-4 minutes over a medium heat until starting to soften.

Step 2

Add the vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Season with salt and pepper. Simmer for 10 minutes until the vegetables are tender.

Step 3

Whizz with a hand blender or in a blender until smooth. Reheat in a clean pan, stir in the cream or milk. Heat through and serve.

Top Tips

This soup will keep in the fridge for up to three days, but it also freezes really well.

Try adding a garnish of chopped parsley, crispy fried bacon or chorizo. Croûtons are also delicious.



Night Blessing Submitted by Audrey Lynas

May you make room at your table and find room at another's. Our lives are enriched by the presence of guests, and we have no idea how much our participation in the lives of others might bless them. May you create space for grace to be shared and love to be shown.

#niteblessing

Eating less red and processed meat can reduce your risk of bowel cancer

HSC Health and Social Care

Public Health Dietitians Group Northern Ireland

HSC Public Health Agency
Project supported by the PHA

Remote Access Scams

Only install software or grant remote access to your computer if you are asked by someone you know and trust.

ActionFraud
National Fraud & Cyber Crime Reporting Centre
www.actionfraud.police.uk

Engage with Age thanks its supporters and funders:

HSC Public Health Agency

HSC Belfast Health and Social Care Trust



Belfast City Council

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COMMUNITY FUND

OLD JOKE HOME!

Submitted by our Anonymous Phone Caller who loves a joke.

What do clouds wear during spring rain showers?

Thunderwear.



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