



EASTER EGGS ALL ROUND

Ally bally ally bally bee

An Easter greeting from the co-mmittee

We think you are the knees of the bee

For you're into Active Ageing.

Our six walking groups are oot-an-about,

Their leaders working out the routes

But, sadly, bus passes may be in doot

Still we're into Active Ageing.

We bowl, bridge, bike and do pilates too

Then starvation diets with "skinny" New U

Karaoke with Jimmy and we read books too

Cos we're into Active Ageing.

We quilt, we paint, make jewellery with bling

We call it craft – it's an acronym – For Can't Remember a Flaming thing

But we're into Active Ageing.

We've got new groups including the Mahjong

But music, knitting, cards are still going strong

Come join our Choir for a singalong

Cos we're into Active Ageing.

It's an Easter egg from your

co-mmittee

We think we are the knees of the bee

April 2018 Newsletter

EDITORIAL

Well, the Beast from the East has come and gone, thank the good Lord. It was a testing time: we were all cooried in at the fire keeping safe and warm. But, would you believe that two of our members actually struggled out, only to be disappointed to find the office (like most other institutions) closed; Fiona and Sharon both snowed in. We're made of stern stuff in the 50+ but to wade through the white stuff like Captain Scott is above and beyond the call of duty.

While I'm on the subject, is there something in the water, or is it the weather, that causes so many of our members to register their complaints? I'm tempted to say: Don't shoot the pianist, he's doing his best; or, in our case, she's doing her best. However, we do answer each and every complaint and hope we give a good service. We are, after all, volunteers just like you.

On a happier note, we are still offering trips, holidays, groups, events. In fact, we will have been running for 25 years next year, so we must be doing something right. We'll be happy to take suggestions as to what would make a fitting celebration!



Make the rest
of your life, the
best of your life!



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HELEN ORR'S CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

December can be a very stressful month; crowds everywhere, shops very busy, parking almost impossible, and the expense of Christmas itself - BUT all your worries fly out of the window if you are a member of the 50+!

The joviality started with the arrival of the Christmas Edition Newsletter. Nothing will lift your spirits quicker than reading Mary's wee anecdotes and witty stories. After a good old chuckle, we are ready to tackle anything.

Thank you Mary.

On 7th December we had our annual Xmas Kracker evening and we were entertained royally by our very talented choir and Kate Blake aka Joyce Grenfell.

Thank you Vanda.

On 10th December, fifty seven members enjoyed an excellent trip to Dumfries House to see the fabulous Christmas decorations. There we had lunch in the new conservatory followed by a guided tour of the house. After a dauner roon the wee shop and a spritely walk around the beautiful grounds, we boarded our coach for home - "tired but happy" as they say.



Thank you Irene.

Meanwhile, again on 10th December, ten members of the Events Group were marshalling at the Santa Run in Livingston. These community projects are very worthwhile ventures and allow the generations to mix.

Thank you Ian.

On 12th December, forty five members of the Nu Yu travelled to the Hillcroft for Christmas Lunch and cabaret. We ate till we were "bursting" and danced till we were "drappin".



Thank you Margaret.

On 16th December we rounded off our busy month with our annual Christmas Party. 120 members took to the floor, participating in all the games and dancing - and that at 10:30am! The highlight, however, was the buffet supplied by the 50+, and, of course, Boyle's famous pies. At the end we raised the roof with our rendering of Auld Lang Syne.

Thanks to all the members and the workers who helped to make this a great success.

So, if you want to avoid the winter blues, join the 50+ and enjoy a new lease of life!

Helen Orr

SOME OLD SCOTS SAYINGS

Before we lose sight of the old Scots, here's a few sayings to remind you.

Hoo kin you staun the heat? A'm fair bilin.

Don't get yer dander up. Yer fair bristling wi anger.

He taks a guid bucket. He's fair plaistert!

I wis fair taen aback. Fair flummox't.

A richt greetin match. Aabodie bubblin an greetin!

Hingin the pettit lip. Ettlinti get yer ain wey.

Hummin-an-hawin. Mumpin awa.

Missed yersel the nicht. Ye should hae been there.

Dinnae gee yer ginger. Dinnae fash yerself.

She'll be fair skeich when her feet are sortit. She'll dance a jig when her corn's pare't.

Efter ma hard work, A'm fair wabbt!!



BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS

Soon it will be holiday time and you'll be looking for books to read as you lie back on your sunbed in Ardnamurchan. So why not pop into the office and view the many good books. We've got everything from 50 Shades Darker to The View From Castle Rock. They're only 50p - a bargain. So pop in and organise you holiday reading.

OWER THE MOSS

I was cleaning out a cupboard and came across this fine poem sent to me long ago by an Armadale poet – Mrs. M. Hunter. I'm sure you'll appreciate it, and especially the Armadale members.

Whit fun we had when we were young

Jumpin ower the ditches

Pullin reeds an' makin hats

That made us look like witches.

Black Moss is what they ca' it noo

Wi' paths for you to walk on

Leadin tae a bonnie pond

An seats to sit an talk on.

We canna bring the auld days back

We canna jump the ditches.

But we remember makin hats

That made us look like witches.



ITS GOOD TO BE ABLE TO LAUGH AT OURSELVES

You know you're getting older when everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work.

You feel like the morning after, and you didn't go out the night before.

Your knees buckle and your belt won't.

You can only burn the midnight oil 'ill 9 o'clock.

The twinkle in your eyes is the sun hitting your bifocals.

Your back goes out more often than you do!

MEMBERS LETTERS AND CARDS

We love to hear from our members and are lucky to have some wonderful letters, notes and cards to share with you in this Newsletter.



Dear Mary,

Thank you so much for the invitation to the celebratory lunch in LaPiuma. It was a lovely meal and in very enjoyable company.

Thanks also to all the Committee and staff for the Christmas party and for all the work and time given to make it happen, your efforts are very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Christine White



A very belated thank you for the invite to the speakers dinner on 24th November 2017. It is always appreciated that you are kind enough to think of me and invite me.

Kind regards

Yvonne Drummond



Once again Helen,

Sincere thanks for organising a lovely holiday to Bodelwyddan. Helen you are "The Tops" and you always know what we enjoy. Long may these super holidays continue.

Kindest regards and best wishes

Anne Scott



To the Committee "Helpers"

Many thanks for all your help before, during and after the concert on Friday. It was very much appreciated by the Network Singers.

Vanda Collins

MEMBERS LETTERS AND CARDS CONT....

I joined the 50+ Network in January 1997, about a year after my husband died. For a year I did not know what to do or where I was going. I had been looking after my husband and Mum who were ill: both died 7 months apart. A friend told me about the Network so I joined and the first meeting I went to, there were 20 people. Mary Ferrie spoke to us and gave us a warm welcome. I joined many groups, went our day trips, holidays, you name it and I was there. Of course the membership grew and with Mary at the helm the club went from strength to strength. The latest holiday was in North Wales and as I was sitting in the coach, I was thinking its great to be among people of a certain age that I can relate to and out of the 46 passengers, I can name almost all of them!!

Finally I would like to mention Marys excellent News letters and thank her for all her hard work in putting it all together, and giving us a right good read!!

Ella Reinholds



'A GAME OLD BIRD'

This is one of those stories that comes into my head every so often for no reason, but especially around Christmas.

My Mother was born in 1908 so this story probably originated around the time of the First World War (1914-1918). My Grandfather was a Roads Foreman with Midlothian County Council and his family were brought up in a Toll House at Howden which now comes under Livingston New Town. The house (long since demolished) stood under the south side of the now existing Almond Valley Bridge. An isolated spot in those days.

My Mother always remembered there being plenty of game on the dinner table but where did it all come from? It certainly wasn't shot as there was no gun in the house. Winter was hard as van salesmen were unable to get through the snow blocked roads for weeks at a time. One wintry day, when my Mother couldn't get to school in mid Calder, she was looking out of the window to see her Mother throwing grain on the ground to feed the wild birds which consisted of pigeons, pheasants, crows, etc. I learned that this was a daily routine and the birds would arrive each morning knowing that they would be fed. My Grandmother had her eye on a few that were ready for the pot. When the time was right she would soak the grain in whisky overnight and feed the birds as normal the following morning. The birds then had their fill of whisky flavoured grain and were unable to fly away. Granny jumped the fence and selected her chosen birds whose necks were quickly wrung. As soon as the effects of the whisky wore off the other birds flew away.

The mystery of the food supply was solved and I guess it's what you would call "country survival".

Alistair Hall



SMILING

Smiling is infectious

You catch it like the flu

When someone smiled at me today

I started smiling too

I passed around the corner

And someone saw me grin

And when he smiled I realised

I'd passed it on to him

I thought about that smile

And realised its worth

A single smile like mine

Could travel round the earth

So if you feel a smile begin

Don't leave it undetected

Lets start an epidemic quick

And get the world infected

Contributed by Helen Orr

ANAGRAMS

Presbyterian - When you rearrange the letters:

BEST IN PRAYER

Astronomer - When you rearrange the letters:

MOON STARER

Desperation: When you rearrange the letters:

A ROPE ENDS IT

The Eyes - When you rearrange the letters:

THEY SEE

The Morse Code: When you rearrange the letters:

HERE COME DOTS

Dormitory: When you rearrange the letter:

DIRTY ROOM

Slot Machines: When you rearrange the letters:

CASH LOST IN ME

Animosity: When you rearrange the letters:

IS NO AMITY

Election Results: When you rearrange the letters:

LIES - LETS RECOUNT

Snooze Alarms: When you rearrange the letters:

ALAS! NO MORE Z'S

A Decimal Point: When you rearrange the letters:

I'M A DOT IN PLACE

The Earthquakes: When you rearrange the letters:

THAT QUEER SHAKE

Eleven Plus Two: When you rearrange the letters:

TWELVE PLUS ONE

AND FOR THE GRAND FINALE:

Mother in Law: When you rearrange the letters:

WOMAN HITLER

Can you imagine how good the author of this would be at

Scrabble!!

DAY TRIPS

Message from Lesley Martin:

My task on the committee is to organise the day trips.

How do I choose them, where to go and when? From the results of the holiday questionnaire, I aim to try **culture**, exhibitions, castles, country houses.

Places of interest, Peebles, House of Bruar.

Sporting, Grey hound racing, horse racing, motor racing.

Others, Gardens of renowned, special interest, Burns Museum.

I listen to what people say, the V & A in Dundee has been asked for. This will be one for next year once the teething troubles have been sorted out.

What day? Some people work, some people have childcare duties, so I vary the days, Friday, Saturday, and Wednesday. I am always open to suggestions.

Cost again. If public transport is used it is cheaper. But we have to use coaches and sometimes this makes it more expensive.

Future trips,

Garden Show- Ayr

Food Festival – Glasgow

Vintage Car Rally- Biggar

Newhailes House- East Lothian

CURRENT TRIPS

A day trip to Peebles - Saturday June 9^h. Here you might choose to spend the day in picturesque Peebles or you have the option to visit Innerleithin Printing Works. There will be a coach and there will be high tea to finish off the day. More details later.

Musselburgh Racing – Are you up for a day at the racing? Well I am organising this for August 29th. Public transport will be used and Leslie will give you further details at the June meeting.

.....Lesley M Martin.....

Note from the Editor

Did you hear about the wee Hamilton boy who came home after a visit to Edinburgh Zoo with his Dad?

'So, how was it, Ronald?' asked his mother.

'Oh, it was smashing. And Dad loved it too, especially

.....

WIND

As we get older disconcerting things happen to our bodies. Does anyone recognise this syndrome from the book: Now we are Sixty (and a bit) by Christopher Matthew?

WIND

Can anyone tell me?
Does anyone know?
Where does wind come from
Down there below?
I go to a concert
Of Bach or Mozart –
Up goes the baton,
Out comes a fart.

I'm waiting at Heathrow en route to Belfast –
Bend down for my luggage,

And let off a blast.
I'm playing a bridge hand –
The usual stuff –
I bid seven diamonds,
And suddenly guff.
I'm sitting at dinner
With stylish aplomb –
I sneeze: the result is
A hydrogen bomb.
Can anyone tell me?
Does anyone know?

THE WEEKENDERS

When you read this the Weekenders Group will have been running for about two months. Our membership is currently 25.

This group was set up with the remit of providing social contact at weekends when some members may be on their own and not see or speak to anyone from Friday to Sunday or not be able to attend other groups during the week due to work or family commitments.

We officially meet at 1030 hours on the second Saturday of the month at Rosemount Court, Bathgate, for chat, coffee and organizing future events. Everyone contributes to what we want to see or do.

We correspond by e-mail which enables us to arrange events at very short notice. For example if someone fancies going to the cinema they can e-mail around the group and see if someone else wishes to go and then meet up. Members have so far teamed up to attend an event at Howden Theatre and a De-stash sale at Uphall and a Fleamarket in Edinburgh.

We have attended a pop up cinema in West Calder to see the film, Dunkirk, and a boat trip under the three Bridges and passing Blackness Castle which included a cream tea . We are looking to organise a bowling evening and whatever other events members want.

Do come along to one of our official meetings or e-mail the office if you wish to join this group.

Sheila Linscer, Allan Dungavel, Lesley Martin

SPENT YOUTH

How do I know that my youth is all spent?
Well my 'Get Up and Go' has 'Got Up' and went
But really I know, when I think with a grin
Of all the places my 'Get Up' has been.
Old age is golden, I've heard it said
But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed
With my ears in a drawer, my teeth in a cup
My eyes on the table until I wake up
Ere sleep overtakes me I say to myself
Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf
When I was young my slippers were red
I could kick my heels right over my head
When I was old my slippers were blue
But I could still dance the whole night through
Now I am old my slippers are black
I walk to the store and puff my way back
Then pick up the paper and read the 'Obits'
If my name is still missing I know I'm not dead
So I have a good breakfast and go back to bed.

 Contributed by
Irene Calder

A HOLIDAY IN CUMBRIA

I believe there are still places on the holiday to the Cumbria Grand Hotel on Monday 23rd April to Friday 27th April 2018. At £279 per person, this is a snip. As there are no free single rooms, this is also an opportunity to find a new friend to share with and save yourself a bit of money.

The hotel is set in 20 acres of private gardens and woodlands and overlooks Morecambe Bay. There is also an outdoor garden area for you to relax in, a tennis court for Andy Murray fans, a putting green and a woodland/fitness walk. The restaurant overlooks the bay and the golf course.

Hurray along now and book a relaxing five days among friends.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Just a gentle reminder that the membership fees were due January 2018.

Thank you to all those that have paid. If you haven't, you can pop into the office with it or even post a cheque to us. Our address is:

West Lothian 50+ Network

48G Linbar House

North Bridge Street

Bathgate

EH48 4PP

Note from the Editor

EASTER HOLIDAYS

The office will be closed Good Friday, 30th March and Easter Monday, 2nd April

FRENCH FOR BEGINNERS

It is still not too late to get your name down for Alex Aitken's French for Beginners class.

It's every Wednesday from 1pm till 2pm in the office. Pass your name to Fiona in the office.



LEXOPHILE

'Lexophile' describes those that have a love for words, such as "you can tune a piano, but you can't tuna fish", or "To write with a broken pencil is pointless." An annual competition is held by the New York Times to see who can create the best original lexophile.

This years winning submission is posted at the very end.

No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationary.

If you don't pay your exorcist you can get repossessed.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

Did you hear about the crossed-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.

When chemists die, they barium.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, then it dawned on me.

I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.

This girl today said she recognized me from the Vegetarians Club, but I'd swear I've never met herbivore.

I know a guy who's addicted to drinking brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.

A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.

When the smog lifts in Los Angeles U.C.L..A.

I got some batteries that were given out free of charge.

A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.

A will is a dead giveaway.

With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.

Police were summoned to a daycare centre where a 3 year old was resisting a rest.

Did you hear about the fellow whose entire left side was cut off? He's all right now.

A bicycle can't stand alone; it's just two tired.

The guys who fell onto an upholstery machine last week is now fully recovered.

And the winner is.....

A waiter in an Indian restaurant in Edinburgh, asked the diner, 'Curry okay, sir?'

'Yes, lovely thank you, waiter'

A waiter in an Indian restaurant in Glasgow, asked the diner 'Curry Okay, sir?'

'Naw, ah cannae sing a note!'

Jimmy went to the airport to pick up his friend Gordon. When he got there he found Gordon in tears. 'Ah lost the best part o' ma luggage on the way here,' he moaned.

'Do you think it was stolen?'

'Naw, the cork came



ENTERTAINMENT BY COMBINED SENIOR AND JUNIOR CHOIRS

The Network Singers and the Network Juniors delighted their audience when they performed on Friday 9th March in St. Mary's School Hall, Bathgate.

Under their musical director, Yvonne Drummond, the choirs sang songs from the shows plus some well-known individual songs.

The senior choir (25 members aged from 65 to 91) started the show with a selection from Oklahoma.



This was followed by the recently formed junior choir (26 members aged from 7 to 14) singing a selection of songs from the Sound of Music. Several of the children sang solo lines very sweetly and clearly while two of the older members, Emma and Rachael sang "Climb Every Mountain" really touchingly. Alex Aitken of the senior choir joined the juniors in a lively production

of "Crash, Bang, Wallop".

Carol Wilson from the seniors gave a beautiful rendition of "Secret Love" and a tribute to Elvis was given by Alex who sang "It's Now or Never" and "The Wonder of You". Four ladies from the senior choir had the audience in stitches as they morphed into ABBA (or was it SAGA) and danced to "Voulez Vous".

The evening was efficiently and humorously compered by Kate Blake and ended with both choirs singing "Thank you for the Music".

It is not often the generations join together so effectively to their mutual benefit and to the delight of the audience. Yvonne Drummond's expertise, enthusiasm, musical talent and patience are the driving forces behind the success of such a concert. She has to be congratulated on the results of her efforts.



Vanda Collins

AN RECENT ARTICLE FROM WEST LOTHIAN

THANK-YOU VANDA



“Friends and family joined members of the Rotary Club of Whitburn at a recent meeting when the highlight of the evening was the club taking the opportunity to thank Vanda Collins, through the awarding of a Paul Harris Fellow, for her exceptional service to the community.”

“Vanda has given magnificent support to Rotary. She has been a leading organiser of the charity thrift shop and has also opened up her home to accommodate guests as part of the district’s Friendship Exchange programme.”

“She has served her community in many ways over the years, including being president of Bathgate Tennis Club and being a very active member of St Mary’s Church in Bathgate.”

“She has served the West Lothian 50+ Network by serving on the Committee for seven years, running coffee mornings for the more elderly members who perhaps don’t have a lot of company, running the charity thrift shop and she also started The Network Singers choir.”

“President of the Club, Iain Scott, said “ Vanda is committed to her community and she goes about it all quietly and efficiently. Vanda is a very worthy recipient of the Paul Harris Fellow Award”

“Pictured with Vanda Collins are Alistair Marquis, Bill Collins and John Strang”

Very well said; say us! Congratulations to Vanda.

ARMADALE SHED

The Armadale Shed is a community run and managed space, in which people undertake the activities they want to.

There are a range of different activities happening in the Shed. You can try your hand at wood working, metal working, wood turning and weaving.

Members can share the tools and resources they need to work on a project of their own choosing at their own pace and in safe, friendly and inclusive surroundings. The shed is a great place to socialise so if you're not sure about the activities, come in anyway and join us for some tea and a good chat.

If the Shed sounds like something you'd like to try come and join us!

Contact us on **01501**

735796 or email:

armadaleshed@gmail.com

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A man walked into a bar in Edinburgh and sat down next to a man with a dog at his feet. 'Does yer dog bite?' he asked.

'Naw, ma dog doesna bite,' came the reply.

So he reached down to give the dog a pat, and the dog bit him.

'Hey, whit's the game here?' exclaimed the man.

'Ah thought you said your dug doesna bite?'

'Aye, ah did. But that's no' ma dug!'

The old lady in Paisley went to see the doctor, complaining of a pain in her left foot.

'Och,' said the doctor, 'it'll jist be old age.'

'It cannae be that,' replied the woman, 'the ither yin is fine and it's the same age!'



EVENTS GROUP



On Monday 18th December 2017 the Walky Talky 1 group - 28 in total ventured on an away day to The Royal Over-Seas League on Princess Street in Edinburgh for Xmas Lunch. We were in the Robert Louis Stevenson's room. Everyone enjoyed a lovely lunch followed by tea, coffee and mince pies.

The group sincerely thanked Christine White, our team leader, for her forward planning of the walks. The noise in terms of decibels was so high that we never heard the 1 o'clock gun go off at Edinburgh Castle. An enjoyable social event in good friendly company was enjoyed by all.

ROMANCE IS NOT DEAD – #A ME TOO STORY

A couple in their early sixties celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary in a quiet, romantic restaurant. Up pops a wee fairy. "You've been such a loving couple", says she, "I'm, going to give you each a wish".

The wife jumps in "I want to travel the world with my lovely husband". The wee fairy waves her magic wand, and, hey presto, 2 tickets for the Queen Mary 11 arrive on the desk.

But the husband says: " I must make the most of this opportunity. I wish for a wife 30 years younger than me!"

The wee fairy waves her magic wand again, and, hey presto the husband became 92 years old!

The moral of this story is that you men should remember that wee fairies are female!

CULZEAN CASTLE - SUNDAY 6TH MAY 2018



The Walky Talky group are organising a trip to Culzean Castle in Ayrshire in May and I thought a wee bit history of the castle might be in order, so here goes.

From the 12th century, Culzean was

only one of several small Kennedy castles built mainly for defensive purposes. In 1775, David, the 10th Earl called in Robert Adam to rebuild. So, with the wealth of the great Kennedy estate he built this grand castle on a cliff overlooking the island of Arran, surrounded by 500 acres of woodland. Even the farm buildings were re-designed and built in harmony with the castle. Robert Adam died before he had completed the build, but it is still considered one of his finest.

During the Second World War, many Allied commanders and dignitaries stayed at Culzean, General Eisenhower among them. In these days there was a landing strip at Turnberry and that was the first touch-down points for trans-Atlantic flights. Later General Eisenhower was gifted an apartment in the Castle for his own use, and stayed there frequently, even when he was President of the United States. His apartment is still preserved as it was in his day, and can be rented by those rich enough to afford it.

For the walkers, if you start from the carpark you can walk via Glasson Rock and the Barwhin Hill, by estate paths to Ardlochan House, Firbank Cottage and the Hogston Brae to the Swan Pond; Thomaston Castle is nearby, and from there you can go on to the Hough of Kilmore and the Beggar's Knowe. By then you will be near Goatsgreen Cottage, and the shore at Burnfoot, and you go on past Croy House, and work your way back to the car park. If you speak to the ranger before you set out he or she will set you off on the right track.

Don't expect me to lead you – you know I always get lost!!

A WEE REMINDER



Just in case you have forgotten, the Committee decided some time ago that Fridays should be put aside for Fiona to catch up with the ever increasing admin work. So, please, call in and see her Monday to Thursday and leave Fridays for the ever-increasing burden of admin.



OBITUARIES

IAN KAY

Sorely, we report the death of Ian Kay on 9th February, 2018. Ian will be sadly missed, particularly for the good humour he brought to every occasion. Long ago, I remember, we started our first French class with a very dedicated teacher. Not long into the lesson Ian asked for a coffee break. The teacher sternly replied: "Ian, you're here to learn French, not drink coffee!" It became a standing joke: every class Ian asked for his coffee much to our amusement - but he never got it!



Apart from other talents, and there were many, Ian could play any tune you liked to ask for on the piano, yet he never had a lesson. I can just imagine Ian is playing right now for a singalong in heaven.

SHEILA GODDEN

Sadly Sheila Godden passed away on 5th March. Sheila was a keen member of the Canasta group, a very gentle lady. She fought her illness very bravely and will be sadly missed by all her friends.

CAROL ROBINSON

Again, sadly, Carol died recently after a long spell of ill-health. She was a very talented lady. She tutored one of our card making groups until overtaken by ill health. Ever generous Carol has donated her body to medical science.

MUSIC FOR ALL

The Music For All Group currently has a few spaces for new members. If you enjoy music and would like to share your favourites with others, then come and join us. We listen to and enjoy every kind of music from pop to classical. Many members have found that their taste in music has been expanded by listening to the favourites of others.

If this prospect interests you contact the office or phone Bob Cowan on 01506 638938.



Bob Cowan

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Yes, the hunt is on once more for new Committee members. Each year we have tried to stir up the Committee with fresh blood, and each year it has been difficult. The old members did not want to go off and new ones didn't want to come on. We, therefore, decided to rewrite the Constitution and include a clause which said that the longest serving members should go off to make space for the new.

This is a good idea because it, hopefully, will bring new ideas to the table. At the moment, at least three "old" members are leaving and we're looking for new ones.

So, if you are people friendly, energetic, able to see the other person's viewpoint, willing to be hands on (tables to be moved etc), able to bring some new ideas to the network, and, ideally with some knowledge of computers and email - WE WANT YOU. In FACT, IT MIGHT BE AN IDEA TO MAKE A POSTER READING your network needs you!

Pop in and have a chat if you are even slightly interested in joining us.



STATISTICS



We sometimes get asked some thorny questions by the Council, such as: How do we prove retention of membership? Anne Webster has, therefore, been going over the membership forms and has produced some interesting statistics. For example we have 40

members who have stayed with us since the year 2000 and before. YOU might also be interested in the age range: so would you believe that we have 4 ladies over 90 and 1 man? The greatest numbers are in the 60-69 age range: 119 and in the 70-79 age range; 180. Currently we have 408 members (if they all re-join) – not bad when you consider we started off with a group of 33. From little acorns great oaks grow!

The doctor examined Sandy and informed him that he was incontinent.

'Don't be silly, doctor,' he protested, 'ah've never been out o' Scotland!'

'You know something, McGrath,' observed his boss. 'It hasnae escaped ma notice that every time there's a mid-week match on, you have to go to your granny's funeral.'

'You know, sur,' said McGrath, 'you're right. Dae ye think she's faking it?'

Some folk in Scotland think a transvestite is a man who changes his semmit every night.

HELLO, GOODBYE

Many of you may remember the Beatles ditty, hello goodbye - well perhaps not a ditty – can you really apply that description to *anything* the Beatles wrote? When I sat down to write a few words for the Newsletter, that particular tune popped into my head and I thought it most appropriate.

My short contract will be up at the end of March 2018. I started working in the office on 10 December 2017 and was employed to help Fiona out during the very busy period of membership renewal for the 50+ Network, and what a wonderful Network it is! With currently around 30 groups established, I had no idea how varied and interesting the opportunities were, that was until I started working in the 50+ Office.

It has been an absolute pleasure to meet you all and take your money. I hope the feeling has been mutual (not the money part obviously) for most of you, even though I did tend to forget both people and names even after a second or third time of meeting... Sorry about that. However, it was comforting to know I was reassured, that I was in good company.

At this point I would like to say a few words about the Ladies and Gentleman of the Committee. I am genuinely full of both admiration and respect for the tireless work and dedication I have seen from this group of people. Their commitment to the Network is admirable; faithfully attending monthly meetings, with many gathering weekly in order to tackle the extra jobs that need to be done. This dedication is solely so that you, the membership, can enjoy all that the Network has to offer. The group leaders also put in a tremendous amount of hard work, and although I am still not too familiar with all these leaders, I can appreciate the effort that it takes. The overall exertion everyone gives to keep the whole thing a viable and vibrant concern is worthy of applause.


What also struck me about the committee was their kindness. After only a week in the job and a week before the Christmas break, Fiona and I were both struck down by debilitating Flu and a sickness Virus respectively. The committee, en route home I believe, from one of the trips down south, made a swift decision to close the office down for the whole week. I can't quite express my gratitude for that decision. I was so ill and could barely move from my sick bed; but weighing heavily on my mind was the worry of having to take time off from a job which I had only just started! When Judith text me to wish me well and let me know about the decision (I wasn't actually able to take her phone call or even speak) the relief I felt was huge.

Being able to focus on getting well without worrying about your job is not something that is prevalent in our society today. More and more, I have seen people struggle to their work ill, fearful for their jobs, when they should, quite simply, be home warm and in bed.

When Fiona and I returned to the office after Christmas, once again fighting fit, there was a bunch of lovely presents and cards awaiting us. Mostly for Fiona I admit, but one or two for me, which I have to say made my wee heart dance. After being so ill and feeling very low over most of the Christmas holidays, it brought a tear to my eye when I saw a few gifts and cards with my name on them, I was very touched.

Life has been a bit of a struggle for me since 2014 for various reasons and I know too that for many, sometimes just showing up for life each day takes a good deal of courage. This being alive isn't always easy that's for sure, and especially so, I would say, as we get on in years where loss of a loved one or an illness can make us feel like we can't go on. But kindness in a word or a gesture, no matter how small, always restores our faith in humanity quite unlike anything else. So I leave with a great sense of gratitude for all the kindness that the committee has shown me in general, and for that time in December in particular.

Last but not least, let me say a few words about the Office administrator Fiona Seenan. One aspect of the job which I will miss most is spending 2 hours a day Monday - Thursday working alongside my lovely wee colleague Fiona. She made me feel welcome *and* more importantly competent, every single day, even when I didn't particularly display competence. And that is how she is with everyone. One of the members, a man, no idea who he was, obviously a big fan of Fiona's, (*She may have paid him*) asked me, maybe around 2 weeks into the job; "So, how are you getting on with Fiona?" I barely had the chance to reply when he quickly cut in with, "If you don't get on with Fiona, then there's something wrong with you." Ha Ha. I'm laughing now, but at the time, I thought quietly to myself: "Ok, thank you for sharing that "

However, he was absolutely right. Fiona holds the membership in her head and in her heart, as well as in her computer. And with over 400 members that is no easy feat! But her heart is way bigger than her small stature would indicate. (I know you probably have an inch or two on me, Fiona. I tend to think I'm taller than I actually am.) Thank you for making me laugh and cry and for your patience. It has been a blessing and a joy. 

So all in all, the human ingredients that make up the 50 + Network, I think make it a very special place to belong to indeed. And now that I know all of the different groups on offer, I intend to start coming along to a few. Hopefully my work commitments will allow me to do that, because unfortunately I am not yet quite able to retire...

So, this is really a Hello and not Goodbye at all.

Sharon Hepburn

Here. hopefully for your delight, is one of my favourite Frank Sinatra songs. My Dad was a big Sinatra fan and I knew all the words to many of the songs when I was only about twelve years or so of age. The lyrics of this particular choice obviously mean more to me now than when first I heard them. I hope some of you remember the wonderful melody too.

YOUNG AT HEART

Fairy tales can come true
It can happen to you, if you're young at heart.
For it's hard, you will find
To be narrow of mind if you're young at heart.
You can go to extremes with impossible schemes;
You can laugh when your dreams fall apart at the seams
And life gets more exciting with each passing day.
And love is either in your heart, or on its way.
Don't you know that it's worth
Every treasure on earth, to be young at heart.
For as rich as you are
It's much better by far, to be young at heart.
And if you should survive to a hundred and five
Look at all you'll derive out of bein' alive
And here is the best part, you have a head start,
If you are among the very young at heart...

Music by *Johnny Richards* and lyrics by *Carolyn Leigh*. The song was *written* and published in 1953

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SNOW JOKE!

Am I that glad that all the snow is away. The kids had the best time being off school with us building snowmen, igloos, sledging and making snow angels but, my goodness, I was desperate to get back to normality and back to work! Oh, it was so hard to keep them entertained. They only lasted so long playing with the fun snow before they got too cold and came in (soaking every floor downstairs in the



house in the process). Out came my 'rainy day' activities; PlayDough, painting, hide and seek, jigsaws, then 'lets make our own jigsaw Mummy' - cue hundreds of cut pieces of paper and cardboard everywhere, and I mean everywhere.

After lunch I could see they were looking for something else so, in my infinite wisdom, I remembered a cool experiment I saw online that I knew the kids would love. It involved milk, food colouring and washing up liquid.

We took a plate of milk, plopped in a pattern of food colouring then placed a cotton wool ball soaked in washing up liquid in the middle of the plate. The reaction was really good to see, all the colours started to move around the plate on their own, the kids loved it, so much in fact that they jumped up and down with excitement and knocked the table, sending the plate smashing to the ground. Operation clean up then began.

Each night they went to bed suitably tired and with wee smiles on their faces so that tells me that I didn't do too badly at keeping them amused.

Even though we had fun, the weather recently was really frightening. My husband works for a very well known Satellite TV company in Livingston and they took the decision to close their Call Centres which was the first time they have ever closed down in their history.

One thing that really stood out for me was the stories of the people that had 4 wheel drive cars or trucks and were offering their time to get nurses and doctors to their work. Did you see them on the news? They were rescuing people that were stuck in the snow and getting folk to hospital in emergencies. They also did things like food shopping for those that needed help. One of our neighbours has a big truck and he was out for 2 days straight helping people. How amazing is that!