



NETWORK NEWS

West Lothian 50+ Network

Summer 2018

END OF AN ERA

The outstanding contributions of four long-serving members of the West Lothian 50+ Network have been recognised by Network members.

One of the longest serving members, Mary Ferrie, who held the office of Network Secretary, had served on the Committee for some 23 years, whilst Helen Orr, who has had the responsibility for organising many of the Network's members' holidays, has totted up some 20 years of service to the organisation.

Mary and Helen both stepped down from the Committee at the organisation's recent Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May. At that time Judith Hanna also stepped down as Convener and Isobel Wilson stepped down as Treasurer.

Judith's and Isobel's contributions were

acknowledged at the AGM when incoming Convener Anne Webster thanked them for their service to the Network and presented them with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the membership.

The remarkable contributions made by Mary and Helen were marked at the Network Members' meeting on 16th June, when a special buffet was laid on for members to celebrate their achievements, with special presentations and a celebration cake.

New Convener Anne Webster said: "We are all indebted to the dedication and hard work that has gone to making the Network a continued success over the years since its inception. Next year the Network celebrates its 25th anniversary and has gone from strength to strength. The work of our retiring members will be a hard act to follow."



Helen Orr (L) and Mary Ferrie with their celebration cake at the June members' meeting



EDITORIAL

There have been big changes in the 50+ Network since our last Newsletter. With the retirement of four of our long-standing committee members, it's been a busy few months as the new committee get down to the challenges of taking the Network forward.

It is my privilege to take over the production of the Network's newsletter from Mary Ferrie. Mary's newsletters are a hard act to follow, but I hope you will continue to find them interesting and informative about everything that's going on in the Network.

As I write this the sun is still blazing outside. I've lived in Scotland for over 30 years and don't remember such a sustained period of unbroken hot weather. How is everyone coping with the heat?

Some of the Network's groups are taking a break, but others continue throughout the summer. The office also remains open, though there is no members' meeting in July. Whatever you are up to, I wish you all a pleasant summer.

Sue Bedford-Visser,
Editor



Judith Hanna (L) and Isobel Wilson at the AGM in May on their retirement from the Committee



NEW NETWORK CONVENER

Following the Network's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 19th May, Anne Webster has been chosen to lead the new Committee.

Anne has served on the Committee for the last 2 years and as a Chartered Accountant and former finance manager is well placed to take on her new role.

Anne takes the lead as four of our most experienced and longest serving members step down: former Convener Judith Hanna, Secretary Mary Ferrie, holiday organizer Helen Orr and Treasurer Isobel Wilson.

Anne acknowledged the invaluable contribution made by these long-serving members, adding: "I am sure that everyone joins me in thanking Judith, Mary, Helen and Isobel for all that they have done for the Network. They have

left the Network in good shape and I am delighted to take over the lead of such a thriving organization. I look forward to continuing their good work, ably assisted by the remaining committee members and those new members that joined the Committee at the AGM."

New committee members Allan Dungavel, Ann McGovern and Joe Murphy all spoke of the huge welcome they had received when they joined the Network, and about the many benefits that they had enjoyed as a result of their membership. They were all voted onto the new Committee at the recent AGM.

The remaining nine members of the Committee all agreed to continue to serve, and were endorsed by the membership.



Anne Webster: the Network's new Convener

"I am delighted to take over the lead of such a thriving organization"

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YOUR NEW COMMITTEE

An overview of the new committee and their responsibilities:

Anne Webster – Convener

Jim Dixon - Vice Convener; Fundraising; Men's Group

Anne McGovern – Secretary

Liz Wark – Treasurer (Business); HR

Irene Calder – Treasurer (Social)

Sue Bedford-Visser – Communications / Publicity; Newsletter

Allan Dungavel – Groups;

Data Protection

Vanda Collins – Minutes and Cards

Barbara Haddow – Catering;

Rosemount Liaison and Raffles

Sheila Linscer – Holidays (reporting on a holiday subgroup); Theatre Trips

Lesley Martin – Trips/ Outings

Joe Murphy - Speakers; Holiday sub-group



New Committee Members: Allan Dungavel, Ann McGovern and Joe Murphy (R)

MARY'S MEMORIES

As Mary Ferrie, steps down from the Committee, she reflects on the early days of the Network, and looks back at some of the highlights.

“Tam Dalyell led us, one by one, into the refectory at the Parliament because the manageress told him that the rules had changed and he was only allowed one visitor at a time. After half a dozen forays into the restaurant, the manageress gave in and said: Alright, bring in the bus-full!”

I've been mulling over 22 years - or is it 23? - on the Committee of West Lothian 50+ and thinking how it has enriched my life over these years. We used to meet, month about, in the Community Centres of West Lothian, then, on the suggestion of Robbie Robertson, we moved to the new St. Mary's hall (I wish we still met there!).

We had no office until we applied for a lottery grant, and established ourselves upstairs in the Regal Cinema. This wasn't ideal as there were a lot of stairs. We then moved to a posh office above the Citizen's Advice Office in Hopetoun Street, but the Manager there ran away with the funds on the day after we paid our rent and we had to do a moonlight flit. We were given 24 hours' notice to get out. The museum came to the rescue and we set up office there for a year. The museum committee then got

worried that the Lottery would come back at them because they were subletting part of their premises paid for by the Lottery, so we were on the move again, this time to our current premises. Once established there, we applied for another lottery

grant and were set up right royally with a secretary and an administrative officer. Such luxury, but it only lasted for three years. However, it did allow us to save our own money and thus we have a very stable financial footing.

In the early years we have a number of members who were politically inclined, so this led us to visit the Parliaments. I remember the knockabout discussions we witnessed in the Dial in Dublin, and the ceilidh we had in Inchicore thereafter. Charlie sang his favourite scouting song: Maggie Cockabendy Tooralooraloo, and the Irish folk though he was being rude! Then the visit to London where Tam Dalyell led us, one by one, into the refectory at the Parliament because the manageress told him that the rules had changed and he was only allowed one visitor at a time. After half a dozen forays into the restaurant, the manageress gave in and said: Alright, bring in the bus-full! Then there was the new coach which took us on the ferry to Bruges. When we got there the electrics had gone wrong and the bus wouldn't start, thus imprisoning all the bus and car passengers on the ferry. Then I remember Agnes McKeown dancing the highland fling as the piper played on the concourse of the United Nations Building in New York. That holiday in Beijing was unforgettable:

apart from all the usual visits, we sat in on the High School classes, we heard their band, we were serenaded by Mr Jing's opera group, we visited a township and ate lunch in the local's houses and much much more. Then we went to Trinidad and Tobago, another wonderful experience. Jim Dixon tried to work his way through the list of cocktails in the hotel in Tobago, but only got half way! O, O the years O!

That's not to forget all the wonderful holidays we've had by bus in this country and the trips like the one recently to Culzean Castle in Ayrshire. Irene was telling me how kind and helpful the staff were on that occasion. I was not at all surprised as Robert Burns said: Auld Ayr wham ne'er a toon surpasses, For honest men and bonnie lassies. (Guess where I come from!)

I could write forever about all the groups and classes we've organised, but I'll refrain. Sue, our new Editor, wouldn't have the room. Suffice it to say, I've enjoyed it all, and will continue to enjoy it for many years to come – I hope!



NETWORK MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

DID YOU KNOW?

West Lothian will experience one of the biggest increases in the proportion of population aged 75 and over between 2012 and 2022.

But Age Scotland thinks that public services are failing to prepare for the needs of an aging population.

According to Age Scotland, we're living longer but Scotland is failing to plan ahead to future-proof its housing stock and workplaces, and tackle health inequalities.

There's been a surge in enquiries about joining the 50+ Network, according to Fiona in the office. Membership (at June 2018) stands at 378 (304 women and 74 men).

In the first 6 months of this year, we have welcomed 32 new members, the same as for the whole of 2016, and looking set by the end of

the year to far exceed the total of 39 in 2017.

Exactly 50% of our members live in Bathgate, 11% in Armadale, 10% in Livingston, 6% in Whitburn and 5% in Uphall, with the remaining 18% coming from other small towns and villages across West Lothian.

The largest group of members (48%) are aged between 70-79, with the next biggest group, 27% falling into the age range 60-69. Some 15% are aged 80-89, and only 4% are age 50-59, giving the Committee a focus for recruitment. Four members (1%) are over 90. 5% of our members did not state their date of birth.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

West Lothian Council is the Network's largest contributor, providing essential funds to help us run the office, and once again this year we are indebted for their support.

Members of the Committee met recently with the link officer from West Lothian Council, BID and Town Centres Manager, Nairn Pearson. The meeting took place in April and provided the opportunity to discuss a wide range of pertinent issues, including future funding, town centre developments, blue badge parking issues and concessionary travel.

In July committee members will meet up with the people from Enterprising Bathgate the Bathgate BID (Business Improvement District) to get a pre-view of the organisation's plans for the town for the next 5 years.



Supporting Enterprising Bathgate, who are about to launch their business plan for the next 5 years.

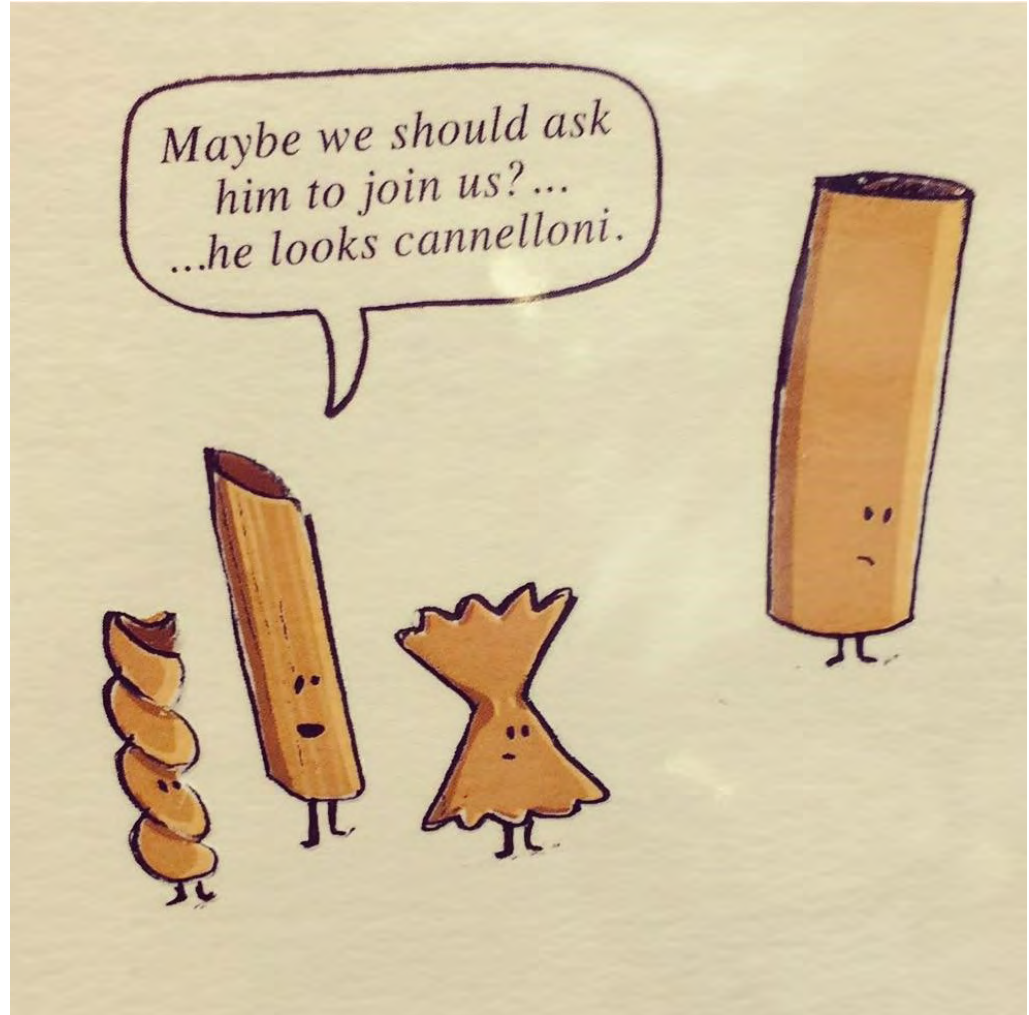


NEW MEMBERS GET TOGETHER

One of the key aims of the 50+ Network is to help combat social isolation on older people. So when new members join the Network it's important to make them feel welcome. We aim to do this in an informal setting and so, on 11th April sixteen new members enjoyed a get-together with committee members over tea and cakes.

Rosemount Gardens in Bathgate proved to be an excellent venue for the meeting which provided new members with the opportunity to introduce themselves to others whilst finding out more about Network activities.

And the meeting prompted new member Eileen Lander to float the idea of a starting the new Ukulele group which met for the first time in June.



HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH MEMBERS

We have four main ways of communicating with our members:

The **monthly members' meeting** is held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at the Royal British Legion in Bathgate. This gives the chance for members to socialize with each other whilst getting an update on events, trips, holidays, group activities etc.

Approximately 100 members come along to the monthly meeting.

Minutes of the monthly meeting are emailed the following week to the 201 members who are on email (53%) and posted to those who are not.

Our **facebook page** is a source of regular updates on Network activity and currently has 152 followers.

We aim to produce our **newsletter, Network News**, once a quarter.

PDF versions of the newsletter are sent to those on email, with hard copies sent in the post to all other members.

Paper copies of Minutes and Newsletters are always available in the office .

- **53% of our members use email;**
- **Our facebook page has 153 followers;**
- **Some 100 members regularly attend the monthly meeting**
- **Every member receives our quarterly newsletter**

NORDIC WALKING COMES TO BATHGATE

Nordic walking came to the 50+ Network earlier this year!

Around 16 members benefited from a free introductory training session at Bathgate's Balbardie Park in mid April.

Trainer Derek Storey took the group through the basics of this form of exercise which was originally a summer training regime for cross-

country skiers. It's based on using specially designed walking poles in a way that harnesses the power of the upper body to propel you forward as you walk.

Everyone who took part really enjoyed it and is looking forward to more sessions.

It is hoped that this will form the basis of a new Network group in the near future.



UKULELE FOR BEGINNERS



The newly formed Ukulele group has got off to a great start, according to member Carol Wilson who, it seems, hasn't stop practising since she got the bug on her first lesson. Carol, who sings with the Network Choir, is delighted that she'll be able to accompany herself on a musical instrument. "It's

great fun and easy to grasp the basics," said Carol.

The group was started in May by new member Eileen Lander. She doesn't claim to be an expert but knows how much fun you can have with just a few chords. Eileen has two or three ukuleles that she can loan out on a temporary basis – though

Carol has already invested in her own "starter" ukulele.

If anyone else is interested in joining, you don't need to be able to read (or even understand) music...it's a bit like painting by numbers!

ITALIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Eight members have recently taken up the challenge of learning Italian, ably tutored by John Walker. The group met three times - on Thursdays at 1pm in the 50+ office - before John took a 3 week trip - to Italy of course. The lessons are very participative, with the aim of getting everyone

speaking. John tries to keep grammar down to a minimum - but it keeps getting in the way, largely driven by the group itself, who ask lots of questions and are keen to understand.

The group is still very new so if anyone else is interested in joining in, contact John via the office.



MEN'S GROUP GOING STRONG

Less than 20% of our 378 members are men but we're pleased to report that the Network's Men's Group led by Jim Dixon is going from strength to strength.

In April the men enjoyed another great day out, catching the train to Balloch and Loch Lomond. A walk in the country park was followed by a traditional fish tea. Some members also chose to do the one hour sail on the loch.

The May outing saw the

men - joined by several ladies - visit the Burns Heritage Centre in Alloway, and in June they visited Scotland's Secret Bunker near St Andrew's.

In addition to the outings, there's now a weekly Wednesday morning men's drop in club at Rosemount Court in Bathgate, from 10am to 12 noon.



WEEKENDERS ON THE MOVE

Over 30 members have now joined the new Weekenders group, which has already organised a diverse range of activities and visits.

These include a theatre visit to Howden Park Centre, two 10 pin bowling afternoons at Deer Park, a canal boat trip to Ratho, stopping off at the Bridge Inn, a Glasgow City Bus Tour and a visit to the jousting at Linlithgow Palace.

The group started up earlier this year, with one of the first outings being a cruise with cream tea on the Firth of Forth.

Determined to enjoy themselves, despite the snow and windy weather, the Three Bridges and Blackness Castle tour went ahead with ten of the original sixteen of the

group meeting at Hawes Pier, South Queensferry to enjoy sailing up the Firth of Forth. It was choppy at the beginning and end of the trip but the sea was relatively calm in between with some sunny spells. The cream tea was lovely with proper china cups and saucers.

Back on dry land, the Hawes Inn provided a warm welcome for refreshments.

Definitely something to be repeated, though maybe next time in the summer months!

As the group grows it is more important than ever that every Weekender has the opportunity to contribute, so come along to our monthly meetings and put forward your ideas for shared activities.

Meet up with the Weekenders on the 2nd Saturday of each month at Rosemount Gardens, Bathgate - 10am for 10.30 - for coffee, chat, sharing ideas and organizing future events.



NATTERING NEEDLES



Nattering Needles have now moved to Rosemount Gardens and are able to bring in a few new members now that they have more space.

Led by Doris Cowan, the group meet on Fridays between 2-4pm.

This group of ladies meet to chat whilst they do their current pieces of work.

As the name of the group implies, their nattering covers a range of handiwork from knitting to all forms of needlework.

Members of the group are free with their advice and help and willingly share their expertise and tips as well as a good knowledge of new products and where to buy materials.

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 interested please contact the office or Bob Cowan.



“Get one-to-one help with the things that are holding you back from getting the best out of your laptop, phone or tablet”

TABLET TRAINING AND IT BUDDIES

Are you struggling with email or unsure about how to download photos from your phone? Want to know how to shop online or set up online banking? Tablet training takes place in the 50+ Network office on Thursday mornings, where you can get one-to-one help with the things that are holding you back from getting the best out of your laptop, phone or tablet.

The sessions are winding up for summer, but will start up again in September so get in touch with Fiona in the office if you'd like to put your name on the list.

An IT Buddy is also available every Tuesday morning in Simpson Library, Bathgate Partnership Centre to provide friendly and informal support to help you get online, access the internet or use devices such as smartphones, and tablets. To book an appointment, call into the library or phone 01506 282910.

THRIFT SHOP APPEAL

Charity shop queen bees Kate and Liz are getting ready once again to take over the thrift shop in George Street for a week in August and are looking for both goods and volunteers. This is an important fundraiser for the 50+ Network and you've done us proud in the past with your generous donations.

Declutter

This is your chance to do good, feel good and look good. We're told decluttering is very therapeutic, reduces stress and restores an order of calmness and well-being. So please declutter away to your heart's content and discard items that you no longer require - we are happy to have it all! Nothing is too big or too small. Get rid of stuff you really needed to have but now you ask yourself "what possessed me to buy that?", or even worse "what made them think I would wear that?"

So start clearing your cupboards and wardrobes of stuff you know in your heart you will never use again.

Key Dates

We have the shop from the 15th August and so we will be taking goods in the shop from 2 pm on the 15th, to be ready to open for business on the 16th until 22nd August.

Unfortunately the 50+ office can't accommodate goods so can you please bring your items directly to the shop (we can unload cars into the back of the shop). We are also happy to take items when the shop is open during the week.

If you have any difficulty getting things to us please call Fiona in the office and we will try to organise an uplift.

Volunteer

We had a fantastic team of volunteers running the shop

last year so if you would like to repeat the experience (fun, frolics, coffee and cake) please call the office and put your name against a 3-hour slot. We would love others to join in too so if you can spare a few hours that week it would be much appreciated.



WE VALUE YOUR PRIVACY - NEW GDPR POLICY

You may have noticed that many organisations have been updating their privacy policies in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations which came into effect on 25th May 2018. Because your privacy is very important to us the 50 Plus Network has done the same.

It's important you're aware of how we handle your personal information - why and how we handle it, and the steps we take to make sure it remains secure.

We collect your personal information based on the consent outlined on your Membership application and Group and event participation and use it for the following purposes: -

- To help us identify you and the membership you hold with us, both for our own purposes and for approved providers who need to verify your membership details;
- To administer your membership record;
- To inform you of news, events and activities;
- To enable you to receive the service(s) you have requested;
- To fulfil our obligations to you as a West Lothian 50 Plus Network member;
- To communicate with you generally;
- To maintain our own accounts;
- For statistical analysis;
- To improve the services provided by West Lothian 50 Plus Network.

Your personal information will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be used for Network administration purposes and for communicating with you about your membership and any activities that you participate in. Only the Committee, Office Administrator and Voluntary Group Leaders will be able to access your personal information and, in certain circumstances, service providers who carry out services on our behalf – such as holidays. Even then, only the minimum amount of information necessary will be provided for them to carry out their roles.

The Network's new privacy policy is available to read in the office or in a Note on our facebook page, or can be mailed or emailed to you at your request.



NETWORK MEMBERS' SURVEY

The Committee is delighted that so many members took the time to take part in our latest survey of Network members, conducted during the period 16th February – 31st March 2018.

In total 112 surveys were returned, 82 of which were completed online (over 60 within the first day!).

The purpose of the survey is to give guidance to the Network's Committee as they take forward the development of the organisation.

The results will also be of interest to West Lothian Council who need to ensure that they receive best value for the annual grant which they award us to deliver activities which combat social isolation in older people.

All members of the Network (over 400) were consulted. Those who are on email were sent a link to an online version of the survey. Members who are not on email were sent a paper copy of the survey, distributed with the newsletter so that no extra postage was incurred.

Copies of the survey results are now available to view in the office.

“The vast majority – 93% - said the Network has helped them meet new people – demonstrating that the Network is effectively delivering our key target - combating social isolation in older people”

HOW BENEFICIAL ARE NETWORK ACTIVITIES?

In the survey we wanted to know how beneficial members find each of the main different types of activity:

Monthly Meeting: 77% beneficial or very beneficial; 23% Not applicable. (26% never attend; 21% attend occasionally; 27% attend often and 25% attend every meeting)

Interest Groups: 76% beneficial or very beneficial; 22% Not applicable. This had the highest percentage rating them very beneficial at 62%.

Classes / Courses: 61% beneficial or very beneficial; 37% Not applicable

Day Trips: 73% beneficial or very beneficial; 26% Not applicable

Theatre Trips: 65% beneficial or very beneficial; 31% Not applicable

Social Events, Dinners etc: 71% beneficial or very beneficial; 27% Not applicable

Holidays: 57% beneficial or very beneficial; 39% Not applicable

HOW DO WE IMPROVE MEMBERS' QUALITY OF LIFE?

One of the most heart-warming parts of the Member's Survey was the response to the question: How has the 50+ Network enhanced your quality of life?

A massive 93% said that it had helped them meet new people, and 74% said that they had found new recreational opportunities. 60% had learned new things and 56% had

become more active, with 43% saying it had helped them improve their health.

Best summed up perhaps by some of our members' own comments:

“Since losing my husband 10 years ago I have found the 50+ Network a life saver. I have made many new friends”;

“I would be at a loss if not for the 50+”;

“You can talk over problems with some of them and not feel it's only you with a problem”;

“Before I moved to West Lothian, apart from my neighbours, I hardly knew anyone. Now I can be anywhere and I usually bump into someone I know through the 50+ network. It's given me a sense of belonging.”

SOD SITTING, GET MOVING!

Remember “the Green Goddess”, exercise guru Diana Moran who appeared on BBC breakfast TV in a green leotard?

Moran has co-written a book, Sod Sitting, Get Moving! with Public Health consultant Prof Sir Muir Gray, urging older people to find exercise classes that they enjoy, and to walk everywhere if they can.

Older people should be given a course of pilates lessons as a birthday gift rather than slippers or chocolates, said Moran, 78, adding that people in their 60s and 70s can have

greater fitness than millennials because they did not spend their childhoods playing video games.

“However, it is essential that they continue to exercise in old age.”

“I see people in gym classes that are in their 60s and 70s that are much fitter than those in their 30s and 40s. They had to walk to school, were made to do sport and PE, and because of that our bone bank is stronger.”

Muir Gray said: “We have this thing where, if our elderly mum is getting on and she can’t get to the

shops any more, that we go and help her. This is completely wrong. We need more activity with every year that passes,”

“But things are slowly changing, there are some great classes out there, and socialising while exercising is very important,” he said.

They would approve of all the activity that goes on in the 50+ Network, with some 6 walking groups, Nordic walking, Pilates and NuYu classes, not to mention bowling, cycling and much more!



“Socialising while exercising is very important”



Members of one of the 50+ Network’s six walking groups

CRAFT FAIR AND COFFEE MORNING

West Lothian 50+ Network’s annual Coffee Morning and Craft Fair takes place this year on Saturday 20th October. This replaces the normal monthly members’ meeting and is an important fundraiser for the Network. As usual, we’re asking our

crafty members to start working on items that can be sold at the fair. And later we’ll be putting a call out to those who love baking to lend a hand too. Put the date in your diary - and remember that friends and family are all welcome.





MARCH MEMBERS' MEETING - RiverLife

Our speaker at the March meeting was Luke Park from the RiverLife Project.



Luke spoke to us about the ambitious programme of improvement works and community engagement activities which is being undertaken on the two main rivers which flow through West Lothian, the Almond and the Avon.

Both have been heavily impacted by the area's

industrial past and more recently by significant urbanisation and intensive agricultural practices which have caused lasting damage to the river environment.

Keep a look out for evidence of the project's activities, such as the recently completed fish pass at Kirkton Weir in Livingston, which will allow migrating fish to pass this artificial structure to return to their spawning grounds upstream.

**Contact RiverLife on
0131 445 1527**

APRIL MEMBERS' MEETING - Pet First Aid

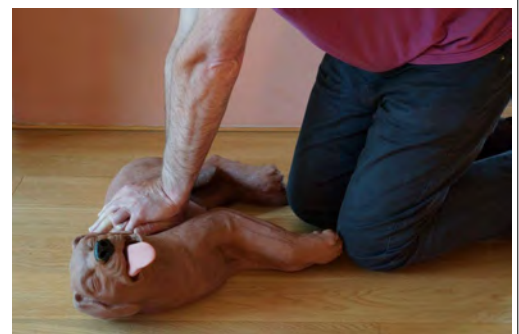


*David Fitzcharles,
Fitzcharles Training Ltd*

Pet Aid First was the topic for our speaker at the April Members' Meeting. David Fitzcharles from local business Fitzcharles Training Ltd warned of the various dangers for pets found in and around the home, whilst demonstrating how to administer temporary first aid to pets. David offers certified pet first aid training courses

throughout Scotland, suitable for pet owners or pet professionals.

**Contact David on
07747 65743**



MAY MEMBERS' MEETING - Answer Project



Robert Cook, Director of the ANSWER Project

In May we welcomed Robert Cook from the ANSWER Project (Addressing Needs and Serving Whitburn Elderly Residents), the recipient of our Coin Jar for 2017-2018.

This year's total of £317 was made up to £350 by the Committee.

Mr Cook thanked members for their generosity and gave a brief history of the ANSWER

Project located in Whitburn which provides day care facilities for older people with dementia who require day care support, as well as carers requiring respite.

The organisation started in 1994 and is partially funded by the Council but also requires additional funding from outside sources - such as the 50+ Network - and grants. The project has recently been able to

expand to run from two to four days a week.

Contact the ANSWER Project on 01501 749974

UPCOMING MEMBER'S MEETINGS

JULY

Holidays - No meeting

AUGUST

18th August.

Guest speaker from the Levensat Recycling and Waste Management Company

SEPTEMBER

15th September

Guest speaker from the Guide Dog Association

OCTOBER

20th October

Our annual craft Fair and Coffee Morning replaces the usual Members'

Meeting

NOVEMBER

17th November

Our guest speaker is the Rev. John Povey - The Calder Witches

DECEMBER

15th December

Christmas Party

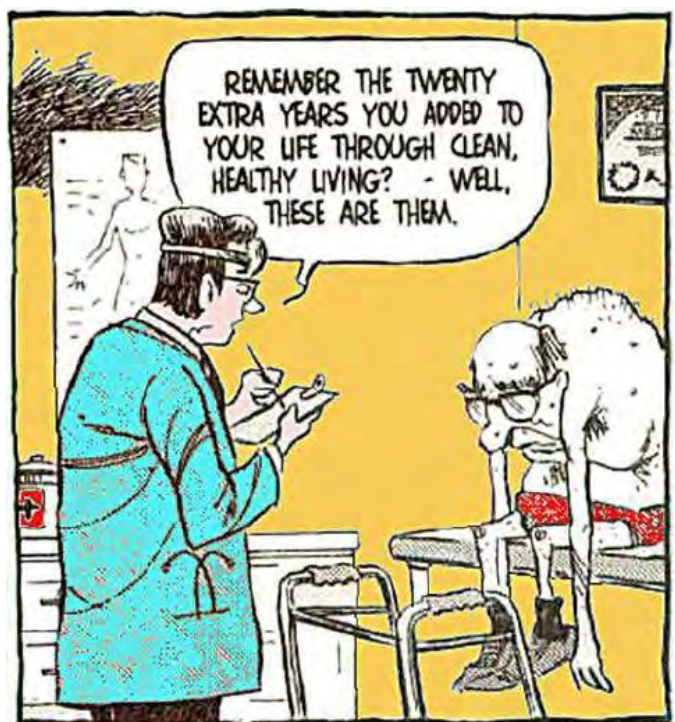
COIN JAR CHARITY 2018 / 2019

Five possible charities were put forward at the Member's Meeting in April to receive the proceeds of the Coin Jar over next year. They were: Mary's Meals, The Polar Academy, Food Bank, Food Train and West Lothian Young Carers.

After a show of hands, **West Lothian Young**

Carers was chosen as the charity that the West Lothian 50+ Network will support over the coming year.

WLYC
project



WALKING IN CATALONIA by Mary Ferrie

Fifteen intrepid walkers from the Network's wealth of walking groups assembled with walk leader Heather Waddell on 19th April at 4.30am in Edinburgh Airport. By lunchtime we were all safely ensconced in a hotel on the beach in Coma-Ruga, Catalonia. What a beautiful place! We wandered along the front, revelling in the heat, and soon became acclimatised with some Spanish crepes and sangria.

Our first led walk was billed as a coastal walk from La Mora to Torredembarra, 6 miles, 80 m of ascent/ descent. Aye, that and the rest said all the walkers' Fit Bits. Nevertheless, we saw the medieval Mora watchtower, the witches' village of Altafulla, the Roman villa of Els Munts and then into Torredembarra for a tapas lunch. Apart from the "ascents" (dirty great big rocks with foot high steps) we loved it. We caught the train back to the hotel – good organisation as we learned where the station was in relation to the hotel



and filed this information away for future use.

On our free day we walked along the coast to the holiday home of Pablo Casals, one of the greatest cellists of all time. It was really beautiful and interesting – a garden, a restaurant for our coffee and a museum. The history was interesting, particularly his political history. Despite his international status he refused to play in any country which recognised the Franco Regime. It made us want to find out more about the Spanish Civil War, as our knowledge was sorely limited – The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie and little else.

The second led walk took us to the Foix Natural Park, along lanes and pathways close to vineyards with views of the Sierra Montmell.

The blurb we were given said that the land "undulates gently". I beg to differ! Their idea of undulation and mine differed greatly. This led to much hilarity as one of the ladies googled a phrase used about the terrain – "Ondular mi culo". (Look it up!) Anyway, we passed an impressive lakeside Castle in Castelet, now home to a UNESCO International Biosphere Research Centre. 6.9 miles with 100m ascent/descent – the Fit Bits did not agree! We got the train home and, by the time we walked back from the station, they were registering 10 miles!

"6.9 miles with 100m ascent/ descent – the Fit Bits did not agree! By the time we walked back from the station, they were registering 10 miles!"



WALKING IN CATALONIA cont'd

On the Monday, another free day, we took a tour to the mountain town of Montserrat, where the rock formations are unique. It houses a Benedictine Monastery, a museum, a most sumptuous church. Here resides the black Madonna, and the pilgrims queued for hours to pay her homage. Thinking it would be busy, we sat in the (rather cold) church for over an hour waiting to hear the boys' choir which was due to sing at 1pm. It was busy, but they let all and sundry in to stand in the aisles, so our suffering was unnecessary. The boys' singing was wonderful to hear, but short-lived. So was our visit to the Dali museum next door. We could have stayed in there for the day and rued the time we had spent shivering in the church.

Our third led walk was to the villages of the Alt Camp and the Cistercian Route. Some, including me, decided this was a step too far. However, most of our walkers tackled it. The total distance was



allegedly 10 miles, but Heather's watch said over 11. I gather it was quite gruelling, but, brave souls, they did it! Must be the West Lothian Spirit - or the free wine we got at dinner each night.

On our last day we visited Barcelona – a place on my bucket list. I was well rewarded. Some of the others had visited earlier in the week, so we learned from them. Get your tickets before you go to save queueing and take the red bus tour. The Sagrada Familia was everything I expected it to be and more. They hope to

complete it for 2026, 100 years after Gaudi's death (He was run over by a tram!). To sit upstairs in the tourist bus and see all these wonderful buildings – really unforgettable! Well, that was Catalonia. A walking holiday is a great way to get to know other members of the 50+ Network and I enjoyed all of their company. Thanks go to Heather for her idea for the holiday, and for her care and attention to all the details. You deserve a medal, Heather!

“The Sagrada Familia was everything I expected it to be and more. They hope to complete it for 2026, 100 years after Gaudi's death. (He was run over by a tram!)”



DAY TRIP TO CULZEAN



Enjoying tea at Culzean

Culzean Castle on the Ayrshire coast was the destination of the May outing, with a full coach setting off last Sunday (6th May) from the Bathgate Partnership Centre.

Culzean overlooks the Firth of Clyde, near Maybole, Carrick. It is the former home of the Marquess of Ailsa, the chief of Clan Kennedy, but since 1945 has been owned by the National Trust for Scotland.

The weather was overcast at first, but the sun came out and the clouds disappeared just after lunch.

The coach party split into smaller groups to explore the Castle, Clock Tower Courtyard and the Walled Gardens, just some of the many of the features of the

estate.

Culzean Castle was constructed as an L-plan castle by order of the 10th Earl of Cassilis. He instructed the architect Robert Adam to rebuild a previous, but more basic, structure into a fine country house to be the seat of his earldom. The castle was built in stages between 1777 and 1792. It incorporates a large drum tower with a circular saloon inside (which overlooks the sea), a grand oval staircase and a suite of well-appointed apartments.

In 1945, the Kennedy family gave the castle and its grounds to the National Trust for Scotland (thus avoiding inheritance tax). In doing so, they stipulated that the apartment at the

top of the castle be given to General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower in recognition of his role as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during the Second World War. The General first visited Culzean Castle in 1946 and stayed there four times, including once while President of the United States.

After refreshments in the sun at the Home Farm Visitor Centre, which included ice cream and the odd glass of wine we boarded the bus around 1630 to return to Bathgate. A fabulous day was had by all.

Thanks to Irene Calder for organising this trip.

SPLENDOURS OF THE SUBCONTINENT



A group visit to this exhibition at The Queen's Gallery at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh was organised by Lesley Martin in April.

To keep costs down, we used public transport to get to Edinburgh, meeting at the entrance to

Holyrood for the one hour

tour.

In October 1875, the Prince of Wales set off on a four-month tour of the Indian Subcontinent, visiting over 21 localities, which today encompass India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal. Developed in collaboration with Cartwright Hall, Bradford, and

New Walk Museum & Art Gallery, Leicester, Splendours of the Subcontinent: A Prince's Tour of India tells the story of this grand tour through some of the finest Indian treasures from the Royal Collection that were presented to the Prince during his visit.

DAY TRIP TO PEEBLES WITH HIGH TEA

A coach trip to Peebles including high tea at a local hotel was organized on the 9th of June.

With river walks along the Tweed, museums and shopping, there was lots to do in this pretty Borders town.

Thanks to Lesley Martin for organizing this trip.



THEATRE VISITS



Committee member Sheila Linscer took on the role of organising theatre visits for the Network when she joined the committee in May 2107.

Since then she has arranged five outings: The Carpenters Story, Cabaret, Blood Brothers and Gilbert & Sullivan's HMS Pinafore, with Les Miserables still to come in February 2019!

There's no getting away from the fact that theatre visits can be expensive, especially for the popular musicals, even for matinee performances.

To diversify the offering, and hopefully find some cheaper alternatives, Sheila has started looking at plays rather than musicals (although there is one) for September onwards.

The following options were announced at the June Members Meeting:

Rain Man

Monday 1st to Saturday 6th October. Matinee on Wednesday, 3rd October in The King's Theatre. Cost £29 or £26 concession (Play)

Calendar Girls – The Musical

Tuesday 2nd until Saturday 13th October in the Festival Theatre. Possible matinee on Wednesday, 10th October. Cost £40 or £37 concession.

Macbeth

Tuesday 23rd to Saturday 27th October in the Festival Theatre. Thursday and Saturday matinees at a cost of £30 or £27 (concession) and £32 or £29.50 (concession) respectively. (Play)

Shakespeare in Love

Monday 12th to Saturday 17th November in King's Theatre. There is a matinee on Wednesday 14th November. Cost £30 or £27 (concession) (Play)

Sheila would love to hear from members, especially those who don't attend the monthly Saturday meetings, to find out what you would like to see.

If any of the above options appeal – or if there are other performances you would like to see - you can contact Sheila by e-mail on sheilaanne@hotmail.com or let Fiona know.

FOUR WALKS IN THE PEEBLES AREA

Heather Waddell is arranging an outing to Peebles for all walkers on 29th September.

There is a choice of walks in the Peebles area to suit a range of abilities, as follows:

A. Wander by the Tweed (approx. 2 miles)

B. The Sware Circuit (Distance 6.5 km/4 miles) Riverside walk. Undulations, tree roots

then returning by road climbing to a view point back to Peebles.

C. The Tweed Walk to Lyne (Distance 11 km/7 miles) Riverside walk.

Undulations, tree roots to Lyne. Returning same way or by Sware Circuit view point.

D. Innerleithen to Peebles (Distance 11 km/7 miles) The route is on the surfaced dismantled railway passing Cardrona.

This is a hard-surfaced, almost flat walk. Bring your bus pass.

There is now a waiting list except for Walk B which includes a steep incline.

Names to the office if you wish to go.

Cost £6.40.

Times to be confirmed



NETWORK HOLIDAYS



Members have been enquiring about Network holidays since holiday organizer par excellence Helen Orr's retirement from the Committee. At the first meeting of the new committee it was decided to set up a holiday group to plan new holidays. The new group includes not only committee members but also members who have organised group holidays in

the past –such as Heather Waddell and Alex Aitken - and Helen!

The group has now met and will shortly outline their plans for an Autumn break.

And taking on board your input from our Holiday Survey last year, the destination will be a location in Scotland.

CHINA VISIT

Jim Dixon is planning a Network visit to China towards the end of May 2019.

Sixteen members are required to make it worthwhile.

The trip is likely to cost between £1700 and £2000 depending on availability of flights.



MUSSELBURGH RACES

Are you feeling lucky? Lesley Martin is organizing a day at Musselburgh Race Course on Wednesday 29th August. First race 2.10 pm. Last race 5.10 pm. Admission to the race course £17 per person (discounted price) Public transport will be used to get there and back, to keep costs down.

Return train fare from Bathgate to Musselburgh is £4.20 (change trains at Waverley). If travelling by bus, there is a 5 – 10 minute walk to the race course. If travelling by train, there is a mini bus shuttle service from and to Musselburgh station to/from the race-course. Please give names to the

office by Tuesday 14th August.



NOTES FROM THE OFFICE: FIONA'S NEW PUPPY



Well hello again from a sunny office. I'm not sure what the weather will be like by the time this arrives to you, but it's been so lovely for the past few weeks – it's amazing how the sun can lift spirits and make everyone smile.

That's exactly what our new addition to our family has done for us. We now have a beautiful puppy called Ruby and she has melted our hearts and chewed my slippers, peed everywhere and started digging holes all around the garden – but my goodness, she is worth it. She is a bundle of fun and she's fantastic with the kids.

Charlie turned 7 in February and we had noticed that he was becoming more and more afraid of dogs. At one point he begged us to cross the road when he saw a lady coming towards us with a lovely big dog on a lead. We have wanted a dog for a long time but never thought that the time was right. We kept worrying (well I should really say I kept worrying) about how we would fit a wee pup into our lives. So, when we saw how scared Charlie was becoming we decided not to go on holiday this year and instead we should look for our fur baby (okay I know that's a bit much, but she is my fur baby)

So, after months and months of searching for

the right breeder – after trying all the rescue centres – we found Ruby and what a wee cutie she is.

We brought Ruby home and the kids didn't know anything about it at all. Marc and I were bursting with excitement for them finishing school. Marc went to pick them up and stopped them at the door to explain that there was a surprise inside and they had to be really quiet and calm. This was so special to me as it brought back memories of when I was little. My Mum and Dad brought our Benji home and I was introduced the exact same way. I will always remember my dad standing at the bottom of the driveway with a paper Rintoul's bag in his hand and asked me to be nice and quiet (which can be really hard for me as many of you will know.)

Watching the kid's faces when they first laid eyes on her was amazing. It makes me smile even as I am writing this.

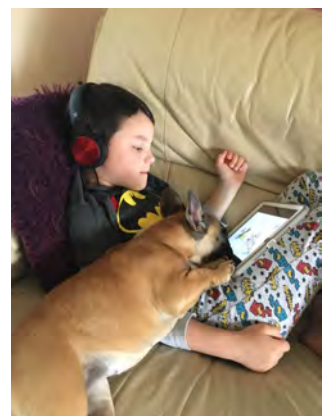
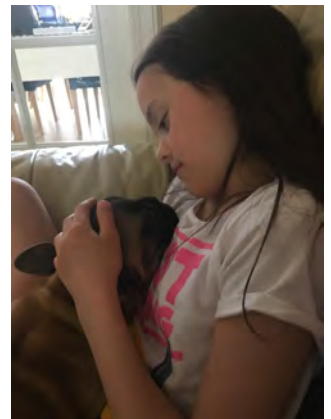
Amy was straight into Ruby's bed and curled up beside her as she was sleeping. Charlie was still very unsure, but he instantly fell in love and over the next few weeks he became braver and braver. So much so that now you would never think he was afraid in any way. The kids both adore Ruby and help to feed her,

clean her paws and even help with training her. She follows us all around like a wee shadow.

So that's our little family complete. Hopefully, once she's older, we can look forward to taking her on caravan holidays and lots of other adventures which I will be happy to share with your all.

There's not much to write about the happenings in the office this time, apart from us all being busy bees, as we always are.

Fiona Seenan



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Office Hours

Monday to Thursday 10am to 2pm
Friday to Sunday: Closed

We're on the Web!
[www.facebook.com/
WestLothian50PlusNetwork](http://www.facebook.com/WestLothian50PlusNetwork)

***Make the rest of your life
the best of your life***

The West Lothian 50+ Network is a group of active over-fifties run by members for members. We facilitate a wide range of physical, social, educational and cultural activities for our members, with the aim of keeping active in mind and body whilst combating social isolation. We meet monthly with an interesting speaker, offer over 30 special interest groups and run day trips, holidays, concerts, dinners and other events.

Started in May 1994, the Network is going from strength to strength and currently has around 400 members, some 50% of which live in Bathgate and the rest residing in towns across West Lothian.

Annual membership fee for 2018/2019: £17

We aim to produce **Network News** each quarter to keep our members up to date with what's happening in your Network. If you would like to contribute an article, or if there's anything you'd like to hear more about, please get in touch with the editor. The next issue will be at the end of September.

Editor: Sue Bedford-Visser
suebedford_visser@hotmail.com

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thrift Shop

Wednesday 15th August to Wednesday 22nd August.

St Mary's Hall

Craft Fayre – Saturday 20th October
Choir Carol Concert – Thursday 13th December
Christmas Party – Saturday 15th December

British Legion

Saturday Members Meetings:
Saturday 18th August
Saturday 15th September
Saturday 17th November

WW1 Commemorative Event

Friday 9th November

