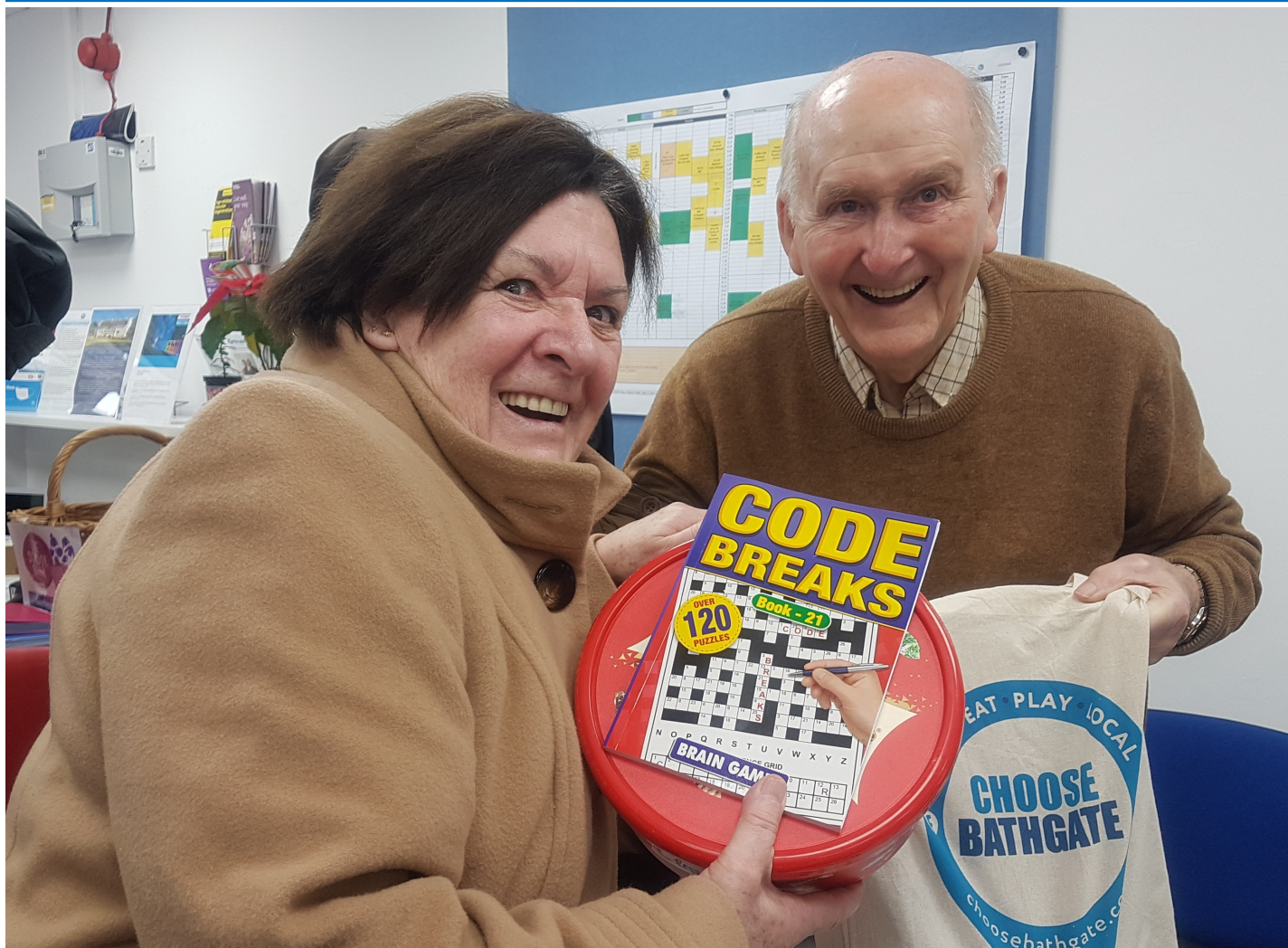


# Network News

March 2022



## It's Good To Be Back!

*It was standing room only at our first Members' Meeting this year, as members flocked to the Network's new premises in the centre of Bathgate.*

With a crowd-drawing talk by Bathgate councillor Harry Cartmill (more inside), on 19th February

members were once again able to meet to catch up with the latest Network news and with each other over tea and coffee. Not to mention our monthly raffle, a much-missed source of fun, as well as a fund-raising opportunity for the Network.

The bright and cheerful new space on Bathgate's pedestrian precinct is already attracting a number of Network groups as a location for their meetings. Of particular interest

is the ability to take advantage of the internal storage space for group equipment.

With eighteen groups already time-tabled to meet there, taking up slots into the evenings and week-ends, group leaders thinking about this as a venue should register their interest as soon as possible.

## Convenor's Foreword

*After a very mild winter, the gales, rain and snow of February came as a bit of a shock. I hope you and your families, and your homes and gardens, managed to stay safe.*

In the last newsletter we highlighted the upsurge in new members as more people reach out for friendship and companionship. This trend continues, and we now have 541 members (at end February). It's a key part of our overall plan to bring the benefits of Network membership to as many people as we can, and it's good to see the increase in membership paired with the opening of a number of new activity groups.

I'm sure you'll join me in welcoming our two new members of staff who are also integral to our growth. Many of you had the chance to meet Karen Stephen, our new manager, at our February members' meeting. Our new development office Cheryl Scott-Davidson, will soon be out and about, helping us to make new connections and develop new partnerships.

It's been fantastic finally seeing the work of the last few months in our new premises come together and to be able to welcome you into our new space. It's in quite high demand with 18 groups meeting there already, so get your bids in quickly if it's suitable for your group's needs.

We hadn't expected quite such a good turnout for our first members' meeting at 14 George Street. But it was standing room only for members of the committee as 100 of you

turned out to hear Harry Cartmill's Bathgate history talk - and perhaps to see what we'd done with the old Santander building. Many of you have told us you enjoyed the experience, though it's fair to say that it was a learning curve for us in managing a large meeting of this kind, and a few adjustments are planned for next time.

Thank you for bearing with us with our reduced opening hours since the start of the year and the frustration caused by our lack of access to broadband. Thankfully by the time you read this, we'll be fully connected and back to our normal opening times.

After the disappointment of having to cancel our Christmas event, we were blown away by Sky whose Communities Team provided 40 of our members with a fantastic surprise box of Christmas treats. Some of you have been asking what we did with the Christmas grant that we'd received from the council and you'll see on page 7 that we have been allowed to redeploy it to fund our Daffodil Tea.

As ever, we've many people to thank, both members and external supporters, for helping us get to where we are today. You can read more about some of the support we've had throughout the newsletter.

With Spring just around the corner, there's much to look forward to, not least in some of the events, trips and holidays we've got in store for you. We hope you enjoy them.

With best wishes to you all,  
Anne Webster



## Funding Update

*We are grateful to a number of supporters who have helped us to run our Network.*

A cheque for £500 was received at the end of February from Diageo Retirement Association, which will go towards our new PA system.

Linlithgow Roundtable have donated £500 towards costs for the refurbishment of our new George Street premises.

West Lothian Council provided funding for our stairlift from the Voluntary Organisations Modernisation and Improvement Fund 2021/22.

Howdens Bathgate generously donated the new kitchen which has been installed at our Hub.

A big thank you to Sky for their support at Christmas (see p. 15).

Thanks also to The Original Factory Shop Bathgate for their cheque for over £300 (see p.11).

And thanks to Co-op Whitburn for their continued support.

**THANK YOU**  
to all of our sponsors!



## New Premises Open

After a shaky start to 2022, thanks to the precautions around the Omicron variant, the Network opened its doors at 14 George St, Bathgate on 19th January and began to welcome some of our “early adopter” groups into the meeting space.

Following extensive consultation with group leaders in September, a great deal of work has been put in to refresh the tired décor of the former Santander Bank and shape the space to our needs. We’re grateful to a number of external sponsors who helped to fund these improvements, and to all who have lent a hand to expedite the work led by Willie Webster, committee member responsible for Property and Groups.

Plans for a full opening were knocked off kilter by the failure of our telecoms company to deliver on broadband, resulting in our staff still having to work partly from home until 1st March. Needless to say we have now changed our provider and are back to full speed (and normal opening hours).

The official opening which we had planned for mid January had to be postponed but the committee is working towards a new date in the summer. We'll keep you posted.



We love the new shelving unit which divides the space in our new premises.

Purpose built, the unit provides bright and attractive storage for our books and jigsaws, whilst giving privacy for groups which meet at the back of the room from activity in the reception area.

Even better, the unit is on castors and can easily be moved to open up the space for larger meetings and events.

Thanks to the members who came in to unpack and arrange all the books and jigsaws. If anyone would like to volunteer to keep on top of our book donations and keeping them in good order, we'd love to hear from you.

## Men's Group Open to New Members

*There are a few more places in the Network's Men's Group if anyone would like to join them.*

They meet on Tuesdays mornings at our Hub in Bathgate.

As the weather improves, the group will be getting out and about again.

In the past the men have enjoyed trips to a wide variety of places, including Scotland's Secret Bunker, Loch Lomond, the Transport Museum and Faslane.





## Bathgate's Hidden History

*It was a full house for local history buff Harry Cartmill's talk on Bathgate's Hidden History, and a great return for our February Members' Meeting in our new premises. For those unable to be at the meeting, we asked Harry to give a flavour of his talk, highlighting the connections to Bathgate of some key historical figures.*

"You'd be hard pressed now to find much trace of Bathgate Castle, its foundations obscured by the present-day 9th and 10th holes of Bathgate Golf Club, but it is integral to Bathgate's history, and plays no small part in our national Scottish history. The Castle was given to Walter, 6th High Steward of Scotland as a dowry upon his marriage to Robert the Bruce's daughter Marjory, a union that gave rise to the House of Stuart (originally Stewart), their son becoming the first Stuart monarch, King Robert II of Scotland. After Marjorie's untimely tragic death at the age of 19 from a horse-riding accident in Paisley, the future king spent much of his childhood at Bathgate Castle. Walter used the castle as his principal residence until his own death there aged only 34, probably from TB, in 1327, shortly after which the castle was abandoned.

Although there is no longer a kirk on the present-day Kirk Road, excavations around 1870 unearthed some stone coffins indicating there was once a small Chapel. It's speculation but, given that one "grand" burial was documented, this may have been the family chapel for Bathgate Castle and possibly the grave site of Walter. This next piece of hidden history explores Bathgate's connection to Charles Edward Stuart, one which may have altered the course of Scottish history. In 1746 the Bonnie Prince stayed in the grand Boghall House (sadly demolished around 1870) which was then located not far from the Starlaw Roundabout overlooking what



is now Tailend Nature Reserve. The house was owned by the Jacobite-sympathising family, the Norvels (still remembered in the naming of Novell Lodge in present-day Boghall). Over the three days the Prince spent with them, the Norvels provided him with food, lodgings and funds to continue the Jacobite cause. The Young Pretender's army camped en masse near Clinkin Stane Cottages which had a panoramic view of Boghall House. Without this opportunity to regroup and this crucial financial support, would the Prince have gone on to Glasgow, Falkirk and Stirling, eventually leading to his ultimate and sad defeat at Culloden?

An interesting thought.

The building on the Steelyard, now home to D'nisi's, Baguette Express and a barbers, was the long-forgotten Royal Hotel, an important stopping point for the daily Edinburgh – Glasgow stagecoaches. Robert Louis Stevenson lunched here in 1879, mentioning his visit in a letter to a friend. Anecdotally, other illustrious guests included Oscar Wilde and Charles Dickens, both of whom spent several months living in Edinburgh.

The name of the Steelyard itself is derived from the yard of steel which was the standard measure by which local weavers measured their cloth. The iconic McLagan drinking fountain now takes pride of place in this

meeting place for generations of Bathgate Bairns. It was presented to the town in 1878 to celebrate the opening of the Petershill reservoir by Elizabeth Anne McLagan, the wife of Peter McLagan, Scotland's first mixed race MP, landowner, shale mine operator, advocate of the Temperance cause and a champion of votes for women before the suffragette cause. It was initially sited at the top of Engine St, which was renamed George St and King St on the coronation of King George VI in 1937.

Bathgate's most famous son, Sir James Young Simpson, is rightly celebrated throughout the medical world because of his pioneering discoveries of the uses of the anaesthesia chloroform (famously used by Queen Victoria when giving birth to Prince Leopold). But another local man is often forgotten in the story. A contemporary of Simpson, Dr David Waldie was a native of Linlithgow who, in tandem with his medical studies, also studied chemistry. It was he, in fact, who presented chloroform to Simpson suggesting that this formula could be used as a medical anaesthetic. Before famously trying it out on friends at his home in George Street, Edinburgh, Simpson experimented using chloroform on the pigs that were kept behind the home of family friends, a house which still exists on Bathgate's Marjoribanks Street. "





## Stair Lift

*Well done Bill Collins for being the first to try out the new stair lift which was installed in our new premises in February!*

We're grateful to West Lothian Council who provided the funding for this important addition from the Voluntary Organisations Modernisation and Improvement Fund 2021/22.



## Treats for Daisy Drop In Kids

*It was disappointing to have to cancel our Christmas Tea event in December.*

But with the latest advice surrounding the Omicron variant, we felt we had no option but to once again "cancel Christmas".

But what to do with the treats that had already been bought in preparation for the event?

It was agreed to donate them to a children's centre. Here's Committee member Kath delivering cupcakes, clementines and chocolate reindeer to Laura Stewart at the Daisy Drop In, a family centre for pre-school children in Craigshill in Livingston.

## Network's Chosen Charity

*A reminder that West Lothian 50+ Network's chosen charity this year is The School Bank West Lothian.*

The volunteer-led charity aims to improve the lives of children in local families experiencing financial hardship by providing them with new and used school uniform, as well as other clothing and equipment such as school bags, PE kit, and stationery, required for the school day.

The Network can accept donations of new and used school clothing at the Hub for drop off to the School Bank.

The School Bank is also the Network's elected coin jar charity for this year so please remember to drop in your loose change when you call into the Hub.

*To find out more got to <https://schoolbank-westlothian.org/>*

## Conversational Spanish

*We are offering you the chance to take part in new Conversation Spanish sessions which will be run by tutor Kirsty.*

The sessions are planned to start from the end of May and will be offered in blocks of 6 weeks, at £5 per class, with the total cost of a block at £30.

Depending on the most popular choice of time, the group will meet on Mondays from 6-7pm or on Wednesdays from 4-5pm in our Bathgate premises. Places are limited, so don't miss out on booking your space.

## Gardening Group Reconvenes



*How good is it to see the days getting that bit longer! Nature is awakening, with Spring bulbs poking their heads through the ground and new growth appearing on the trees.*

What better time for Christine Barton to step up to take on the role as group leader for the Gardening Group? After a winter break the group reconvened at the Network's new premises on 14<sup>th</sup> February to start planning for the year ahead. The group is looking at group meetings, hands-on events and garden visits, the first of which is to see the magnificent display of snowdrops at the House of the Binns outside Linlithgow.

## Weekenders Afternoon Tea



Fourteen members from the Network's Weekenders group enjoyed a lovely afternoon tea together recently at Linlithgow Burgh Halls.

They laid on quite a spread for us, but we managed to do it justice!

## Dates and Speakers for Future Members' Meetings

**19th March** - Network event - Daffodil Tea - replaces Members' Meeting. Tickets must be pre-booked.

**16th April** - The Brock Centre - a Broxburn group supporting mental health through gardening and craft work

**21st May** - West Lothian Museums, Galleries and Archives  
Their work, projects and origins  
The May meeting is also the Network's Annual General Meeting

**18th June** - Steven Turnbull, West Lothian Foodbank

*Members' meetings take place on the third Saturday of the month in the Network's premises at 14 George St, Bathgate from 10:30am to 12 noon.*

*We look forward to seeing you there.*

## New Lunch Clubs

A new Lunch Club started in Livingston in February.

It plans to meet on the last Friday of each month in the Livingston Inn, Livingston Village, where a menu offering two courses for £9.95 is available.

The group size will have to be limited to 20 so get your names into the Hub quickly if you are interested.

We're also trying to get a new lunch club started in Bathgate. Let us know if this is something you are interested in and we will keep you posted.



## Daffodil Tea To Replace Cancelled Christmas Tea

*The Network will hold a Daffodil Tea on 19th March for our members. This is in lieu of our Christmas Tea event which had to be cancelled due to the restrictions surrounding the Omicron variant.*

We have permission from West Lothian Council to apply the funding we received from them for a Christmas event to this Spring event and therefore the Daffodil Tea will be free of charge to members. You must however apply for a ticket in advance so that we know how many to cater for.

**Tickets became available from Weds 2 March 2022 and are for one of two sessions.**

## Tea with Tracy

*Members of the Committee found time for coffee and cake with Tracy Kerr before she left her role as the Network's development officer to take up her new position at the Voluntary Sector Gateway.*

We wish Tracy every success for the future.



## Notice of AGM

*The 2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the West Lothian 50+ Network will take place on Saturday 21st May 2022 at the Network's premises at 14 George St, Bathgate EH48 1PW.*

Please note that your membership for 2022-2023 must be fully paid up in order to vote at the AGM.

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee of the Network, please submit your note of interest by 30th April 2022. You must have been a member for at least 12 months before becoming a Trustee.

## Singalong

*Would you like to be part of the new Singalong group?*

Tony and Allyson Murray invite you to come for a fun-filled couple of hours when you may discover you have hidden talents! Their aim is to brighten up your day. They are not looking for superstars - although you may be one!

It is a proven fact that singing with friends can lighten your mood. Not everyone will want to pick up a microphone. However, taking part and singing along with the group can be just as enjoyable.

Everyone can choose their old favourites, we have a range of music from Rock 'n' Roll to Country & Western and much more with a total of over 1,500 songs.

There will be a break for refreshments during the session, and while you enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, you can take part in a short music quiz.

The group meets in Bathgate on Thursdays, from 11.45 to 13.45.

## Winter Coach Trips

*The vagaries of the winter weather present a challenge when planning outings for a large number of members.*

Committee members Heather and Sue who plan the monthly coach trips aim to find destinations which have wide appeal, are able to accommodate up to 50 people, and which, in the first and last months of the year, provide an element of indoor activity.

### January's Trip to Abernyste and Perth

We think we hit the mark in January when 48 members set off on what turned out to be a very fine day indeed, to visit the Scottish Antiques & Art Centre at Abernyste near Perth. We hit a slight snag when the high winds in the morning caused the Queensferry Crossing to be closed, necessitating taking an alternative, longer route to Abernyste and shaving a good half hour off our first stop. The Antiques Centre with its wide selection of antiques, collectibles, vintage furniture, jewellery and art did not disappoint, with some members bringing home some souvenirs, earmarking the centre for a future visit. The Royal George Hotel – and our lunch – beckoned, so it was on to Perth where we enjoyed an excellent three course meal, the dessert choice being particularly memorable, including everyone's favourite, sticky toffee pudding. Luckily, we had a couple of hours of free time after lunch to explore the city, with some taking the chance to walk off their meal with a stroll along the river, whilst others hit the city centre shops. We returned in daylight, able to enjoy the scenery and setting sun across the lovely Perthshire countryside.



*The Royal George Hotel on the banks of the Tay in Perth*

### February's Trip to Glasgow

Our Art Lovers Day Trip to Glasgow, taking in three of the city's important galleries and museums, also proved to be a hit, with 37 members heading off on this tour.

First stop was the House for an Art Lover, the Charles Rennie Macintosh designed house situated in Bellahouston Park. The lavishly detailed interior designs are realised in breath-taking detail and a very knowledgeable and engaging guide interpreted the history, art and architecture of this fascinating museum. In the grounds is a Victorian walled garden, heritage centre and sculpture garden. Next on to The Riverside Transport Museum located on the banks of the River Clyde, crammed with every mode of transport, from vintage cars to locomotives.

You could even walk down an old cobbled Glasgow street with shops dating from 1895 to the 1980s as well as visit the 125 year old tall ship Glenlee moored on the Clyde behind the museum.

Our final visit of the day was to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum which houses one of Europe's great art collections. The scope of the museum is wide ranging.

The Life galleries represent natural history, human history and prehistory. The Expression galleries include the fine art collections. Further highlights are Rembrandt's 'Man in Armour', 'Christ and the Adulteress' by Titian and Salvador Dali's 'Christ of St John of the Cross'. The French Impressionists are well represented and Scottish art includes paintings by the Scottish Colourists and the Glasgow Boys.



*Inside the Riverside Transport Museum*



## Spring Coach Trips

*Following the suggestion by one of our members, **The Devil's Porridge Museum** will be the first stop on our coach trip on **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March**. After visiting the Museum we'll head down to **Dumfries** for some free time in the town.*

The Devil's Porridge Museum commemorates HM Factory Gretna. As a result of the lack of ammunition for British soldiers in France in May 1915, Lloyd George embarked on his greatest project HM Factory Gretna, a 9-mile site and the largest munitions factory in the world on the quiet Anglo-Scottish Border. Hundreds of chemists, explosive experts and some 12,000 females, predominantly young women were employed to manage the process from mixing the highly volatile 'devil's porridge' paste through to producing the finished cordite propellant, destined for the shell-filling factories. Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle coined the phrase 'the Devil's Porridge' after visiting as a War Correspondent and witnessing the Gretna Girls mixing this dangerous mixture. The museum explores the stories of the Solway Military Coast during the First and Second World Wars and beyond. We will have exclusive use of museum for 2 hrs, with introductory 10 min talk on coach if possible. The group will be divided into two, one looking around the ground floor whilst the other takes in the 1st floor, then vice versa. The cafe will be open. In the grounds outside are a locomotive, Anderson shelter and Dig for Victory garden. After our visit to the Museum, we'll



Scene from HM Factory Gretna

drive on to Dumfries where you'll have free time for lunch and the chance to visit this historic country town, famed for its connection with National Bard Robert Burns. Stroll down to the 15th century Devorgilla Bridge for a riverside walk, or get a bird's eye view of the town from the camera obscura in the tower of the nearby Dumfries Museum.

The cost of this trip is £20.50 which includes your entrance to the Devil's Porridge Museum.

*On Saturday 30 April our coach trip will head to the Borders for a guided visit of **Abbotsford House**, then take you to nearby **Melrose** for some free time.*

Abbotsford House was built by Sir Walter Scott in the 19th century as a family home, work space and private museum and his interests can be seen in the amazing gothic architecture and interiors jam-packed with fascinating curios, artefacts, books and stories galore. The house is stunningly located on the banks of the Tweed in the Scottish Borders.

It sits at the heart of the landscape that inspired the poetry and novels of its creator. Sir Walter Scott's imagination and creativity extended beyond the walls of his house into the outdoors and the creation of beautiful formal Regency gardens. After visiting Abbotsford we'll head for Melrose for free time to visit the Abbey, gardens, river walk, or other features of this attractive Borders town.

The cost of this trip is £27 which includes a guided tour of Abbotsford House.

**Booking from Weds 30 March 2022**

*We don't have all the details yet, but on **Saturday 28th May** we hope to take you down to **Seahouses** and **Bamburgh** for a day on the east coast.*

This is a fantastic time of year to spot wildlife off the coast on the nearby Farne Islands so we're looking at including options for boat trips.

Watch this space!





## New Mugs

There was lots to do in preparation for our first Members' Meeting in our new George St premises and one of the most important things was ensuring that you could all get a tea or coffee during the proceedings.

What do you think of our new branded mugs?



## The Enchanted Forest: October 2022

*We are now taking bookings for our coach trip to the Enchanted Forest in Pitlochry in October 2022.*

This will be a day trip, returning to Bathgate in the late evening.

The cost is £39, which includes the coach to Pitlochry and your transport and admission to the Enchanted Forest. There is the option for High Tea at Fishers Hotel at an additional cost of £16.

Please confirm your booking, either by payment in full, or with a £20 deposit, with the balance payable later in the year.

## Coffee Club's Late Christmas Lunch

*Livingston Coffee Club were determined to have their Christmas Lunch. It was very late, finally taking place in February, but worth the wait.*

Twenty members of the group enjoyed a three course meal at the Chain Runner pub.

They even had a Secret Santa which everyone enjoyed, including a booby prize - Pat Cozens was really happy with her Donald Trump toilet brush.!

Thank you to Christine Powell for the photographs and feedback.





## Thanks To Our Local Supporters

*Committee members Anne and Sue were delighted to collect a cheque towards Network funds from **The Original Factory Shop - Bathgate.***

The shop adopted the Network last year as their chosen charity, and presented us with a cheque for over £300.

Thanks to all involved in nominating the 50+ Network and in raising funds on our behalf.



*Anne and Sue at The Original Factory Shop in Bathgate*

## Scotmid Hamper

Long-standing member Alma Thomas was delighted to be the first draw in our raffle on 19th February, taking home with her the fantastic hamper of goodies donated by Scotmid Whitburn. We're grateful for all the support they have given us.

In fact there was a "take away" for everyone from our February's members' meeting thanks to Home Instead Livingston who donated a puzzle book for every member.



*Alma Thomas with her Scotmid hamper*

## Fabulous New Birthday Cards



*The Union Canal, Bridge 39 by Dougie Milne*

In January 2020 we collaborated with local photographer Dougie Milne Photography who kindly allowed us to use four of his images of West Lothian landscapes to produce a set of birthday cards for our members.

We're grateful that we've had these uplifting local scenes to send to our members throughout the year on their birthdays, another way of keeping in touch especially over the last two years when our normal ways of being together were disrupted.

Now Dougie has kindly agreed to us using four new images to replenish our stock of cards. They all depict beautiful local scenes which we are sure you will enjoy receiving when

your special day comes around. We especially love the tranquil scene taken from the towpath of the canal near Philpstoun, which captures two important aspects of West Lothian's heritage: the shale oil industry and the Union Canal, which was opened 200 years ago this year.

To see more of Dougie's beautiful photography, check out his online shop at <https://photo4me.com/profile/Dougiemilnephotography>



## The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

West Lothian is getting ready to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this summer.

A number of local events have been organised, and the county will also take part in national initiatives to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's record-breaking 70 years of service.

These include lighting of the Platinum Jubilee Beacons at Beecraigs Country Park on 2 June, when beacons will be lit throughout the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, UK Overseas Territories and Commonwealth countries.

West Lothian is also taking part in The Queen's Green Canopy initiative, to plant healthy native trees that will thrive, enhancing our environment and the landscape for generations to come. Nelson Park in Armadale has been designated for this, and work is progressing on an ancient woodland site at Calderwood Country Park. The council has also applied for an ancient tree in West Lothian to be designated as part of the canopy.

All schools will be closed on Friday, June 3, as part of the Platinum Jubilee weekend celebrations, and all council staff have been given an additional day of leave to enable as many people as possible the opportunity to take part in events.

The Museums Service is planning a Platinum Jubilee exhibition, which will tour around community museums spaces and partnership centres across West Lothian, as well as supporting community-based heritage projects, such as the Bennie Museum and Bathgate Community Council.

**Watch out for updates of what the Network is planning as part of the wider celebrations.**



## Help for Ukraine

*As the tragedy began to unfold in the Ukraine, Network members responded rapidly to do their bit to help.*

Hearing that the Edinburgh Ukraine Community had a truck leaving for Ukraine on 7th March, we put out an urgent appeal for donations to help fill it with items that are needed.

Your response was amazing. In a matter of days, we took in a staggering amount of goods, from sleeping bags to paracetamol. Thanks to everyone who donated.

A big thanks also go to the team who came in on the Saturday - Kath, Mike, Mary, Vanda, Liz and Kate - who sorted, bagged, boxed, labelled and stacked. With the sheer volume of goods, it took all day.

Then there were the Sunday drivers - Elma and Davie, Julie, Bob, Alex, Susan and Stephen and Maggie's daughter Michelle. They left Bathgate with their cars packed to the gunnels heading for Edinburgh. Thanks to all for their time and

generosity.

At the same time, we were planning a "Walk for Ukraine" for 14th March, walking a 7-mile route from Bathgate to Livingston in order to raise funds. Thanks to all the walkers who took part, including many in our 7 walking groups, but it was open to others who wanted to walk with us. At the time of going to press, before the walk, we had raised in the region of £1500.

All money raised will be sent to the Disasters Emergency Committee which brings together charities such as Cafod, Christian Aid, Save the Children, Oxfam, Age International, Tearfund and many others. The UK Government will match £ for £ up to £20 million donated by the public to the appeal, which will make a big difference to what we are able to raise and will make it all worthwhile.

**WALK  
FOR  
UKRAINE**



## Tesco Blue Tokens Reminder

*A reminder that the 50+ Network is in the Tesco Blue token vote in Bathgate, Broxburn and East Calder stores from January until 31st March.*



The Tesco Community Grants scheme helps to fund thousands of local projects across the country.

Since 2016 they've supported over 40,000 community groups with more than £90m in grants.

For a three month period customers can vote with a blue token for the project that they would like to receive funding in their local community.

**Please vote for the Network in Bathgate, Broxburn and East Calder until 31st March using the blue tokens issued at checkouts – every little helps!**

## Network Holiday : Bletchley Park and the National Memorial Arboretum

*So much of interest to see on this short holiday with lots of included extras. From our centrally located hotel we'll take you to visit a number of important sites of national and historic interest.*

### **Full Day: Bletchley Park with Afternoon Tea**

Step back in time to experience the stories of the extraordinary men and women who worked at Bletchley Park. Once the top-secret home of the World War Two code-breakers, this renowned heritage attraction attracts visitors from all over the world.

Immersive films, interactive displays and exhibitions set within beautifully restored historic buildings and carefully recreated WW2 rooms will guide visitors on a journey of discovery.

### **Includes afternoon tea in the iconic Mansion.**



### **Full Day: National Memorial Arboretum & Tamworth Castle**

Set within 150 acres, The National Memorial Arboretum is a very special place to visit. This national site of remembrance honours those who served and sacrificed, with over 400 memorials and gardens surrounded by 25,000 trees commemorating the armed forces, civilian organisations and voluntary bodies who have served our country.

### **Includes a land train tour with commentary.**

In the afternoon we take a step back in time at the 900 year old Tamworth Castle. **We take a guided tour** of the chambers and hallways of this unique building and get a sense of how the Saxons, Normans, Tudors and Victorians lived.

### **Includes refreshments after our tour.**

### **Full Day: Coventry & Royal Leamington Spa**

This morning we head to **Coventry**, City of Culture 2021 and home to the Commonwealth Games in 2022. There is something for everyone in this historic city, full of heritage and culture, museums and gardens. Coventry Cathedral, with the ruined original cathedral, bombed during WW2 standing next to the new cathedral. Coventry Transport Museum houses the largest publicly owned collection of British vehicles on the planet and tells the story of a city which changed the world through transport.

We head to **Royal Leamington Spa** in the afternoon. Tree lined avenues with Georgian and Victorian architecture, museums and beautiful gardens sum up this elegant town.

**Mon 22 Aug - Fri 26 Aug 2022**

**5 days/4 nights dinner bed & breakfast staying at the Jurys Inn, Hinckley**

**Price £339; Single Supplement £40**

**Deposit £50 from Wednesday 2 March 2022**

**Balance Due Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022**



## Welcome To Our New Manager

*We are delighted to welcome Karen Stephen, our newly appointed manager, to the Network. We asked Karen to tell us something about herself and what she brings to the Network.*

Karen has built several business platforms and continues to progress her colourful career. She has been the director and owner of a building company for over 34 years, an estate agency for over 13 years and a bathroom shop.

She was the former treasurer for West Lothian Holistic Health Group, a charitable organisation with venues at Strathbrock in Broxburn and St Margaret's School in Livingston. She worked in accounts for West Lothian Council, and was a Supervisor in Sky Television.

Karen has also trained in Clinical Massage and Reiki, and has a good knowledge of Hopi Candle and reflexology treatments.

Her passions and hobbies are Ceroc dancing, swimming, walking, socialising and theatre. She was also part of a team of Medium's standing platform at Howden Park Theatre.

## Games Group

*New member Pauline Copleston is the latest convert to Sudoku in the Games Group.*

Pauline, who says she had never really ever done a Sudoku before, is seen here completing the Sunday Times "very hard" prize sudoku.

Pauline said: "For the first few minutes the principle eluded me but it very quickly became an open book, a great mind exerciser and very satisfying finishing what I had previously thought of as an impossible task. I am looking forward to the next puzzle."

Not satisfied with completing this challenge, she then went on to start learning how to play "Mexican

Train" (up to 8 players) in preparation for this new game to the Games Group.

**If you'd like to take part in either of these or any of the other 39 games on offer at the group, contact the Hub and put your name forward. The Games Group meets on Thursday afternoons in the Members 'Hub.**



## Partnership Working

Network representatives were at the Bathgate Partnership Centre on 24th February as part of a wider promotion at the library.

We wanted to get out into the community and give people the opportunity to come along and have a chat about the wide range of

activities offered by the Network for people aged over 50.

Unfortunately it was one of the snowiest days of the year so far and was very quiet.

But it gave us our first chance to show off our smart new banners. Hope you like them.



Liz and Mary at the Bathgate Partnership Centre



## Sky's Amazing Gift Boxes

*It was smiles all round from the lucky Network members who found committee member Kath on their doorstep just before Christmas with a large box of gifts.*

Sky employees, co-ordinated by their Communities Team, donated 40 gift boxes for distribution to Network members. The membership number of every member of the 50+ Network was entered into a draw, with 40 lucky recipients being picked at random.

We were overwhelmed by the generosity of Sky employees. After receiving a phone call on 14th December to tell us to expect some gifts, engineers Ross and Ian arrived at our Members' Hub in two vans laden with Christmas gift boxes. They actually had to make two trips!

We are super grateful to the Communities Team at Sky who made it all happen, and to their charity partners, Age Scotland, who put the Network forward to receive some of their gifts this year.

We also received a £250 Love to Shop Gift Voucher to use however we wish - how amazing is that!

Thanks also to Kath, ably helped by her husband and son, who took on the task of delivering the boxes.



# Network News



## What is the West Lothian 50+ Network?

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.

Under normal circumstances we meet monthly with an interesting speaker, offer over 50 special interest groups and run day trips, holidays, concerts, dinners and other events.

### Limitation of Liability

West Lothian 50+ Network does not assess its members' fitness for participation in any of its various activities.

The decision about your fitness to undertake any activity lies within yourself, together with any medical advice you wish to take. It is your own responsibility to ensure your personal safety and that of your belongings.

## We want to hear from you

*Do you have a story you'd like to share with other members?*

Or an idea for a topic you'd like us to cover?

We'd love to know what you've been doing over the last few months.

Have you mastered the use of a new technology, taken up a new hobby, or found new places to visit?

Send us your stories and we'll aim to include them in the next issue of Network News.

## Membership Fees 2022-2023

*A reminder that Membership Fees are due from 1st April.*

The fee for 2022-2023 (1st April 2022—31st March 2023) is £20.

We have already started to accept fees for the coming year so you don't have to wait until 1st April.

We are asking everyone to complete a new Application Form to ensure that our records are up to date. If you are a UK tax payer, please tick the Gift Aid box which allows the Network to claim back 25 pence for every pound - at no cost to you.

## Contact West Lothian 50+ Network

14 George Street

Phone: 01506 635510

Bathgate

Email: [hub@westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk](mailto:hub@westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk)

EH48 1PW

Website: [www.westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk](http://www.westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk)

Open Mon– Fri, 10am to 2pm Facebook: [WestLothian50PlusNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/WestLothian50PlusNetwork)



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