



NETWORK NEWS

West Lothian 50+ Network

Autumn 2018

AULD AQUAINTANCE REKINDLED

The 25-year old friendship between West Lothian 50+ Network and Opportunities in Retirement (OIR) in Ayr was rekindled recently.

Committee members from West Lothian went on a day trip to Ayr to meet their counterparts at OIR, the organisation which provided inspiration for West Lothian's network some twenty five years ago.

After big changes to West Lothian's committee earlier this year, both groups were keen to get together to compare notes and share ideas as the organisations continue to grow.

Network convener Anne Webster, who instigated the meeting,

said: "Our friends in Ayr have been established for 32 years now and we learned a lot from them when our network was being set up. With over 1300 members and some 80 groups OIR are clearly still going strong. With so many new members on West Lothian's committee and a growing membership of around 400, we felt the time was right to rekindle the relationship and continue to share ideas."

The group from West Lothian were welcomed by the committee in Ayr at their office, then taken to a nearby hall for round table discussions over a sandwich lunch.

Jim Dixon, who was one of the West Lothian

group's founding members, reminisced about the early days of the network with an equally long-standing member of the Ayr group, as they recalled some of the overseas visits and holidays they had both been involved in.

After lunch the group attended an OIR members' meeting in Ayr Town Hall and were entertained by their guest speaker, Scottish writer and storyteller Jess Smith whose work focuses on her experiences as a Scottish traveller.

Anne Webster said: "We were made very welcome in Ayr and have come back from our learning journey with some new ideas and perspectives. I hope it won't be too long before we can return the hospitality".



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THRIFT SHOP SUCCESS

A big thank you from Kate Blake to all involved with this year's Thrift Shop which ran from 15th - 22nd August.

Whether you supported the shop by donating goods to sell, by helping set up or clear away afterwards or by helping to man the shop – it worked.

Through everyone's hard work and effort we raised a staggering £2121.48 after costs.

We sold bikes, cameras, china, shoes, hats and scarves - all flew off the shelves. We were a one-stop shop. We dressed a lady for a wedding and provided a man with a kitchen start-er kit for his daughter's first home.

The few items left did not go to waste. We donated the children's clothes to Kidzeco.

Other remaining goods were evenly distributed between local charity shops with the exception of some ladies clothing which was donated to 'Smart Works, a charity that provides high quality interview clothes, styling advice and interview training to women in need.

If you supported the shop and bought items to fill the spaces you had just cleared...take heart, you only need to keep them for 11 months more then you can feel great when you respond to our appeal for goods next year.



EDITORIAL

I don't know about you but as a keen walker and gardener I'm particularly aware of the changing seasons and the special things that each new season brings.

As we move from summer into autumn, members of the 50+ Network have lots to look forward to.

A big outing of the walkers to Peebles took place in September, and in October we'll have our annual coffee morning and craft fair.

In November we're joining forces with the British Legion to commemorate 100 years since the end of World War I, and later that month we're repeating our St Andrew's Day dinner - though with a change of venue this year.

Many groups have already booked their Christmas lunches - and with so much cross-over between groups, I hear a few are banding together for one big party. Yes, Christmas really is just around the corner - though, as the saying goes, to every thing there is a season - and so I don't like to see shops full of Christmas decorations before we've had Halloween and Bonfire Night.

What do you think?

Sue Bedford-Visser,

BUSY TIME FOR NETWORK SINGERS

The end of the year is going to be a very busy time for the Network Singers. Between now and Christmas this very active 50+ group is taking part in four different events.

On 9th November the group will be singing in the Bathgate British Legion as part of the WWI Commemorative Tea Party, and just a week later, on 16th November, they'll be singing to a group involved with the Cyrenians' OPAL (Older People Active Lives).

The group's annual Carol Concert (always a sell-out) follows on 13th December, and on 16th December they will be taking part in Carols in Kirkton Park. That all adds up to a lot of words to learn and sing!



The Network Singers are well established in the 50+ Network. They have been singing for nine years now and during that time have gone from strength to strength. Choir leader Vanda Collins said: "This is due mainly to our Music Director, Yvonne Drummond. Her enthusiasm, drive and energy keep us going. She manages to select songs which she knows we can cope with, even in two or three parts!"

Currently the choir has 30 members – 25 women and 5 men - and is open to new members. Vanda explained: "There is no audition for the choir and we encourage anyone interested in joining to come along and listen and see how we practice before committing themselves. We would really like to have more men in the choir. Their voices add a certain depth to our singing which is much appreciated."

"We meet every Thursday in the Answer Centre, Whitburn from 7 - 8.30pm. As well as singing to the best of our ability at these practices, we also have good fun. There is quite a lot of "banter" between Yvonne and the members. This makes our Thursday nights so enjoyable."

Every eighteen months the choir produce a concert with the Network Juniors, a young choir of about 25 school children, aged between 8 and 13 from the Armadale area.

Vanda said: "The children are great singers and actors and put on a Christmas show and a summer show each year. Some of our members assist Yvonne with the Junior practices which take place every Thursday afternoon. We have a very good rapport with the children".

Over the years the Network Singers have been supported by the 50+ Network committee, receiving help to successfully apply for Arts Grants which have funded the choir's sound system, microphones and stands and a recording machine.

Vanda said: "All these devices help improve the sound quality of the choir when we are singing in largish halls. We are very grateful to the committee for their continued support and assistance."

"Armadale Church Hall will now be our permanent venue for our future big concerts. Yvonne has improved the stage area and we are hoping to purchase lights for our shows."

If you are interested in joining the Network Singers, please give your name to the office who will pass it on to Vanda. Remember men in particular, your voices are needed!

AUGUST MEMBERS' MEETING

Pamela Knox-Welsh from Levenseat Waste Management Company was the guest speaker at our Members' meeting on 18th August.

Pamela gave an interesting presentation about the various methods of recycling used at Levenseat, including the conversion of waste to energy at their plant just outside Forth.

There was a lot of interest in the question and answer session after the talk and Pamela was able to give advice on domestic recycling and the role that Levenseat plays in conjunction with West Lothian Council.

Levenseat Trust is an approved body for the Scottish Landfill Community Fund. Amongst a wide range of other projects, they sponsor a local football team as well as working with schools, encouraging the next generation to be more aware of recycling.

The Network plans to organise a visit to Levenseat's operation for those who are interested.



SEPTEMBER MEMBERS' MEETING

We had a very special visitor at our September meeting.

Tessy, the Golden Retriever/Labrador cross puppy who is in training to become a guide dog, came along with her walkers Frances and Alex Kemp, who were our guest speakers. The couple have been involved with Guide Dogs, the largest breeder of working dogs in the world, since 2014, and Tessy is the fourth puppy they have taken on.

Alex explained that all puppies destined to become guide dogs are bred at the National Breeding Centre near Leamington Spa. At six weeks they are microchipped, health checked and assessed for their suitability to be a working dog before they are allocated to puppy walkers throughout the UK. There are currently 20 such walkers in West Lothian who play a vital role in the young dogs' training. This is a voluntary role but needs full commitment to ensure the puppy is house trained, sociable and obedient. Walking the puppy regularly is vital to familiarise it with streets and traffic noise, shopping malls, music, crowds and other distractions.

At 14 -16 months the puppy will progress to the more specific training it requires to become a working dog. Alex told the meeting: "It's an emotional wrench when the puppy is matched with its eventual owner and we have to say goodbye. But we go straight out and buy new toys and wait for our next puppy to arrive".

Alex explained that it costs £55,000 to train a puppy to become a guide dog – and some owners can have up to eight in their lifetime. With over 2 million people in the UK with visual impairment and no government funding for assistance dogs, Guide Dogs are continually looking for support from both individuals and organisations.



UPCOMING MEMBER'S MEETINGS

Our monthly members' meetings take place on the 3rd Saturday of every month at the Royal British Legion in Bathgate. Put these dates in your diary for the remainder of 2018 and the first 6 months of 2019.

2018

20 OCTOBER

Our annual Coffee Morning and Craft Fair replaces the usual Members' Meeting.

17 NOVEMBER

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

15 DECEMBER

Our Christmas Party replaces the usual Members' meeting and this year takes place in the British Legion.

2019

19 JANUARY

Our guest speaker is Jim Robertson who will speak to us of his life in the army, from his early life joining the army and his rise to Drum Major.

16 FEBRUARY

Members' update and social activity.

16 MARCH

Our guest speaker is Adam Fleming who manages Wyndford Farm Plants at Ecclesmachan, twice RHS Chelsea medal winners.

20 APRIL

Members' update and social activity.

18 MAY

Our guest speaker is Ruth McNamara on 'How the West wasn't won'. Ruth was a popular speaker when last she joined us in September 2017 and spoke of a 'Hollywood History of the World'.

15 JUNE

Members' update and social activity.

PHOTO:

Committee members Sue and Anne picking the apples which were available at the September meeting

ALL CHANGE?

The format of our Members' meeting has been unchanged for many years - guest speaker followed by tea and coffee, then updates on groups, holidays, outings, theatre trips etc, and finally the Network draw and raffle.

It had been suggested that members would like more social time, and so, for the first time at the September meeting, the order of proceedings was changed. Business matters were dealt with first, then the speaker, and finally tea and coffee and the raffle.

There are pros and cons with both formats. The new way means the speaker has to wait whilst we get through the announcements, though this did not seem to be a problem as it gave them longer to chat with members afterwards. But some members didn't want to wait so long for their cuppa - especially if they were going straight on to lunch after the meeting.

Of course there'll never be a format that suits everyone, so please continue to talk to committee members about what works for you. Nothing is set in stone and everyone is entitled to an opinion about what works - and what doesn't.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Cyrenians OPAL

A number of organisations play an important role in maintaining older people's independence and well-being.

One such service is that offered by Cyrenians OPAL (Older People, Active Lives) whose volunteers offer encouragement, companionship and support to help older people - typically aged over 60 - engage in social, leisure and community activities across West Lothian.

The 50+ Network is exploring how Cyrenians OPAL differs from the 50+ Network and is looking into ways in which our two organisations can work together.

The Cyrenians OPAL free service is funded through a collaboration with council and health services and is delivered by a team of trained volunteers who can provide one to one support for a period of up to 9 months. They offer support and encouragement to attend a variety of local groups/activities or events where they can meet new people. They can also offer support to build confidence again following bereavement, for example, or a stay in hospital.

One to one services are accessed via a referral process however no referral is required to attend an activity group.

Telephone Befriending/Support - This service provides a friendly weekly call, helping to share experiences, enjoy a chat and develop a trusting relationship through conversation.

Accompaniment / introduction to local groups or social activities

- A volunteer can help to identify groups/activities or events available in the local area that may be of interest. The volunteer may also offer accompaniment to build confidence to attend alone.

One-to-one support to build confidence / Befriending

- One to one support is offered when assistance is required to rebuild confidence with a specific task, aim or goal. This could be after a fall or hospitalisation, recent bereavement or support to use public transport independently again. This can help connect you again with your local community, meet new people and get out and about. A befriending service for the housebound is also available.

Groups – there are a variety of regular local groups across West Lothian providing a welcoming and relaxed way of getting to know people locally in a friendly setting, sharing hobbies and interests.

Find out more:

Tel: 01506 815 815

Email opal@cyrenians.scot

Macular Society

Bathgate Support Group

A new support group for those affected by central vision loss has started up in Bathgate.

Jamie Cuthbertson from the Macular Society called into the 50+ office to leave some information about the new group's monthly meetings which will take place on the fourth Thursday of each month (except December, July and August) from 1-3 pm at the Bathgate British Legion.

Macular conditions cause more than half of all blindness in Britain. Being diagnosed with macular disease can leave you and your family feeling isolated and uncertain about the future. The Macular Society is a national charity which provides free information and support to improve the lives of those affected.

Local groups are run by volunteers, most of whom have macular disease or know someone who has a macular condition, and offer support and help in understanding macular disease and coming to terms with sight loss. They often share information about obtaining treatment, other services and staying independent. Anyone with central vision loss, their family and friends are welcome to attend.

For further information, contact

Jamie Cuthbertson

Tel: 0141 942 1083

Email at jamie.c@macularsociety.org

Macular Society

Support groups

Macular conditions can cause loss of central vision. Our support groups are there so that no one has to face macular disease alone.



ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE

The number of over 50s in the UK suffering from loneliness is set to reach two million by 2025/6 - a 49% increase in 10 years – according to a new report by Age UK.

Published in September, “All the Lonely People: Loneliness amongst Older People” shows that the proportion of older people who are lonely has remained relatively constant but that the numbers of older people are rising fast.

Over the last decade around one in every twelve older people say they ‘often’ feel lonely. Age UK warns that if this continues, huge numbers of people are on course to experience loneliness in later life, because our population is ageing. This should be a major public health concern because if loneliness is not addressed it can become chronic, seriously affecting people’s health and well-being.

The death of a loved one or the onset of illness and disability are more common trigger points among older people. The risk of being often lonely is dramatically higher among those people who are widowed, do not have someone to open up to, or are in poor health. Age UK

found that the over 50s are over five times more likely to be ‘often lonely’ if they are widowed compared with older people who are in a relationship, and nearly four times more likely to be ‘often lonely’ if they are in poor health compared with older people who are in good or excellent health. It also found older people are more than twice as likely to be ‘often lonely’ if they have money issues, compared with those who don’t.

Because loneliness occurs when people’s ability to engage with others is inhibited, helping people cope with and overcome these feelings can require more than just offering them social activities.

The Government is soon to publish a Loneliness Strategy. Hopefully it will provide resources so that the provision of a range of joined up local services can be funded to help to prevent and address loneliness. A genuinely cross-Government approach is essential because so many different elements need to be taken into account, including the availability of local transport and social care. The Government cannot ‘solve loneliness’ on its own, but it can ensure the foundations are in place so all of us can play our part, as neighbours, relatives, friends, employers and volunteers.



Convener Anne Webster represented the Network at the recent Silver Sunday event in Whitburn, one of hundreds of events taking place across the UK that bring together local organisations that are helping to combat isolation amongst older people.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

The West Lothian 50+ Network does not assess its members’ fitness for participation in any of its various activities. The decision for your fitness to undertake any activity lies within yourself, together with any medical advice you may wish to take.

It is your own responsibility to ensure your personal safety and that of your belongings.

GET ON BOARD WITH THE WEEKENDERS

Boat trips are popular with members of the Network's Weekenders group which has now grown to include almost 50 members.

On 9th September they followed up their previous trip on the Union Canal with a repeat visit to the Bridge Inn at Ratho.

And on 16th September the group took another boat trip on the Forth, this time taking in the Three Bridges (rail, Queensferry and road bridges). This time the group took the option to go ashore on Inchcolm Island and visit the island's historic Abbey – one of the best-preserved group of monastic buildings in Scotland.

As with the previous trip the weather was inclement (last time it snowed!) but as one intrepid member of the party remarked, this added to the sense of adventure!

Music and theatre are also popular with Weekenders members with the Oran Mor theatre in Glasgow's West End rapidly becoming a firm favourite.

Closer to home, at the end of September eight Weekenders had a rocking good night at Howden Park Centre listening to Magic's two for one show featuring the music of ELO and Queen. Although seated, more than a few showed they would be more than capable of strutting their stuff on any available dance floor. Just a few days later they were back for the Viva Neil Diamond tribute show.



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.

OUT AND ABOUT WITH THE MEN'S GROUP

The Network's Men's group enjoyed a visit to Summerlee in **August**, known as the Museum of Scottish Industrial Life. Situated on a 20 acre site in Coatbridge, an important centre within Scotland's 'industrial heartland', this 4 star visitor centre is built on the site of the old Summerlee Ironworks, and incorporated the main workshop of the former Hydrocon Crane factory.

The group's **September** outing was to the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum on the west side of Glasgow, travelling by train and underground.

One of Scotland's most popular free attractions, the museum has 22 themed, state-of-the-art galleries displaying some 8,000 objects, in an architectural masterpiece of a building.

The next group outing will be on Wednesday 17th **October** when a visit to the Military Museum Scotland in Wilkieston is planned.

If interested please give your name to the office.



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



HOW MANY GROUPS ARE YOU IN?

With almost 40 different interest groups under the 50+ Network's banner, group membership is clearly a very important part of the Network's offering.

In September an analysis was undertaken of group involvement across our 395 strong membership:

- ◆ 3 members are in 7 groups
- ◆ 14 members are in 6 groups
- ◆ 7 members are in 5 groups
- ◆ 14 members are in 4 groups
- ◆ 54 members are in 3 groups
- ◆ 92 members are in 2 groups
- ◆ 134 members are in 1 group

I always knew I'd get old. How fast it happened was a bit of a surprise, though.

NEW DRAMA GROUP

Tony Murray told members at the meeting on 18th August that an Amateur Dramatics (Am-Dram) group is to be set up under his leadership.

If you are interested, please put your name into the office.

**SING? DANCE?
ACT?
AM-
DRAM**
IS THE SOCIETY FOR YOU!

UKULELE GROUP

The new Ukulele group is going from strength to strength under the leadership of Eileen Lander.

"The group are already sounding great," said Eileen, "and should soon be ready to perform at one of the Network's events".

Here we see the Ukulele group members at one of their fortnightly meetings at Rosemount Court in Bathgate.



NEW MEMBERS SOUGHT

A number of groups are actively seeking new members.

If any of the following appeal, please make contact via the office.

Book & Blether
Bowling
Bridge
French Café
Jewellery
Monday Stitchers
Network Choir
Rummikub
Lunch Club
Coffee Club
Supper Club
Mens Group
Italian
Ukulele
Weekenders



ANOTHER FIVE YEARS FOR BATHGATE'S BID

Businesses in Bathgate have voted for another five years of the town's Business Improvement District (BID).

The result of the Business Improvement District ballot was announced on 23 August, with approximately 85% of the 195 local businesses who took part voting in favour of the BID status continuing for a third term.

In advance of the ballot Enterprising Bathgate published their business plan for 2018 - 2023, headlining projects such as the Premises Improvement Scheme, Bathgate in Bloom and the upgraded CCTV initiative.

Bathgate was the first Business Improvement District in Scotland when it was established in Spring 2008.

The 50+ Network is delighted that Bathgate BID will continue for a further five years.

Network convener Anne Webster said: "The result highlights the overwhelming support among local businesses for the work that has been undertaken in Bathgate during the past ten years through the BID."



"The BID aims to deliver improvements in Bathgate that will ensure the town continues to prosper."

"Our Network has benefited from the BID in the past, and we are pleased to sponsor a hanging basket again next year as part of the Bathgate in Bloom initiative."

Sam Crawford of Enterprising Bathgate commented on the outcome of the ballot: "The team at Enterprising Bathgate is delighted with the level of support received in the recent ballot. We always envisaged the BID model as a long term initiative to continue to improve our town centre".

"We would also like to thank the 50+ Network for their continued support and we look forward to working with you for years to come."



Enterprising Bathgate has recently funded the purchase and installation of two public access defibrillators in Bathgate town centre.

COUNCILLORS' DISBURSEMENT FUNDS

Like many local organisations, the 50+ Network welcomes small pockets of grant aid such as the Councillors' Local Disbursement Fund - a boon to help support community activities.

Each year we contact all 33 of West Lothian's elected members to request support through disbursement funding.

We are grateful this financial year for the support we have received so far from Cllrs Harry Cartmill, Charles Kennedy and John McGinty

(Bathgate), Kirsteen Sullivan (Whitburn and Blackburn), Pauline Clark (Fauldhouse and Breich Valley) and Sara King (Armadale and Blackridge) who have included the 50+ Network in the groups they support with the funds at their disposal.

Some 50% of our members live in Bathgate, with the remaining 50% in towns and villages across the wider West Lothian area.

Many of our groups depend on small grants that assist in purchasing equipment, supporting travel and hiring

premises. Indeed the recent trip to Peebles that brought together members from across all six of our walking groups happened because of a transport subsidy.

It's therefore concerning to read that a proposal to remove or reduce the Councillors' Local Disbursement Fund is amongst the potential additional savings measures included in the council's Revenue Budget Strategy 2018/19 - 2022/23 which will be put to the Partnership and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 5 October.

FUND RAISE WHILE YOU SHOP

With so many of our members now shopping online, there's a fantastic opportunity to raise funds for the Network whilst we shop - at no extra cost. With this in mind, we've recently added the 50+ Network to the list of charities that can be supported through the easyfundraising website.

Simply go onto the easyfundraising website before you shop online, register and select the 50+ Network as the charity you wish to support. Then choose the shopping site you want and when you have finished shopping you are told how much you have raised for your charity. Asda, Amazon, E-Bay, etc are all linked to the website – in fact easyfundraising has over 3,200 retailers linked with it.

With Christmas just around the corner we could raise quite a lot of money by shopping this way it and it costs nothing to do so.



GIFT AID BOOSTS NETWORK FUNDS

Have you signed up for Gift Aid? If you are a UK taxpayer this will allow the Network to raise substantial additional revenue from your membership fee – at no extra cost to you.

We're constantly looking for ways to boost Network funds and are registered as a charity with HM Revenue and Customs under the Gift Aid scheme – an income tax relief scheme designed to benefit charities.

If you're a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid increases the value of your charity donations by 25%, because the

charity can reclaim the basic rate of tax on your donation – in this case, your membership fee.

How does this work? When a UK taxpayer gifts money to a charity, such as through a membership fee, tax has already been paid on that money. Because you are exempt from tax, we can claim this money back from HMRC.

As a charity, in real terms this means that the Network can claim back from the government on your behalf 25p for every £1 donated via your membership fee, boosting its value by a quarter.

To illustrate how valuable this is to the Network, we are currently awaiting a cheque for £886 from HMRC for this year's claim.

Currently just over half of our members support us through Gift Aid - you can check at the office whether you have already signed up. And if your circumstances have changed and you no longer pay tax, please let us know.

Remember - agreeing to donate through Gift Aid is at no additional cost to you. Your assistance in ensuring continuing revenue from this funding stream is much appreciated.

COFFEE MORNING AND CRAFT FAIR

Our 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. Later

we'll be putting a call out to those who love baking to lend a hand too.

We would also appreciate donations for a hamper which will be raffled and items for a tombola stall.

Put the date in your diary - and remember that friends and family are all welcome.

10.30am-12.30. Tickets £3



WWI COMMEMORATIVE AFTERNOON TEA PARTY

2018 marks 100 years since the end of the First World War and to mark this the 50+ Network are hosting a joint commemorative event with the British Legion, to be held in the Legion on Friday 9th November from 2-4pm.

Members of the community who may not have much opportunity to attend such functions have been invited, with invitations sent to the residential/care homes, sheltered housing complexes and day care centres in Bathgate asking if 5 residents/members from each would like to attend. The Lord Lieutenant of West Lothian and the Leader of the Council have both agreed to attend.

The Legion are providing the catering for this free event and 50+ Network members are providing the entertainment. The Network Choir will sing songs which were popular during WWI, and two members will read letters sent between husbands and wives or sweethearts during the war. There will be a short talk about what was happening in West Lothian (mainly Bangour Hospital) and the afternoon will finish with community singing of popular well-known songs of the time.

Those attending the Afternoon Tea have been asked to bring along items of memorabilia that they would like to share with the rest of the company. This applies to any 50+ members who will be there.

Once we know how many of our invited guests will be attending we will be able to allocate tickets to 50+ members and Veterans of the Legion. We will keep you informed of the availability of tickets which then can be collected from the office on a first come first served basis.

ST ANDREW'S NIGHT DINNER

The Network will hold its St Andrew's Night Dinner this year on Thursday 29th November.

The venue is Bathgate Golf Club, starting at 6 for 6.30pm.

Singer Mark Mulgrew has been booked to entertain us and there's room for dancing.

Tickets are now on sale at the office, at £25 each which includes a three course meal and coffee.



AFTERNOON TEA AT THE SIGNET LIBRARY by Mary Ferrie

On my retirement from the 50+ committee I was kindly gifted a champagne afternoon tea for two at the Colonnades in the Signet Library, Edinburgh. What a privilege!

But it brought its problems: who to invite to join me? In the end, after much thought and worry about who I might huff in the process, I decided to invite my two daughters and my daughter-in-law. An almost happy solution, but I still huffed my son and my best friend!

Well, afternoon tea turned out to be so special! As you enter the library, you are faced with tables with mirror tops, beautifully laid with porcelain, silver and crystal.

The room itself is a revelation: alcoves lined with books; tall columns round the room with golden tops flaring up to a gilt balcony again lined with books for the lawyers of Edinburgh to stroll around seeking the august volumes they would require for their research. Now I'm sure all the research will be done on the Internet but the romance of it remains in the Signet Library.

Now to the food and drink – a glass of very expensive champagne drunk from the flat champagne glasses we used to see in old films. Threasa, my daughter-in-law, announced that the design of these were apparently based on a particular part of Josephine Bonaparte's anatomy – well she was not well endowed we all agreed!

Then came the tea – eight

different exotic types to choose from - before the eating commenced.

First an amuse bouche, Thai sweet potato soup served in tiny coffee cups – delicious.

Then appeared a beautiful silver cake stand with the savouries: ham, pea and truffle pie, salmon and beetroot meringue, sweetcorn and chorizo quiche, smoked mozzarella panna cotta, venison kofta, harissa grains and tzatziki, summer vegetable Wellington, green Thai chicken mayonnaise sandwich, smoked applewood and tomato chutney sandwich. These were all in miniature, but really were works of art.

After polishing them off, the stands were cleared away and another brought with the sweets and scones: lime posset, mango macaroon, bramble mousse, strawberry and basil tart, apricot and pistachio pin wheel, matcha tea Battenburg, and freshly made fruit and plain scones served with clotted cream and jam.

We did our level best to eat everything, but despite this, doggie bags were handed round.

Just as we agreed that we could face no more food, the waitress came with a raspberry sorbet to clean our palettes. It would have been rude to not to eat it, so we duly stuffed it down!

It was a wonderful experience which I wanted to share with you and to thank you all again for your kind gift.



Mary with her daughters Laura and Kim, and daughter-in-law Threasa

TECH HELP

Are you struggling with email? Perhaps you are unsure how to download photos from your phone. Or maybe you want to find out how to shop online, sort out the files and folders on your PC, set up online banking or join your friends on facebook?

Our tech help sessions (formerly known as Tablet Training) have started up again after the summer break and take place in the 50+ Network office on Tuesday afternoons.

Volunteers will give you one-to-one help with the things that are holding you back from getting the best out of your laptop, phone or tablet.

Get in touch with the office if you'd like to put your name on the list.



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

PLANNING AHEAD - DO YOU NEED A POWER OF ATTORNEY?

One person in the UK develops dementia every three minutes. Yet don't assume relatives can just walk into a bank and access your money, even if it is to pay for your care. Unless you've a Power of Attorney already in place, loved ones would need to apply through the court, which can be a long and costly process.

50+ Network Committee member Allan Dungavel, who volunteers for the Citizens Advice Bureau, summarises what a Power of Attorney entails and how to go about setting one up.

Many of us have drawn up a will setting out how our affairs should be settled in the event of our death. However, few of us have put in place what should happen if we became unable to manage our own affairs after becoming incapacitated either physically or mentally. One remedy is to draw up a Power of Attorney (POA).

What is a Power of Attorney?

It's a registered legal document that allows a person nominated by you to deal with your financial affairs and make decisions about your personal welfare, at the point where you are unable to make these decisions yourself or simply if you believe it is more appropriate for another person to deal with your affairs as you get older.

Reassuringly, if you sign a POA you do not need to hand over your affairs to the nominated person immediately. You can and should continue to make your own decisions for as long as possible. Yet the POA is available to your family immediately when needed.

Why do you need a POA?

If you lose the capacity to manage your affairs and there is no power of attorney in place, it may be very difficult (and often impossible) for banks, doctors and social workers to co-operate

with family members in your best interests. Without a POA they may not be able to act on your behalf without legal authority, even if you are their partner or close relative. They will need to take further steps, for example making an application to the sheriff court for an intervener or guardian to be appointed. This can be an expensive and lengthy process.

When should you think about making a POA and how do you do it?

Ideally everyone would think about making a POA as an insurance policy, in the hope that it will never be needed, or, in any event, long before it is likely to be needed.

The steps you need to take to put a POA in place are:

- * Ask your solicitor for advice;
- * Decide who you want to be your attorney;
- * Decide what powers to give your attorney;
- * Arrange for your POA to be drafted;
- * Sign your POA in the presence of a solicitor registered to practice in Scotland or a registered and licenced medical doctor;
- * Arrange for the necessary documentation (including your draft POA) and fee to be sent to the Office of the Public Guardian.

The Office of the Public Guardian will:

- * Register the POA if it is legally valid;
- * Send the certificate of registration and copy of the POA to the person who submitted it.

Types of POA

There are three types of POA that can be used to manage someone's affairs. A POA must be worded in

such a way that it is clear which type of power of POA is being granted.

The three types are:

* **Continuing POA** – This allows the attorney to take care of your day-to-day finances, and (depending on the exact wording of the POA) do things like pay bills, deal with your bank accounts, collect benefits and money payable to you, and buy or sell property. If the POA is only to be used in the event of your incapacity, it must clearly state that the powers are not to be used until this happens. A statement can be included about who should make the decision about your incapacity.

* **Welfare POA** - This allows the attorney to make decisions on your behalf about your personal welfare. This can include decisions about care arrangements, where you live, your clothes, diet and leisure activities; and giving or withholding consent to your medical treatment. These powers can only be used when you stop being able to look after yourself because of incapacity.

* **Combined welfare and continuing powers.** This includes both welfare and financial powers. The financial powers can be effective immediately. They will remain in place even if you subsequently become incapable of managing your own affairs. The welfare powers can be used only if you have become incapable of managing your own welfare.

Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian Tel: 01506 436132

Office of the Public Guardian (Scotland) Tel: 01324 678300

Law Society of Scotland General Enquiries Tel: 0131 226 7411

West Lothian Council Advice Shop Tel: 01506 283000

A DAY AT THE RACES

An excellent afternoon in August at Musselburgh Racecourse for members of the 50+ Network.

The sun shone, fish suppers and ice creams were delicious and we all got plenty of exercise trotting backwards and forwards from the paddock to the track for each of the seven races.

In spite of studying form, selecting horses based on their names, colour or physique, there were sadly no big wins, but all in all it was a great day out.



PEEBLES WALKS

Forty eight members from the 50+ Network's six walking groups took part in walks in and around Peebles on 29th September.

The weather stayed bright and breezy throughout and, whether walking 2, 4 or 7 miles, everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy their day out.

The coach left Bathgate at 9.30 in the morning and set off for the return journey at 4pm so there was plenty of time after the walk to enjoy the shops and eating various establishments in the town.

TRAQUAIR HOUSE VISIT

A coach trip to Traquair House in Innerleithen has been arranged for Sunday 25th November. With the house decorated for Christmas and craft stalls throughout the house, the trip quickly proved to be a sell out.

Traquair is Scotland's oldest inhabited house. Visited by 27 Scottish Kings and Queens, Traquair dates back to 1107 and has been lived in by the Stuart family since 1491.

A Brewery Tour and Ale Tasting will be available for an additional fee payable on the day.

The bus will leave at 9.30 a.m. from the Bathgate Partnership Centre.



Because of the popularity of the Traquair trip and a sizeable waiting list, we are considering putting on a second bus on Saturday 24th November.

The cost of the Saturday trip would be £10 but this is for the coach only and will not include the lunch which is included on the Sunday trip. Food will however be available to purchase separately at Traquair.

If you are interested in this supplementary trip, please contact the office urgently so that a decision can be made on the viability of a second trip.

RETURN TRIP TO EDINBURGH GIN

A return visit to Edinburgh Gin in central Edinburgh has been arranged for 18th December.

There are 20 places available. Two one-hour tours will take place followed by a gin drink served in the cosy atmosphere of the distillery.

Members wishing to go should give their names and the £10 ticket price to the office. Transport will be by train to Haymarket.

Edinburgh Gin is a small-batch, award-winning Scottish gin distillery inspired by Edinburgh's gin-making heritage and its spirit of innovation.



CHINESE ARTS AND CULTURE FESTIVAL BY MARY FERRIE

Every year Jim Dixon, who is well in at the Chinese Embassy, manages to get us free tickets for the Chinese festival.

This year was no different: there were tickets available for the Chinese Youth Art Festival on the Friday night, 3rd August, and the main festival on 4th and 5th August, all in the Edinburgh International Conference Centre. Apparently, the children's festival had been wonderful – I missed it.

Then I heard that the Shenzhen Children's Orchestra, and the China Performing Arts on the 4th had been wonderful – I missed it. I did manage to go on the 5th August to see the Beijing Modern Dance Company and the Hou Ying Dance Theatre.

Well, it was fabulous to see the artistry of these dancers and to

admire their skill and suppleness; however, each of the two acts lasted an hour and a half, and you can get too much of a good thing!

I don't mean to sound ungrateful, Jim, and I'll probably be the first to be looking for free tickets next year, but, this year, enough was more than enough.

However, being an optimist, I'll look forward to next year!



THEATRE VISITS

Tickets for the Beauty and the Beast pantomime have been booked for 9th January at 2pm at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh.

The cost is £20.50, and the seats are in the upper circle. Booking for this show opened on Tuesday 18th September in the office.

In March next year we are considering booking for Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat at the Playhouse in Edinburgh between 19th and 23rd March 2019.

NETWORK BACK ON THE WEB

A new website to promote the 50+ Network is underway.

Although still a work in progress, the new website is now “live” online and keeps the same URL (address) as before.

Details are still being brought up to date but one of the key differences is that we will be able to do updates ourselves instead of having to rely on a third party.

The project is led by committee member Sue Bedford-Visser.

The aim is that the website, along with our facebook page, will promote the activities of the 50+ Network and help keep our members informed whilst raising an awareness of the Network and attracting new members.

www.westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk



HOLIDAY TO LIVERPOOL

Network members and their friends have the opportunity to have a short holiday in Liverpool in the early New Year.

The coach will leave Bathgate on 21st January for 5 days/ 4 nights at a cost of £189 with a single supplement of £60.

Accommodation is at the Adelphi Hotel in central Liverpool. With half board included, this holiday represents excellent value for money.

The full itinerary is still to be confirmed with travel providers Glentons, but is likely to include visits to Southport and a National Trust property.

There are still places available. Any members interested in going to Liverpool should give their names to the office with their £20 deposit.



WALKING HOLIDAY TO MALLORCA

Walkers who have been on one of Heather Waddell's previous successful walking holidays to Spain will be delighted to hear that she is organising another walking holiday in 2019.

This time the walkers will be heading to Mallorca, the largest of the Balearic Islands.

The 8 day holiday will leave on 9th May 2019 from Edinburgh.

The price of £729 includes half board and 3 guided walks. Single supplement £100. Deposit £125.

More information and booking forms from the 50+ office and at the monthly members meeting on 17th November.

Heather will be in the office on Tuesday 27th November to collect deposit cheques and completed booking forms.

NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

The Network is delighted to welcome Tracy Kerr, our new office assistant.

Hopefully some of you will have had the chance to meet Tracy, already but for those of you who haven't, Tracy sent in this short piece about herself.

"I am delighted to join the 50 Plus Network working alongside Fiona and have already had the warmest welcome from everyone I have met so far. "

"Not too far away from 50 myself, I have two sons. Matthew who is 20 and studying at Stirling University and Andrew (15) who has just started S4 at high school - it's a big year for him with his first exams next May.

The other boy I have at home is my husband Mikey who will very shortly be celebrating his 50th birthday and will be getting a membership form in his birthday card!

I previously worked for a pensions company but chose to leave five years ago to take care of Andrew's health needs as he has Type I diabetes.

Alongside this, I've been volunteering with Macmillan Information Services in West Lothian, which I love and will continue to do when I'm not in the 50 Plus Network office.

My weekends are filled with taking Andrew to his football

games, walking and meeting up with friends. And yes maybe the occasional glass of wine!!

I really look forward to meeting all of you in the office over the next few months.



COMMITTEE WORKING

Four months in, and the "new" committee is settling in and gaining in confidence.

We've had a lot to learn as many of us took on new roles, and we're still learning. There's

more goes on behind the scenes to run a thriving Network like the 50 Plus than meets the eye.

We've made a few changes - some of which may be more

or less popular depending on your point of view, but hopefully the changes will help to take the Network forward.

We aim to take on board your views and make changes where necessary that reflect your feedback.

Generally speaking we aim to streamline our activities, save money, improve efficiency and generate new funding streams for the Network, whilst improving services for our members.

We meet as a Committee every second week on Tuesday mornings, so if there's anything you wish to suggest or bring forward for discussion please let us know.



West Lothian 50+ Network

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Phone: 01506 635510

Email: wlothian50plus@btconnect.com
Facebook: [WestLothian50PlusNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/WestLothian50PlusNetwork)

Office Hours

Monday to Thursday 10am to 2pm

Friday to Sunday: Closed

We're on the Web!
www.westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk

***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 almost 40 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: £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.

Editor: Sue Bedford-Visser
suebedford_visser@hotmail.com

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Coffee Morning & Craft Fair – Saturday 20th October

WW1 Commemorative Event - Friday 9th November

Members Meeting - Saturday 17th November

Traquair House Trip - Sunday 25th November

St Andrew's Night Dinner - Thurs 29th November

Kristmas Crackers Concert, Network Singers Choir –

Thursday 13th December

Network Christmas Party – Saturday 15th December

Edinburgh Gin Trip - Tuesday 18th December

Pantomime Theatre Trip - Beauty and the Beast -

Weds 9th January 2019

Liverpool Holiday - 21st to 25th January 2019

Theatre Trip - Les Miserables - Weds 13th Feb 2019



Scottish Charity No SC024257