

CHEESY HAM AND POTATO HASH

Heat the oven to 180 ° C, Gas 4 then spray a dish with low-cal cooking spray.

Mix 600g of peeled and sliced potatoes, 2 sliced leeks, 200g shredded cabbage and 400g lean ham (visible fat removed) cut into chunks, in the dish and spread out.

Mix 200ml chicken stock, 2 crushed garlic cloves and 2tsp dried parsley.

Pour mixture over the vegetables and ham and add a bay leaf and season to taste.

Sprinkle on 110g grated reduced-fat cheddar.

Cover with foil and bake for 30-40 mins.

Remove foil and bake for 20-25 mins, spooning the stock mixture over now and again until the potatoes are tender.

Serve with salad.

Submitted by Helen Orr



CRAFT FAIR - SATURDAY 21ST OCTOBER

We had a most successful Craft Fair and Coffee Morning in St Mary's Hall at the end of October. 130 attended and you could have heard the noise down the street. Many members put a lot of hard work into this event. The baking stall made £136.90, the craft stall made £289.78, the cards made £42.70 and the Crafts for Enjoyment stall made £46.60.

The hamper raffle (won by Sheila Scott) drew £242.00). The wine raffle (won by Anne Webster and Bill Collins) drew £37.00. The quilt raffle (won by Maureen Wheelan) drew £172.00, £100 of which went back to the makers (the Quilting Group) to cover the cost of the materials. In all, we made a total profit, less the hire of the hall, of £1159.46. Hard work, but well



worth it.

In fact, this was such a pleasurable occasion I wonder if we shouldn't consider having it twice a year instead of a speaker. Feedback on this would be appreciated.

Mary Ferrie



JOKE OF THE DAY

I made my girls wishes come true when we got married in a castle. Though you wouldn't have thought it from her face as we were bouncing around.

Anon

WEE STORIES

This is the story of
Wullie Kelly,
Pit his fit through his
Grannies telly
Jist because she pit his
Wellie,
oot the windie cos it
was smelly.

This is the story of
Wullie Brodie
Killt his Granny and
burnt her body
Telt the polis he's lost
control
Jist because he wis
short o' coal

For Xmas he bought
her a tombstone
She bought him one
back pretty fast
He wrote - here lies my
wife, cold as usual
She wrote - here lies
my man stiff at last



AWAY AHEAD OF THE EXPERTS

A recent study by Independent Age charity and the International Longevity Centre found that nearly one million elderly British men are living in isolation – a number set to soar in the coming years. Experts have found that older men are far less likely than women to have contact with the outside world.

Interestingly, the new evidence suggests that men and women experience social isolation and loneliness in different ways. “In general, men rely more heavily on their partner to remain socially connected. When their partner dies, often a man’s social life shrinks.”

Experts call on the Health Service, GP’s and other statutory bodies to identify those at risk; they also ask voluntary bodies to develop low-cost innovations to encourage older men to support each other through the creation of clubs and other social programmes.

Well, are we, or are we not, well ahead of the experts??

Jim Dixon has been doing that very thing. He formed our men’s group in July 2017 following a survey of male members. To date the group has met for monthly outings:

July - Edinburgh Botanic Gardens

August - Dawyk Gardens, Peebles

September – Glasgow Botanic Gardens

October – Riverside Transport Museum, Glasgow.

November - Scottish National Museum.

December - Christmas Lunch

Jim’s approach is very democratic, in that he gets the group together to discuss their interests and, bearing these in mind, plans future visits.

Mary Ferrie

TABLET TRAINING

Our wonderful Tablet Training Buddies have been working very hard to get through all the members that originally requested to get training.

They have now, very kindly, offered us even more of their time which means that we can fit more people in.

So, if you fancy a little tuition on how to use your tablet, please get in touch and we will add you onto our list.

We are able to offer one to one tuition for 4 sessions (across 4 weeks). The classes are based in the office in Bathgate every Tuesday afternoon. If you don’t have a tablet you may borrow one from WL50+ until you get your own.

WHEN WE WERE WEE

Prams Were Substantial.

When I were a nipper they made prams from the subframes of Morris Minors. You wouldn't get yummy mummies jogging along with these. You needed the biceps of Geoff Capes to push one of them.



You Learned About Danger

Borough council playgrounds would make your modern Health and Safety officer weep into their clipboard, but they taught you about danger. After one of your limbs got crushed in the Witch's Hat, you never did it again.



When you had a dog

When you were old enough, he was there as a mate. Albeit, A mate who liked sniffing his friends backsides and relieving himself on street corners.



Getting In Trouble

Back then they didn't give you an ASBO, they gave you a thick ear and you soon learned not to sit next to the trouble-makers.....except for Humpty.



OFFICE HOURS OVER CHRISTMAS

**The office will be
closed from 23rd
December and will
reopen on Monday 8th
January 2018.**



A VISIT FROM NICHOLAS

'Twas the night before
Christmas, when all
through the houses

Not a creature was
stirring, not even the
mouses;

The stockings were hung
in the office with care

In the hopes that St.
Nicholas soon would be
there;

The Committee were
nestled all snug in their
chairs

Discussing the 50+
weighty affairs;

Judith at the table, a file
on her lap

The others were settled for
a long winter nap,

When out in the lane there
arose such a clatter,

Ellen sprang from her
chair to see what was the
matter.

Away to the window she
flew like a flash

Tore open the blind and
threw up the sash.

The Legion was busy, its
light was aglow

And shone like the moon
on the new fallen snow.

When what to her
wondering eyes should
appear,

But a miniature sleigh,
and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so
lively and quick,

She knew in a moment it
must be St. Nick.,

More rapid than eagles his
coursers they came,

And he whistled, and
shouted, and called them
by name.

Now Dasher! Now Dancer!
Now Prancer and Vixen!

On, Comet! On Cupid! On
Donner and Blitzen!

So up to the house-top the
coursers they flew,

With the sleigh full of
bags, and St Nicholas too.

Ellen drew in her head,
and turning around,

Down the chimney St.
Nicholas came with a
bound.

He wore a long dress and
he carried a bag

And clearly resembled Bill
Collins in drag.

His eyes – how they
twinkled! His dimples how
merry!

His cheeks were like roses,
his nose like a cherry!

His droll little mouth was
drawn up like a bow,

And the beard of his chin
was as white as the snow;

He had a broad face and a
little round belly,

That shook when he
laughed, like a bowlful of
jelly.

With a wink of his eye, and
a twist of his head,

I'm going to sing you a
ditty he said.

And if you consider my
ditty is witty

I hope you'll invite me to
join the Committee.

He sang and he worked
filling all the nice socks

With forms from the
Council all wrapped in a
box

Then he sprang to his
sleigh, to his team gave a
whistle,

And away they all flew like
the down of a thistle.

But we heard him exclaim
as he drove out sight

Happy Christmas to all
and to all good-night!

(Apologies to Clement
Clarke Moore)

AS OLD AS YOU FEEL

Jim Dixon pulled this off
the Internet. Is he trying
to tell us something?

“Old is when”...

Your sweetie says “Let’s go
upstairs and make love.”
And you answer, “Pick
one, I can’t do both!”

Your friends compliment
you on your new alligator
shoes - and you’re
barefoot.

A sexy lady catches your
fancy, and your
pacemaker opens the
garage door.

Going Bra-less pulls all the
wrinkles out of your face.

You don’t care where your
spouse goes, as long as
you don’t have to go along.

“Getting a little action”
means I don’t need to take
any fibre today.

You are cautioned to slow
down by the doctor
instead of the police.

“Getting lucky” means you
find your car in the car
park.

An “all-nighter” means not
getting up to pee.

MEMBERS FEEDBACK

Dear Helen and helpers,

Again, our many thanks for a super wee holiday - from Alnwick to Newcastle ad Durham - all has been good. We've learned more about Tyneside and its friendly people - we've also made 2 new friends and it seems everyone has enjoyed the trip.

We hope to be "baa-ac" and we've certainly not been "fleeced"!

Hope you've enjoyed the break too and once again the research and work involved has paid off. Here's to the next time and more power to your elbow(s)!

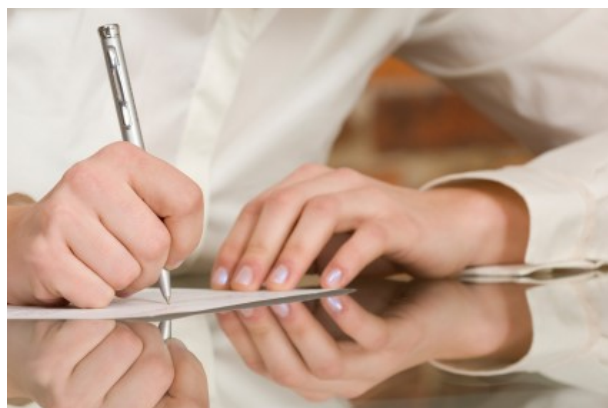
Take care and keep well. -Love Morag and Bertha x

Dear Committee

I don't think that the Christmas party has been dealt with fairly. As well as grants, funding for the party etc is raised through our members fund raising efforts. If we are to continue to adopt an inclusive attitude to these, then everybody should be given the opportunity to attend. I suggest that if a larger venue cannot be found, there should be 2 parties (as other organisations have to do).

I fear that we may become a victim of our own success as an organisation and lose the feeling that it belongs to us all.

Margaret Higgins



Dear Margaret

Margaret, we, as a Committee, appreciate your comments, and agree that, on this occasion, we have handled the distribution of the tickets badly. The damage, however, is done for this year. New year we may well consider running two parties.

DISCUSSION

Margaret has raised a more important point: Have we become a victim of our own success? And are we beginning to lose the feeling that the organisation belongs to us?

I hope not. However, each year the question arises: Should we cap our numbers? So far, we've decided against this as it would be hard to turn away anyone who is feeling lonely and isolated. Surely that is why we're here.

The discussion is open, and I hope members will write in and let us know their views.

The Committee

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Just a reminder that annual membership fees are due in January £17 as ever.

THEATRE VISITS

We have had 2 very successful theatre visits to see the Carpenters Story and Cabaret at the Playhouse. Our next offerings are:

Blood Brothers by Willie Russell takes place at the Playhouse in Edinburgh on 7th March at 2:30pm. Ticket prices are now confirmed however are dependent on the number attending. At the moment the price is £31.90 per ticket. If more than 10 tickets are sold, the price will come down a bit and we will refund the difference. The closing date for this is Thursday 18th January so names and money to the office.



HMS Pinafore (Gilbert & Sullivan) is booked for Saturday 24th March at the Kings in Edinburgh. The showing is at 2:30pm. Tickets are £19 each. The closing date for this will be Thursday 21st December.



Sheila Linscer

SOCIAL ISOLATION

Social isolation is the buzz word for Government, Council, and Charities. May we offer this wee song as their theme tune?

ARE YOU LONESOME TONIGHT?

Are you lonesome tonight?	Are your tights full of ladders?
Is your girdle too tight?	Your shoes wearing thin?
Is your brassiere falling apart?	Do you hold up your pants with a big safety pin?
Is your scraggy old chest	
Sticking out through your vest?	With no teeth you can't yawn,
Do you feel you've been left in the dark?	Is your glamour all gone?
	It's no wonder you're lonesome tonight.

Join the 50+ Network and you won't be lonesome again.

Mary Ferrie

MY FAVOURITE THINGS REVISITED.

Recognising she's not as young as she once was, Julie Andrews has re-issued her hit of yesteryear, "My Favourite Things", to appeal to the Saga generation. OK then, sing along now...

Zantac and Prozac and needles for knitting.

Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings.

Bundles of Hello mags tied up with string.

These are a few of my favourite things.

Cataracts and stairlifts, hearing aids and glasses.

Polydent, Fixodent and false teeth in glasses.

Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings.

These are a few of my favourite things.

When the pipes leak, when the bones creak, when the knees go bad.

I simply remember my favourite things. And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets, and corn pads for bunions.

No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions.

Bathrobes and heat pads and hot meals they bring.

These are a few of my favourite things.

Back pains, confused brains, and no fear of sinning.

Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinning.

And we won't mention our short shrunken frames .

When we remember our favourite things.

When the joints ache, when the hips break, when the eyes grow dim.

Then I remember the great life I've had - and then I don't feel - so bad

Jim Dixon



GENUINE CLIPS FROM COUNCIL COMPLAINT LETTERS

- My bush is really overgrown round the front and my back passage has fungus growing in it!
- It's the dogs mess that I find hard to swallow.
- I want some repairs done to my cooker as it has backfired and burnt my knob off.
- I wish to complain that my father hurt his ankle very badly when he put his foot in the hole in his back passage.
- I wish to report that tiles are missing from the outside toilet roof. I think it was bad wind the other night that blew them off.
- My lavatory seat is cracked, where do I stand?
- I am writing this on behalf of my sink, which is coming away from the wall.
- Will you please send someone to mend the garden path. My wife tripped and fell on it yesterday and now she is pregnant.
- I request permission to remove my drawers in the kitchen.
- 50% of the walls are damp, 50% have crumbling plaster and 50% are plain filthy.
- I am still having problems with smoke in my new drawers.
- The toilet is blocked and we cannot bath the children until it is cleared.
- Will you please send a man to look at my water, it is a funny colour and not fit to drink.
- Our lavatory seat is broken in half and is now in three pieces.
- The man next door has a large erection in the back garden, which is unsightly and dangerous.
- Our kitchen floor is damp. We have two children and would like a third so please send someone round to do something about it.
- I am a single woman living in a downstairs flat and would you please do something about the noise made by the man on top of me every night.
- Please send a man with the right tool to finish the job and satisfy my wife.
- I have had the clerk of works down on the floor six times but I still have no satisfaction.
- This is to let you know that our lavatory seat is broke and we can't get BBC2.

THE NEW ALPHABET

A's for arthritis,
B's the bad back,
C's the chest pains,
Perhaps car-d-iac?
D is for dental decay and decline,
E is for eyesight - can't read that top line!
F is for fissures and fluid retention,
G is for gas which I'd rather not mention.
H high blood pressure - I'd rather it low,
I for incisions with scars you can show.
J is for joints - out of socket - won't mend,
K is for knees that crack when they bend.
L's for libido - what happened to sex?
M is for memory, I forget what comes next.
N is neuralgia, in nerves way down low,
O is for osteo, bones that don't grow.
P for prescriptions, I have quite a few, just give me a pill and I'll be good as new!
Q is for queasy, is it fatal or flu?
R is for reflux, one meal turn to two.
S is for sleepless nights, counting my fears,
T is for Tinnitus; bells in my ears!
U is for urinary; troubles with flow;
V for vertigo, that's 'dizzy', you know.
W for worry, now what's going 'round?
X is for X ray, and what might be found.
Y for another year I'm left here behind,
Z is for zest I still have - in my mind.



OPAL SERVICE



The Cyrenians have an OPAL SERVICE. No, it's nothing to do with fruit sweeties; it stands for Older People, Active Lives. Its aim is very similar to our own: to help increase social integration and combat loneliness in people over the age of 60 in West Lothian. They describe their service as group delivery and are looking for volunteers to help with their groups.

They want people of any age and level of experience to meet with groups, support with activity delivery, encourage attendees to join in - and have a good blether with everyone who comes along. If you are interested and want to find out more please phone on 01506 815815 or e-mail opal@cyrenians.scot

THE WEEKENDERS - A WEEKEND ACTIVITY GROUP

Looking for something to do at the weekends? Help may be at hand.

At the members' meeting on Saturday 18th November, the Convenor announced that there had been requests for a group that would meet at the weekends and a show of hands indicated that there were many interested in such a group. This group would be open to anyone at a loose end at the weekend or anyone who can't partake in the many other activities on offer by the Network due to other commitments. We can look at activities both planned (there has already been some excellent suggestions) and on an ad hoc/spur of the moment basis such as just meeting for coffee, for a walk or visit to the cinema. We thought it would be best if we had a planning meeting sometime in January/early February 2018 when all the Christmas festivities are over to discuss what direction the group should go in and how we would go about organising activities and their frequency.

If you would like to be part of this group and attend the first planning meeting, please either give your name to Fiona by either visiting the office, phoning or by e-mailing wlothian50plus@btconnect.com by Thursday 11th January and we will get back to you with a date by e-mail or phone

Allan Dungavel

Sheila Linscer

Lesley Martin

ADVICE TO LIVE BY

You know you are
getting old when
everything either dries
up or leaks!

Anon

When you are
dissatisfied and want to
go back to your youth -
remember Algebra!

Anon

Old people have one
advantage compared
with young ones. They
have been young
themselves and young
people haven't been old.

Lord Longford

You know you are
getting old when you
have more fingers than
real teeth.

Rodney Dangerfield

Old age is like waiting in
the departure lounge of
life. Fortunately we are
in Britain and the train is
bound to be late.

Milton Shulman



A NEW TEACHER

Can you cast your mind back to
your first days at Primary School?
Yes, I know it wasn't yesterday!
Recently we were discussing how
clever we were, as many of us
spoke broad Scots at home and in
the playground, but, suddenly
when we went into school, we
managed to change register and
speak the King's English (yes it
was the king's in those days!)

This brought to mind this poem
by Jim Douglas; I'm sure you will
have heard it before but it is well
worth another airing., I'm sure
it'll help cheer you up.

IS A DOO A DOVE DAD

Is a dove a doo, Dad?

Is a doo a dove?

Is a coo a cow, Dad?

A sparrow just a spyug?

And is a wall a waw, Dad?

Is a dog a dug?

She's gonna warm ma ear Dad!!!

Instead o' skelp ma lug.

Ma teacher's awfy posh Dad.

She changes aw oor names,

Wee Shuggie is now Hugh, Dad,

And Jimmy's ayeways James.

I'm scunnered wi' it aw, Dad.

The wey she shoogles words.

Ah must be glaikit no' tae ken

That feathered friends are burds.

Ye learnt me it aw wrong Dad!!!

Ye calld a ball, a baw.

Yur wife is now my mother, Dad!!!

You said it wis ma maw.

Ah'm no shure hoot ae spell, Dad.

Ah'll never pass the test.

Whit is this ah'm wearin', Dad?

A simmet or a vest?

Ah gave ma nose a blaw, Dad.

When it began tae dreep.

She gave me such a fright, Dad.

A nearly filled ma breeks.

Do you have a hankerchief!!!

She roared as if in pain.

No, a jist use ma sleeve, Miss.

And wiped ma nose again.,

Ah cawd a mouse a moose, Dad.

Ah shud hiv help ma tongue.

That's manure on your boots,
Dad,

Nae longer is it dung.

It's turnips and potatoes, Dad.

No tatties noo or neeps.

She said I'd ripped ma trousers,
Dad,

When I'd only torn ma breeks.

There's twa words fur awthn' Dad,

They've jumbled up ma heid.

How can I be well bred, Dad?

When ah keep sayin' breed.

Now is a crow a craw Dad.

Is a bull a bul.

Ah'll try tae get it richt, Dad.

I will, I will, ah wull.

Jim Douglas

ST ANDREWS NIGHT DINNER



If St. Andrew were to come back, he would have said: the best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agley!!!

After all Helen's careful organisation, and Elaine and Ian's efforts to bring the entertainment, the hall was – in modern parlance – Baltic!! If anyone who attended caught a chill, will you sue the Fairway and not us?!!

The meal was fine, in fact it was quite good, but the service could have given Faulty Towers a run for its money.

Bill gave his opening remarks at 6.30 pm prompt, grace was said, and then we waited, and we waited, and we waited. Half an hour later the starter appeared. However, the first table served had finished before the last table was served! What could we do? There were only two young and very pleasant lassies serving for a company of 80! Not to put too fine a point on it, the meal dragged on to 9 o'clock, and the entertainment finally got started at 9.10 pm.

Stephen Quigg of the McCalmans was in fact very talented and hugely entertaining, and almost made us forget the fact that there were icicles dripping from some noses – mine included.

Ah well, we live and learn.

Mary Ferrie

BANK TRANSFER

As you know, you can now pay your annual membership fee by bank transfer. However you MUST make sure that when you fill in the details on your computer screen, that you put your name in the 'Reference' box. If you omit to do this, we will not be able to identify who the payment is from.

HA HA HA!

'Hello, hello! Is that Bathgate police station?' came the anxious voice.

'Yes, sir, it is.'

'Do you have any reports of lunatics escaping near here, officer?'

'Not that I know of, sir. Why are you asking?'

'Someone's run off wi ma wife!'

An excited man dialled 999.

'Quick, quick come quick,' he shouted, 'ma wife's havin' a baby!'

'Is this her first child?' Asked the operator.

'Naw, ya twit, this is her husband!'

An older lady in Whitburn went to see the doctor, complaining of a pain in her foot.

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

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

The key to successful ageing is to pay as little attention to it as possible.

Judith Reagan

There is no pleasure worth foregoing just for another three years in the geriatric ward.

John Mortimer

Memorial services are the cocktail parties of the geriatric set.

Harold Macmillan

Early to rise and early to bed makes a man healthy wealthy and dead.

James Thurber.

The instructions on my new deodorant say: Remove cap and push up bottom. I did. Now I can hardly walk, but when I pass wind it smells of gardenia.

Anon

If you wake up in the morning, then you're ahead for the day.

Mace Neufield

You can't turn back the clock, but you can wind it up again.

Bonnie Pudden

Never pass a bathroom.

Duke of Edinburgh

Live your life and forget your age.

Norman Peale



WEST LOTHIAN FINANCIAL INCLUSION NETWORK

When Caring Ends - What Now?

WLFIN have a new group supporting ex carers. When the caring role ends, the ex-carer faces financial and emotional isolation. The

group aims to reduce isolation, increase confidence and also help those who are of working age attain employability skills.

There will be free organised weekly meetings/sessions covering a range of topics chosen by the attendees.

There will also be the opportunity to access digital inclusion using a tablet to keep in touch with family and friends, learn how to do this safely and gain confidence and skills in using the internet.

For working age attendees, the opportunity to access employability support held in a group or individually.

To assist with the financial burdens there will be welfare and benefit advice and also budgeting classes and sessions.

Anyone requiring further information please contact

Evelyn Ralston

Project Worker

When Caring Ends

WILFIN

www.wlfin.org.uk

01501 771775



West Lothian

Financial Inclusion Network

A FERVENT PRAYER

Now I lay me down to sleep,

I pay the Lord my shape to keep.

Please no wrinkles. Please no bags.

Please lift my bum before it sags.

Please no age spots. Please no grey.

As for my belly, please take it away.

Please keep me healthy. Please keep me young.

Thank you dear Lord for all you have done.

FRENCH FOR BEGINNERS



My “Beginners French Class” has been running now for over 3 years and I have had great support for this class both from the committee and from members who have attended the class over the years.

Some members have attended the class for a considerable period of time and have left to be replaced by new members.

The aim of the class was to give a basic understanding of the French language without making it a “school” French class. My teaching method is slightly unorthodox as I try (as best I can) to keep away from grammar. There is no particular lessons as such, so it is not necessary to attend every class. Generally I tailor each class based on which members turn up on any particular week.

There is no homework and it is not necessary that members of my class take notes, although many of my students do take notes.

The focus of the class is on usage of the language based on understanding the rules of the language and pronunciation of the language and by repetition.

I use various methods of teaching within the class:

- Rules and pronunciation
- Translation of simple sentences
- Reading of simple sentences
- Translation of aural sentences
- Flash cards – English to French and French to English
- Reading simple French (Janet and John type) books

I approach the class in a particularly light hearted way and my students always seem to keep me on my toes.

I am always looking for other ways to present the French language to my students so that they can learn in a fun way. Our classes are not serious and we have lots of fun – but we do learn French.

I must say that I have had a great time teaching this class and I look forward to continuing with it and would welcome any new members who have some French and want to brush up their French.

At the beginning of this year I did run a “complete beginners” French class for those members who had no French at all or perhaps had taken French at school but had not used it since.

Although this class was quite successful and a few of the students who came to that class are now in the “Beginners French” class, I found that a 30 minute class was not enough.

However, I am prepared to run this “complete beginners” again if there is enough interest but this time I would want to run it for 1 hour before the “Beginners Class” starts.

So, if you would like to learn French, or if you want to refresh your French from your school days, please give your details to Fiona at the office and I will contact you to discuss this new class.

But what do my students think?

“I am very much enjoying the class which has given me the chance to resurrect my school French.”

It is a relaxed friendly class and also a great way to make new friends with others in the 50+ Network”

Joyce Walker

“I’ve been attending the weekly Beginners French Class for a couple of months now and, to my amazement and delight the French I learned at school is coming back to me.

Alex is a fantastic teacher with lots of patience, and the class is so much fun that I look forward to going every week.

Learning a different language is a great workout for the brain!”

Carol Wilson

“Alex manages to withstand our sometimes bizarre attempts at answers and ignores our blatant stage whispering answers to other peoples’ questions (because as we all know It’s easier to answer other people’s questions). He keeps our enthusiasm in the class by creating a friendly and helpful atmosphere alongside presenting interesting and challenging teaching materials.”

Catherine Blake

“I have been a member of the French class for a long time and have thoroughly enjoyed attending each week. Alex makes the class fun and the time passes so quickly. He doesn’t make me feel bad when I make a mistake or don’t know the answer..... We have a fun time and it keeps my brain active”

Beth Lockhart

I look forward to continuing with my class and hope that I can offer a Complete Beginners Class in 2018.

Alex Aitken

A WEE GIGGLE

A pharmacist walks into his shop to find a man double over at the till.

“What’s wrong with him?” the pharmacist asks his assistant.

“He’s got a cough,” she says. “So I gave him some laxatives.”

“You can’t treat a cough with laxatives,” the pharmacist snaps.

“Look at him”, the assistant smiles. “He daren’t cough now”

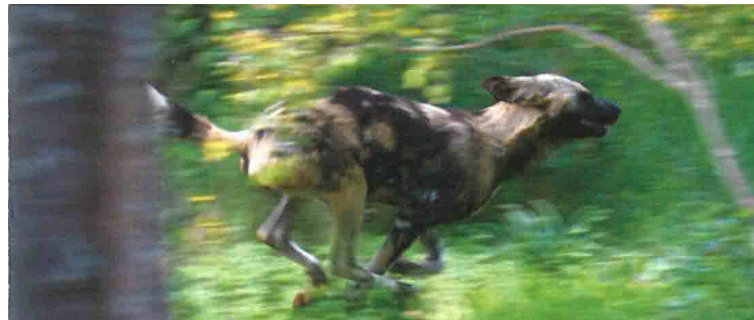
WONDER PANTS

I believe friends are like knickers. Some you can see right through, some are pretty but impractical, some may snap under pressure. Then there are those that offer great comfort and support - and will cover your backside when you need them to!



TALES FROM SOUTH AFRICA

One of the more interesting visits we made in South Africa was to the Endangered Species Centre in Hoedspruit, a unique African wildlife facility focusing on conservation and the sustainability of rare, vulnerable and threatened species. Memorable, probably, because of all the interesting stories we heard there.



We saw the wild dogs there, and learned that, in a pack, there is an Alpha Male and an Alpha Female. When

the Alpha Female gives birth, she gives off pheromones which make all the females in the pack lactate. Thus all the litter are fed and raised. We saw a couple of wild dogs which had been saved, and, apparently the female had had a litter of fourteen pups and had promptly killed them all as she knew she couldn’t raise them. Now the conservationists are hoping to find other dogs to make up a pack and nature can take its course.

Then there was the baby elephant, a dead ringer for Dumbo. He had become separated from the herd



for no reason the rangers could find. Usually if babies are left behind they are sick, but Dumbo was well, Dumbo, however, was assigned a mother at the park– a sheep! Apparently, South African sheep are very maternal and this one happily mothered Dumbo.

Then there was the Southern Ground Hornbill – a very strange bird indeed. It only lays two eggs every seven years. The first egg that hatches kills the other as it hatches. Then we have to wait another seven years before another laying.

TALES FROM SOUTH AFRICA CONTINUED

My heart went out to two rhinos who had been the victims of poachers. Poaching is a real problem in South Africa, so much so that, in the Kruger Park, where they post a map with all the sightings for that day, you are not allowed to post a sighting of a rhino because of the poachers. Anyway, at the Conservation Site, we heard that the rhinos had been dehorned by the poachers, in such a cruel way that, when



one was found, you could see right inside its head. However, at the Conservation Park, the vets had conducted 45 operations on the poor brute, inserting a tin plate, and, as you can see from the photo, he looked back to normal except for the wee stump of a horn.



We also drove through the cheetah enclosure where the cheetah run takes place. Witnessing the fastest animal on the planet at full speed is a sight to behold.

Finally, an unforgettable visit to the vulture restaurant where you see the vultures circling in a synchronised pattern, and descending out of the sky to feed off the remains on the ground.

All in all, a most memorable day.

Mary Ferrie

ACTION ON HEARING LOSS

Action on Hearing Loss is gathering evidence about the accessibility of health services across Scotland for people who are deaf or have hearing loss. To this end, they have produced a short survey for people with hearing problems. If you have such problems and wish to take part in the survey, please complete it online at www.actiononhearingloss.org.UK/access or call in to the office and pick up a hard copy of the survey.

NEW ADMIN ASSISTANT

With over 400 members the admin load was such that it had become overload. We have therefore employed Sharon Hepburn, who, although she hasn't been here a week, seems as if she's been here forever. Sharon is bubbly, friendly and very competent. In fact, you may recognise her as she also stewards at Howden Park.

Sharon has 2 sons, one in Uni and one in London. She tells me she is thoroughly enjoying working with Fiona: More next time.

Mary Ferrie



MONEY SAVING IDEAS

Everyone wants to save money on basic items. January 2017, I decided to target all my insurances, utilities, breakdown services, etc. My object was to save £1000 over the year.

I had been with Scottish Power and British Gas for 30 plus years.

Who to go with??

I contacted Home Energy Scotland, they directed me to the necessary agent and the result I now save £300 a year. There are no exit penalties.

The only down side is you have to read your own metres monthly and enter the result online. I realise those not online will have a problem with this unless they take advantage of the local library computers.

Gas Care – for servicing boiler etc.

A local company (found in the many junk mail shots) does it for half the British Gas, quoted price Savings £174.

Pet Insurance Savings £255.

Car insurance Savings £163.

2nd Car insurance, Savings £139

House Insurance

Broad band/ Landline

Breakdown cover

Savings so far £1031

I have achieved my target within a year with a few more things to be recessed.

Some quotes have been by phoning the companies once their quotes for renewal come in and haggling, usually successful they don't want to lose good customers. At renewal time you get inundated with junk mail offering to quote, get a quote you may be surprised. Some offer cheap deals to new customers just remember to watch when the renewal comes in and switch again if they won't co-operate. **As Tesco says every little helps.**

Anon



WHY TEACHERS DRINK

The following questions were set in last year's GED examination
These are genuine answers (from 16 year olds).....and just remember
they WILL breed.

Q. Name the four seasons.

A. Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q. Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.

A. Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants
like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

Q. How is dew formed?

A. The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q. What causes the tides in the oceans?

A. The tides are a fight between the earth and the moon. All water tends to
flow towards the moon, because there is no water on the moon, and nature
abhors a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins the fight.

Q. What guarantees may a mortgage company insist on?

A. If you are buying a house they will insist that you are well endowed.

Q. In a democratic society, how important are elections?

A. Very important. Sex can only happen when a male gets an election.

Q. What are steroids?

A. Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs. (Shoot yourself now, there
is little hope).

Q.. What happens to your body as you age?

A. When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

Q. What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty?

A. He says goodbye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery.

Q. Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.

A. Premature death.

Q. How can you delay milk turning sour?

A. Keep it in the cow (Simple but brilliant).

Q. How are the main 20 parts of the body categorised (e.g. The abdomen)

A. The body is consisted into 3 parts - the brainium, the borax and the
abdominal cavity. The brainium contains the brain, the borax contains the
heart and lungs and the abdominal cavity contains the five bowels: A, E,
I,O,U..

Q. What is the fibula?

A. A small lie

Q. What does 'varicose' mean?

A. Nearby.

Anon

SPRING PLANTING



As you may have noticed, the pedestrian precinct in Bathgate is almost finished. Well, Bathgate Development intends to pretty it up in the spring by putting out planters filled with flowers and shrubs. Now they are looking for volunteers to weed and look after these planters. Is there anyone out there willing to give a hand to Bathgate in Bloom? Let Fiona know if you are interested and she'll contact you in the spring.



Editor: **Mary Ferrie**
(Secretary of the WL 50+
Network)



Merry Christmas



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FIONA'S DIARY FOR 50+ NETWORK

There has been lots happening here in the office over the past few months. We have been so busy with ticket sales, holidays, general enquiries and much, much more.

I would like to thank each and every member for bearing with me when they have been visiting the office. There has been times where there has been a little wait due to queues, or I have been on the phone, so I would like to thank everyone for their patience. There has also been times where I literally haven't known what planet I am on as there has been so much going on - thank you for understanding if I have forgotten to do something for you, or made a little mistake. It really means a lot to me.

As you already know, we have help on the way (yippee). We will have a new assistant in the office from the beginning of December and to say I am excited is an understatement. Her name is Sharon and she is lovely. She is really excited too and is raring to go.

There will be a little 'bedding in' whilst she learns, and as you know there is a lot to learn so I will ask for your continued patience; which I know will not be problem as you are all just the best!

Speaking of how wonderful I think you all are; I would like to share with you a heart warming experience I've had in the office over the past few months. I will not mention any names. I have spoken to this Lady individually and she's delighted to share her story. I continue to smile each time I think of this so I just have to

share.

This lovely lady popped into the office to enquire about our membership at the beginning of the year; she wanted to share her current situation with me. She had recently lost her partner, very recently in fact, and she was very worried about wasting away in front of the TV. She felt very lost. Friends were scarce as her life in recent years had involved caring for her partner. She was a little unsure at first about joining groups but she decided to give some things a go. I had a visit from her last week and - oh my! What a difference. She wanted to tell me how much of a difference the Network had made to her life. She feels that, by going to the groups, she had managed to lift some of her sadness. She also excitedly told me that she has made so many new friends and had a social life for the first time in many years. Each and every member that she has met has made her feel so welcome and included. I wish I could put across to you properly in words, the way I felt in that moment. No matter how hard I try, I think I may not do it justice. To see the difference that the Network has made to this Lady has literally made my heart smile.

Currently the Network is booming and we are all doing the very best we can to keep up with the demand. Keeping moments like these in our mind will remind us all that it is worth it - ten fold!

Fiona Seenan