



# The Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

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## Elders Council of Newcastle

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**THE ELDERS COUNCIL  
NEEDS YOU TO HELP  
PROMOTE ITS WORK.**

**PLEASE PASS THIS  
NEWSLETTER ON TO  
OTHERS WHO MIGHT  
BE INTERESTED.**

## Image 2009: A SUCCESS!

On 1 October, the International Day of Older People, the Elders Council held a whole-day event in the City Library. Activities included chairbics (try it the next time we do it!) supported by Arthritis Care; Tai Chi (see picture on page 2), singers, recorder players, the Old Spice Drama Group, Nordic walking (see picture below), tap dancing and rookie golf. Lots of groups came to showcase what they do: the University of the Third Age (U3A) were selling their book of war memories and demonstrating board games; Search Project were offering visitors hand massage and displays on knitting, cookery and yummy menus from 'Over 65s'; crafts displays and demonstrations from Lemington & Great Walker; wide selection of art work from the Gadgies' Gallery, Arts Development Team and Friends of the Laing; and lots of information about groups from various parts of the city (Denton Mature Action Group (MAGs), Action Group for Toddler and Grandparents, Women's Institute, Heritage and Newcastle Friendships Groups and many more). As one appreciative visitor said: "I didn't know that so much went on for older people in my area."



## Image 2009 – cont -

The day was opened by the Lord Mayor, Cllr Mike Cookson. He and his wife Dorrie, the Lady Mayoress, then went round the various stalls talking with the older people who were staffing them. He said how impressed he was by the variety of activity that we had put on.



*Pictured: attendees enjoying Tai Chi*



*Pictured: attendees visiting the various stalls*

Throughout the day, the Elders Council radio group, *Everyone's tomorrow – today!*, had their microphone out and broadcast the result the following day.

**A great success! Elders Council thanks go to Liz Hannan and her team for organising everything so well.**

# Working Group Updates

## Action for Health – Senior Citizens in Newcastle (Working Group on Health and Social Care)

**The Big Care Debate** is being promoted by the Government, which is encouraging as many people as possible to respond to the green paper on the future of the care and support system. The suggestion is that we need a new National Care Service that will be fair, simple and affordable for the increasing numbers of people who will need it. Of course, paying for care, as we all know, is a crucial issue, so how to fund a new system is the most important consultation question.



### Consultation question

The Government is suggesting three ways in which the National Care Service could be funded in the future:

- Partnership – People will be supported by the Government for around a quarter to a third of the cost of their care and support, or more if they have a low income.
- Insurance – As well as providing a quarter to a third of the cost of people's care and support, the Government would also make it easier for people to take out insurance to cover the remaining costs.
- Comprehensive – Everyone gets care free when they need it in return for paying a contribution into a state insurance scheme, if they can afford it, whether or not they need care and support

- a) Which of these options do you prefer, and why?
- b) Should local government say how much money people get depending on the situation in their area? or should national government decide?

There is more information on the Government's website [www.careandsupport.direct.gov.uk](http://www.careandsupport.direct.gov.uk) but if you would prefer to discuss the issues in more detail, the Green Paper will be the main topic at a forthcoming meeting of Action for Health – Senior Citizens in Newcastle on Friday 6 November. Both meetings are 10.30 am-12.30 pm in a meeting room in MEA House. The consultation ends on 13 November, so we shall be forwarding comments by then. Please help us to represent your views by telling us what you think about a future system of care.

# Working Group Updates

## Outreach Working Group

At our AGM in June, we celebrated recruiting our 2000<sup>th</sup> member and since then membership has of course continued to grow. Even so, there are still sections of the community that are not well represented, for example elders in the black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. We were therefore delighted when, following discussions with the City Council's Community Development unit, they offered the secondment of a staff member, in order to help us make contact with 'hard-to-reach' elders.

The secondee is Nazrul Islam, who will be working with us on a part-time basis (equivalent to two days per week) for up to six months (to be reviewed in December 2009). As a first move, Nazrul organised a Mulaquath (Get Together) with the Newcastle Bangladeshi Association – see picture – at which very helpful contacts were established. The intention is for Nazrul to use his period of secondment to help us establish such contacts with many more black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, so that we have a better understanding of the needs of older people from different backgrounds.

Nazrul can be contacted on 0191 262 1649.



*From left to right: Nazrul Islam, Masum Ahmed, Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Mohammed Shahjahan; Afsor Khan, Mujibur Rahman and Meena Chopra*

# Working Group Updates

## Housing Working Group

Members of the Elders Council have participated in a project (Neighbourhood 2020) organised by Northern Architecture as part of Northern Housing Consortium's Age-Friendly Communities in the North.

Using our networks we encouraged several Newcastle projects to participate in the Northern Housing Consortium's Northern Silver Screen II celebrating intergenerational work linked to housing.

Work continues with two sheltered housing complexes in Cowgate to develop an activity programme, following on from the student project undertaken earlier this year. This work is quite intensive and is feeding into the community development work in the area being organised as part of Cowgate Regeneration Strategy.



A follow-up meeting for the 'Older Person Friendly Jesmonds' project has been held. Older people were offered the opportunity to participate in three different types of projects and to develop a local older people's forum. If you live in Jesmond and would like to get involved, contact Amy Redpath on 277 3635.

## Learning and Culture Working Group

Making sure that older people have plenty of opportunities to stay active in mind and body is at the heart of this group's work.



We are actively involved in finding ways to give older people the lifelong learning and cultural activities and opportunities that they want at the prices that they can afford. The group will continue to monitor and advise on what goes on in local adult learning and cultural venues and also link into local decision-making processes. The group will be meeting up to discuss the findings from 'The Learning Revolution' – the government's response to the DIUS debate on the future of informal adult learning.

# Working Group Updates

## Transport and Highways Working Group

### Summer Outings in 2009 with your Bus Pass

This project has been very successful, with nearly 200 copies issued and many kind comments about it. We will shortly be discussing whether to do a similar update next year but early indications are that we would like to.

### Travel Centres

We have met with the Nexus Manager of the Travel Shops and we visited the three City Centre Travel Shops (Haymarket, Monument and Central Station). We will be discussing this with Nexus in the coming weeks but some improvements have already been introduced; we are hopeful that there will be more.

## Older Person Friendly City Working Group

### Parks and Recreation Areas

Did you enjoy summer activities in the parks? The summer may have gone (did it ever arrive?), but activities go on. And you can still enjoy a walk in the park, like Valerie Ingoe, who is the winner of our Parks Quiz in the last Newsletter. She will receive £25 Eldon Square vouchers for getting the most correct answers. And she told us of her favourite walk:

“My favourite park is Heaton because I walk through Heaton and Armstrong Park to Jesmond Dene, then if I’m really fit, up to Paddy Freemans, then homeward downhill.”



Congratulations to Ms Ingoe and good walking! Does any other reader have a favourite walk in a park we can share? Do let us know if you have a favourite route that takes you through a park and tell us why you enjoy it. And if you didn’t know the answer to the Quiz question about which park has a ‘shoe’ tree, then why not go and find out!

**Public Toilets in Newcastle** is top of the Working Group’s agenda once again. In July we were invited by the management of Neighbourhood Services to join them on an inspection of public toilets in the City Centre. We were pleased to see that standards of cleanliness and maintenance are good, in spite of continued problems with vandalism. There have been some improvements since our last survey – and some extra automated toilets. We had a good look at one of these modular toilets

## Older Person Friendly City Working Group – cont -

(which we know are not at all popular), but which do offer a very clean environment, are available 24 hours a day, (but still cost 20p at time). Our main concern is the number and distribution of public toilets and the lack of signposting to them, which can be difficult for both residents and visitors. Many cities have chosen to have a Community Toilet Scheme, which is a partnership between local business and a Council. Councils can offer concessions to businesses which join a 'Use Our Loos' scheme opening up their facilities to the public. We have been told that city centre businesses will be promoting this idea – but we don't know yet which ones may sign up and where they will be. We do have some ideas about which would be the best locations, but we would like to have your suggestions as well. As a starter, we think the City Council could give a lead by ensuring that all their premises such as libraries, customer care centres, etc open up their facilities to the public.

**PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.**

## Notice

### Obituary

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Lawrence Hunter at the end of 2008. Lawrence joined the Elders Council in the very early stages of its development and attended many of the events organised by the Elders Council putting forward his ideas and experiences.



Lawrence took part in several of the projects we organised, most notably the 'The Past is the Present to our Future' (*an older person's view of Newcastle 2004*) and Life around Shields Road (2005) sharing his memories of Shields Road. A photograph of Lawrence appears in 'The Past is the Present to our Future' DVD in which he is seen in the early stages of this work playing a cornet with some buskers outside Fenwick's.

He was also a member of the Older Person Friendly City Group and was involved in the work looking at facilities in the City Centre that enable or not enable older people to participate fully in the commercial and cultural life of the City.

Lawrence will be warmly remembered by many of us for his warmth and his good sense of humour.

# Information

## Winter Fuel Payments

Worried about fuel bills and keeping warm this winter?

Good news! If you are aged 60 or over during the week from 21 to 27 September 2009, you should get a Winter Fuel Payment.

You will get up to £250 if you are aged 60-79 and up to £400 if you are 80 or over. Most payments will be made before Christmas.



### **YOU DON'T EVEN NEED TO MAKE A CLAIM PROVIDED YOU GET:**

- state pension; or
- another social security benefit (provided it is administered by the Department for Work and Pensions); or
- you have received a payment before and your circumstances have not changed.

You should get your payment automatically, paid in the same way as your pension or other benefit.

### **YOU DO NEED TO CLAIM IF:**

- you do not get any social security benefits at all; or
- the only benefit you get is Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit;
- **and** you have not had a Winter Fuel Payment before.

If you do need to claim, you should do so as soon as possible. To get more information and a claim form, phone the helpline on 0845 915 1515.

You can still claim Winter Fuel Payments for the winters of 1997/98 and 1999/2000 if you were eligible and did not get them paid then. To claim for these years, phone the helpline or download a claim form from the Directgov website ([http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/Benefits/BenefitsInRetirement/DG\\_10018657](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/Benefits/BenefitsInRetirement/DG_10018657)). Time limits were introduced in 2001 so you can't now claim for any other previous winters.

If you want more information about Winter Fuel Payments or benefits generally there are a number of organisations such as Newcastle Welfare Rights Service that provide free, independent advice on benefits and debt. They can check on your benefits, help fill in claim forms and challenge decisions if necessary.

For details of advice provision in your area visit the Newcastle Welfare Rights Service website at [www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarerights](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarerights) or ring 0191 2772633.

# Stay well this Winter

Have you had your annual flu jab yet? If not, you should get it done as soon as you can.



By the time you read this newsletter, it's possible that the swine flu vaccine will have come out. Older people are not as susceptible to swine flu as they are to "ordinary" seasonal flu; so, unless you are in an at-risk category, it's unlikely that your GP will call you to be immunised amongst the first batch.



## What should I do if I think I have swine flu?

If you have flu-like symptoms and are concerned that you may have swine flu:

- stay at home and check your symptoms by ringing 0800 151 3100 or 0800 151 3513;

call your GP directly if:

- you have a serious underlying illness,
- you have a sick child under one year old,
- your condition suddenly gets much worse, or  
your condition is still getting worse after seven days (five for a child).

The National Pandemic Flu Service is a new online service that will assess your symptoms and, if required, provide an authorisation number which can be used to collect antiviral medication from a local collection point. For those who do not have internet access, the same service can be accessed by telephone on:

- Telephone: 0800 1 513 100
- Minicom: 0800 1 513 200

# Information

## Pension Credit – are you missing out?

Around 110,000 pensioner households in the North East are missing out on money which could make a difference to their lives. Pension Credit is paid on top of state pension and can make a real difference to the finances of people over 60. Pension Credit guarantees single pensioners a total weekly income of £130 per week and couples an income of £198.45.

The Department for Work and Pensions is currently running a campaign in the region called 'Keeping You in Control', urging people over 60 to phone a claim line to find out whether they are entitled to Pension Credit.

Too few people claim, so the Department's campaign aims to answer some of the myths that may be stopping you claiming:

### **“I don't think I'll be eligible for Pension Credit”**

Don't rule yourself out. Around 88% of claims are successful and 2.7 million households across the UK already receive it.

### **“I'll get so little it's not worth me claiming”**

Even if you only get a little extra each month, receiving Pension Credit may help you get money for other things, such as rent, council tax or towards the cost of keeping your house warm.

### **“It's difficult to claim Pension Credit”**

It takes only one free phone call and you won't have to fill in a form.

### **“I have some savings so I won't get anything”**

Having some savings or another pension doesn't necessarily rule you out: around three quarters of people who get Pension Credit have saved something. In fact, you may be rewarded for having saved some money towards your retirement.

### **“I own my own home so I won't get anything”**

Owning your own home doesn't rule you out. Nearly half of families who get Pension Credit own their own home.

It takes just one free phone call to 0800 731 4811 to check your entitlement to Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, and make a claim. Lines are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. There is also more information online at [www.direct.gov.uk/pensions](http://www.direct.gov.uk/pensions).

# Dark Nights

The dark nights can be frightening for older people and those living alone, and unwanted calls from trick-or-treaters and noisy fireworks going off late at night can add to their concerns.



In the weeks running up to Bonfire Night, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service will be visiting secondary schools in Newcastle to educate pupils on the dangers of bonfires and fireworks and to highlight the consequences of anti-social behaviour against emergency workers.

Watch Manager Karen Soady of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service said: “We’re appealing to the public to play their part in helping us to keep everyone safe this Bonfire Night. We urge everyone to attend professionally organised displays and report any illegal

bonfires that have been built to their local authority. That way, we can all have a safe and enjoyable Bonfire Night.”

Keep safe this year by following the tips below:

- Attend an organised display rather than having your own bonfire.
- Call the Neighbourhood Helpline 0300 1000 101 to report any illegal bonfires that have been built or lit.
- Always supervise children around fireworks and never give sparklers to children under five.
- Keep pets indoors.
- Ensure that you bring your wheelie bin in as soon as it’s emptied – it’s a target for arson if you don’t.

**0300 1000 101**  
neighbourhood helpline

# Things to do

## Pen and Tonic: Writing for Health



### Care Homes Project

Care Homes Project in collaboration with Pen & Tonic are providing a unique training opportunity for volunteers to develop creative writing and story-telling skills to be used in interaction with older people in a care-home setting.

There will be two taster sessions – Monday Jan 25<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 12noon, and Wednesday Jan 27<sup>th</sup>, from 6pm to 8pm. The training will then consist of eight weekly sessions, beginning the week of February 8<sup>th</sup> 2010; venue: MEA House.

This course is open to anyone who would like to then use the skills they have learned either in a care-home setting as a volunteer with the Care Homes Project, or through regular personal contact with an elderly relative or neighbour.

With the skills you learn you will enable older members of the community to stay in touch with their memories and to tell their life-story, enabling them to feel that their voice is being heard. You will receive ongoing support both from Pen & Tonic and from the Care Homes Project when you start putting your skills into practice. If you would like to sign up, please contact Nicole Dowley at the Care Homes Project on 0191 2724414, mobile: 07723000678, or email her at [carehomesproject@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:carehomesproject@yahoo.co.uk).

## Volunteers Wanted

Are you over 80 years of age? We are looking for volunteers to participate in a research study developing new brain-scanning techniques.

The study involves having a 1-hour magnetic resonance (MRI) scan of the brain and some tests of memory and attention.

For more information about the study and to find out how you could be involved, please contact: Barbara Wilson; tel. 0191 223 2742 / 0191 248 1337; e-mail: [barbara.wilson@ntw.nhs.uk](mailto:barbara.wilson@ntw.nhs.uk).

# Things to do

## Intergenerational Fashion Show and Music Event



**An Intergenerational Fashion Show and Band Event  
involving models, catwalk,  
and younger and older live bands**

**on**

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

**3.00pm – 5.00pm**

**In the Bewick Hall, City Library**

**TO BOOK YOUR PLACE CONTACT:**

**City Library Contact Centre on Tel: 0191 277 4100**

## Everyone's Tomorrow – Today! Needs helpers!



As every reader now knows, the Elders Council broadcasts its own radio programme from 2 to 4 on the first Friday of every month. Just tune in to 102.5 fm. The show is repeated on the following Monday from 10 to 12.

The radio team would like to recruit more members. If you are interested in taking part (it's fun!), please contact Steve Whitley: [steve.whitley@phonecoop.coop](mailto:steve.whitley@phonecoop.coop); 0191 273 4727.

# Things to do

## Briefing Session on Housing Issues

Are you the sort of person who others come to for advice and information? Do you find yourself helping others to talk through their problems and ideas?

If your answer is 'yes', would you like to find out more about the support available to older people to sort out issues relating to housing?

In partnership with Care and Repair England and FirstStop, we are offering a briefing session on housing issues, which will include:

- Hobson's choice? What are older people's realistic housing options?
- How to find out more – sources of information and advice
- Who pays? Help with housing costs – an overview
- Winding through a maze – what are important things to take into account when thinking about moving home?



The session is free and will take place on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November from 2 to 4 pm at the Dene Centre, Castle Farm Road.

To book a place please contact Christine or Anne on 0191 233 0200.

## Information

### 65 or over? and living in your own home (rented or owned)?

**Don't struggle alone, because a little extra help could make all the difference.**

The Universal Beneficent Society (UBS) is a 150-year-old national charity which provides lifelong friendship and financial support to the over-65s living on a low income. They provide assistance through a range of services including small financial grants in times of sudden crisis; information and support; companionship for those who would welcome it, through volunteer visitors and telephone buddies; and winter food hampers, newsletters, social events and day-trips.

They work to give a sense of belonging and security to help ease the worries of daily living for older people in order to enable people to continue living independently. They provide opportunities for social interaction, friendship and someone to turn to when a little help or up-to-date information can make all the difference.

Please don't hesitate to contact Janet Wilkinson to find out more (tel. 0191 264 1343, Mon. to Wed. 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. or you can leave a message at any time).

# Get Involved

## VOICE North

**Involving older people to help understand how we age, why we age  
and how we can improve later life**

Our region is home to world-class research on ageing. It has Europe's leading centre for research on ageing – Newcastle University's Institute for Ageing and Health (IAH), which is developing a unique 'Campus for Ageing and Vitality' on the former Newcastle General Hospital site. Researchers are working on a wide range of projects – from understanding the causes of disease, to devising treatments, to developing services and products to help us all live healthy, independent lives.

Older people have enormous skills and experience and it is vital that their views inform this research, to ensure that the focus is on the issues that matter. The IAH in partnership with Years Ahead – the NE Regional Forum on Ageing – has set up VOICE North to involve older people. VOICE North is a large group of members of the general north-east public who are interested in helping with research on ageing. No experience of research is necessary – and members can be involved as little or as much as they like. VOICE North currently has over 800 members and is keen to have many more. Recently, members of VOICE North met to discuss public transport for older people; another group has looked at the design of supermarkets. A key part of VOICE North is not just research, but helping to get the research into practice.

VOICE North will be delighted if as many members of the Elders Council as possible join the group. For more information, call Sarah Armstrong on 0191 248 1353; or visit [www.ncl.ac.uk/iah](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/iah), where you will find an application form; or write to Dr Lynne Corner, Wolfson Research Centre, Institute for Ageing and Health, Campus for Ageing and Vitality, Newcastle, NE4 5PL.

## Correspondence

Dear Editor

Thank you very much for giving me the chance to get the Newsletter by e-mail. I found that I got my copy quite a few days before my neighbours, who get their copy through the post, and that was really useful.

I'm also glad to be helping the Elders Council save money on postage.

E. Davies



**Note from Editor:** It costs about 50p per member to send out this newsletter, so would you be willing to have the newsletter sent to you electronically? If you would, it would save a lot of money every year. So please sign up for this service now by emailing [anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk](mailto:anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk), please put "E-mail newsletter" in the subject box.

# How to call the police when you're old and don't move fast any more

George Phillips , an elderly man, from Richmond, Yorkshire, was going up to bed when his wife told him that he'd left the light on in the garden shed, which she could see from the bedroom window. George opened the back door to go turn off the light, but saw that there were people in the shed stealing things.

He phoned the police, who asked, "Is someone in your house?"

He said, "No, but some people are breaking into my garden shed and stealing from me."

The police dispatcher said, "All patrols are busy. You should lock your doors and an officer will be along when one is available."

George said, "Okay. He hung up the phone and counted to 30.

Then he phoned the police again: "Hello, I just called you a few seconds ago because there were people stealing things from my shed. Well, you don't have to worry about them now because I've just shot them" and he hung up.

Within five minutes, six police cars, a SWAT team, a helicopter, two fire trucks, a paramedic, and an ambulance showed up at the Phillips' residence, and caught the burglars red-handed.

One of the police officers said to George, "I thought you said that you'd shot them! George said, "I thought you said there was nobody available!"

**Moral: Don't mess with old people!**

## Things to do ...



**Don't miss this golden opportunity!**

- Do you want to continue living independently in your own home?
- Do you know about services that are available now?
- Do you have ideas about the types of information, support and housing you would like?

Housing can be one of the most important factors in ensuring that people can live well and independently. So don't miss this golden opportunity to contribute your ideas and experiences to a major review of a range of housing and support services. The Elders Council is working in partnership with Your Homes Newcastle to host a session on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November – 10.30 am – 12.30 pm at The Assembly Rooms, Fenkle Street, Newcastle upon Tyne. To book a place please call Anne or Christine on 0191 233 0200.

# Information

## Do you look after someone?



The new carers' information booklet '***Do you look after someone?***' was launched in June 2009. The booklet has been produced by Newcastle Carers Strategy Information Working Group. Newcastle Carers Strategy is a partnership to develop services and support to adults caring for adults in Newcastle. The booklet was produced with the help of carers, Newcastle City Council Adult & Culture Services, voluntary sector organisations, and health services.

The aim of the booklet is to give carers information that they may find useful. It includes information about Carer's Assessments, where to get benefit advice and help, planning for emergencies, and it also has a directory with many useful contact details.

If you would like a copy, there should be some available to pick up in your local library, Customer Service Centre or GP surgery. Alternatively, there are supplies in the following city centre venues:

- **Carers Centre Newcastle**, 6 Saville Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8DQ
- **MEA House**, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS (on the reception desk)

For more information about on the support available if you are looking after someone, visit the 'Caring for someone' section on the Information NOW website at: <http://www.informationnow.org.uk/resources/articles/115>

## Will you?

Are you aged 50 or over? Then you can make your will at the:

### Age Concern Newcastle Will Open Day.

Age Concern Newcastle invites you to use their Will Advice Service to see a solicitor and make a will for just £40 per person provided the will is straightforward.



Their Will Advice Day will be held in MEA House on Wednesday 11 November 2009. To find out more or to book an appointment, please contact the ACN Will Advice Officer on 0191 232 6488.

# Obituary



The death of Billie Cummings is a severe blow to all who knew her. She was a loving wife, mother, aunt and grandmother, and will be deeply missed by her family. Billie was also an active member of groups concerned with the health and wellbeing of older people. We knew her best as a member of Action for Health for Senior Citizens, and as a founder member of Old Spice Drama Group. Billie was not only a campaigner for the rights of pensioners, involving many visits to lobby parliament, but she was also active locally in looking after her friends and neighbours. It often seemed that while the rest of us were talking about care in the community, she was actually out there putting it into action. It was a pleasure to be involved with her in performances by Old Spice, in which she was active until a few weeks ago. To any cause in

which she was involved she brought commitment and loyalty, not just token support, but practical action as well. We have all benefited from having her amongst us for so long. Now we feel the pain of losing a good friend and loyal member, but perhaps we can best honour her memory by following her example of being a good, caring citizen.

**Vera Bolter**

## Things to do ...

### Older actors .....



..... take on the roles of Romeo and Juliet in Ben Power's re-working of Shakespeare's most famous love story. Ben has called the play ***A tender thing*** and its world premiere will be performed at Northern Stage from Thursday 29 October to Saturday 7 November.

**To book seats, ring the Box Office on 0191 230 5151.**

**RSC Older People's Group Tea and Ticket Deal for £15 on Saturday 31 October Production 2pm** - free tea or coffee in the interval (a £10 saving on the best seats in the house!) Please Note: For the purpose of this offer a group is considered 3+ people and the booking deadline is 5pm Wednesday 28th October.

# Poetry

## Birthday Special 2009



On December 17<sup>th</sup> a date to uphold  
The Sage Gateshead is five years old,  
There's a special day to celebrate so hurry there – don't be late.

Each performer who's taking part  
Will entertain from the heart  
Enough to make the rafters ring  
From musicians and them that sing.

The musical treat that's in store  
Will have the crowds wanting more  
A joyful weekend, planned for all  
So everyone can have a ball.

The next silver gala? – July, twenty ten  
When all groups, will partake – again  
To perform a show... in hall one  
It's the best – second to none.

Some of the finest talent on earth  
Have performed here, since its birth.  
Staging classics, to jazz, folk and pop  
This iconic venue is just the top.

Happy Birthday.

**Dorothy F. Moran** (a Silver Singer)

# Hot off the press!

## Giving Voice to the Past

A new book, *The Snoring of a Thousand Men*, commemorates the seventieth anniversary of the beginning of the Second World War.

Written by 27 senior members of Newcastle U3A, it records in their own words what it felt like to be a child in wartime. The well-known author Fay Weldon has written a foreword for it, in which she describes it as 'vivid', 'moving', 'important'.

The book was launched at an event at St John's Church Hall, Grainger Street, in September, with wartime memorabilia including 1940s-style clothes, gasmasks, songs, books and refreshments which included rationing recipes for eggless cakes and spam.

Below are some extracts from the book.

"the rear gunner sprayed a burst of machine-gun fire ahead of us"  
"I'd prayed for Hitler to bomb the school, and felt guilty"  
"It felt such a contented and happy time with family and neighbours all around supporting us"  
"going to school past a pile of rubble which the previous day had been a row of houses"  
"my dolls were spiked with glass"  
"we used to count the bombers going out and then coming back"  
"my cousin was born in a Morrison cage"  
"nothing was wasted: recycling is in the blood for those of us who lived in wartime"  
"singed books carried by the firestorm"  
"missing presumed dead"  
"parachute bras"  
"we escorted gunboats on their way to China"  
"my father thought our convoy had been lost"  
"we used malt instead of sugar for cooking"  
"sweet rationing was very hard on us children"  
"realising the meaning of War"

The book could be a unique Christmas present for old and young alike. It is available for £5, including postage, from Newcastle U3A, 1 Pink Lane, Newcastle NE1 5DW.

# Correspondence

Dear Editor,

## **Parking** (as featured in July-August newsletter)

In our experience, there is regular parking on the double lines and pavement on, for example, a very busy road where we live and which is on a bus route, a route to a primary school and has both a housing complex for elderly people and a residential care home within yards of the parking problem. Because there's a fast-food shop with (limited) parking in front, there are in practical terms 12 potential vehicle exit points within 80 yards of the roadway where additional vehicles park illegally, obstructing view of the road for drivers exiting there.



Pedestrians, including a motorised wheelchair user and parents with buggies, are forced to walk into the road to circumvent vehicles obstructing the pavement; and passing traffic (including buses and army tanks) has to use the oncoming carriageway to overtake parked vehicles.

For many years now we have called Northumbria Police regarding drivers parking vehicles on the pavement and over double yellow lines. At one point, I had a telephone conversation with a Chief Inspector about it and his final remark was: "We have other priorities." The reality was that nothing was ever done either to prevent or punish this illegal parking behaviour. We also documented it by photographs to demonstrate the range of sizes and types of vehicle seen parking illegally (e.g., furniture vans, agricultural vehicles and articulated tree-trunk-carrying lorries).

Similarly, when we contacted various council officers and local councillors, they said that the responsibility lay with the police. When we reiterated the Chief Inspector's words, we were informed that in 2009 the responsibility for parking enforcement would transfer to the City Council and they would then have the right to issue Fixed Penalty parking tickets to offenders. So when this year, in April, the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) began, we were hopeful that the problem would be tackled; disappointingly, however, we have learned that for the whole city there are only five mobile patrols (two on Saturdays and only one on Sundays).

Regards

P.L. Smith & M. Moore

# Poetry

## Welcome Autumn



October brings a change in season  
Choice in colour is the reason  
As leaves of golden brown drop to ground  
To leave trees so vacant with little sound



Autumn slowly takes on new role  
But same magic of nature's goal  
Wind, the rain, cold short day  
Light though colourful sunsets sheer delight



Hardy animals will survive cold weather  
As early frost, snow it seems forever  
Berries in abundance nature prepares this  
In bright red colours hard to miss



Autumn is a magic time of year  
As life has slowed down to prepare  
Last cut of grass that perfect lawn  
Then a heavy dew cast upon it at dawn



Wildlife seem just to disappear from sight  
It's there to hide till morning's bright  
Cold days cloud or clear blue skies  
Wildlife around needs to be wise

Low late sunrise awakes new day  
Then rise to heavens then on its way  
To leave long shadows on land below  
Nature's moving picture show

Wild geese are up on their way  
The swift, the swallow still at play  
Elderberries to merge then fruit  
Birds overhead all give their final salute.

**JOHN REID**

# Newsletter Information

## Newsletter Articles



If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the January/February 2010 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Friday 18 December. (Contact details on page 1).

## Newsletter in other formats

We can make our Newsletter available in alternative formats (e.g. in **larger print** or audio tape).

To request information please contact the office  
(details on page 1)



## Electronic Version of the Newsletter

It costs about 50p per member to send out this newsletter, so would you be willing to have the newsletter sent to you electronically? If you would, it would save a lot of money every year. So please sign up for this service now by emailing [anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk](mailto:anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk), please put "E-mail newsletter" in the subject box.

Advantages to signing up for this service includes receiving the Newsletter at least 14 days sooner than you would normally receive it via the post; getting earlier notice of events happening throughout the city and seeing the various images in colour.

**What are you waiting for?**



# Gift Aid

As you know from what we said in the previous newsletter, the Elders Council grant this year was not increased by as much as we had hoped. So we need to depend more heavily upon voluntary contributions from our members.

Gift Aid is the easiest way to increase donations to the Elders Council by nearly a third at no cost to you (in fact, if you're a higher-rate taxpayer, you can even claim something back).

## What is Gift Aid?

Gift Aid is a tax relief that is allowed on any money that you donate to the Elders Council. The government treat your charity donations as though you have already deducted basic tax from them, which in turn means that we can reclaim this. So we get the benefit and you lose nothing: the extra comes from the government.

## How does Gift Aid Work?

Gift Aid can apply to one-off donations, or those over a specific period. It can even be backdated for up to six years.

Higher-rate taxpayers are eligible to reclaim 25p from the taxman for every £1 donated to charity by including details of their donations on their Self Assessment form. This rebate can be donated directly to the Elders Council on the same form and, if you so choose, it can be increased further through Gift Aid.

## How can I use Gift aid?

If you would like any future donation to the Elders Council to apply for Gift Aid, please contact Matthew Phillips for a Gift Aid Declaration Form: 0191 255 1980.

## PLEASE HELP THE ELDERS COUNCIL TO CONTINUE ITS WORK

I wish to donate £5 [ ] £10 [ ] £25 [ ] Other [£ ] to the Elders Council of Newcastle and enclose a cheque for that amount. Please send me a gift aid form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_