



# The Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

September 2011 - Issue 43

## Elders Council of Newcastle

Contact Details:

Elders Council of  
Newcastle,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor,  
MEA House,  
Ellison Place,  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 8XS

Tel: 0191 233 0200

Fax: 0191 260 5307

Email:

[info@qualityoflife.org.uk](mailto:info@qualityoflife.org.uk)

Website:

[www.elderscouncil.org.uk](http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk)



We've had our say about the city centre ... and about parks and recreation areas ... and about supermarkets. Now we want to assess our district centres for older person friendliness. WE are starting in the usual way by inviting **YOU**, our members, to tell us what facilities you like – or that you wish you had – in the centre you use most. Then we will do a systematic survey of the main district centres to see if they match up to what you have told us you value most in your local centre.

The City Council has recently consulted about the Newcastle Gateshead One Core Strategy, which sets out a vision for developments, including Thriving Neighbourhoods and Quality Places. So it is timely to contribute some views about what would make them good places where older people can live convenient and comfortable lives, including easy access to essential facilities for daily living.

**RSVP** to this invitation by completing the questionnaire enclosed with this newsletter. And don't forget to tell us if you would like to be involved in following up the findings for your neighbourhood.



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

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

# Notice

## Making Newcastle – an age-friendly city



When we have our say, it's important that we take every opportunity to share what we have found out with older people and people in the city who develop policies and services. As we move into autumn, we will have plenty of opportunities to share our knowledge of what would make Newcastle an age-friendly city. A series of events will give older people and people working with older people an opportunity to influence the review of the older people's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (a resource of information about older people in Newcastle which is used to inform commissioning and planning of services). The key events are:

**Conversations with older people on Newcastle – an age-friendly city on 12<sup>th</sup> October.** Hosted jointly by the Elders Council and Newcastle City Council as part of their talkabout\* activity, this event will provide an opportunity for a cross-section of older people to think about what gives them the best possible chance of living well in later life. We will not be starting with a blank sheet, but building on both local and national work, including research conducted by the Elders Council.

**Conversations with older people and the people who work with them on 24<sup>th</sup> October.** This is an opportunity for key stakeholders to consider what older people are saying and to contribute their ideas and experience to reviewing our progress and considering key areas of future development and action.

**Let's Talk Newcastle Thinkabout\* – Policy Cabinet – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2011 (venue to be confirmed)**

All the information we gather will be used to inform a Policy Cabinet meeting on Active Ageing. Newcastle City Council has developed a new programme of Policy Cabinets which will think about the big issues facing the city today. The events are held in public and will play a key part in setting the future direction for the Council. On 9<sup>th</sup> November the theme of the Policy Cabinet is: Promoting Active Ageing – How can we build on our status as a world leader on ageing and vitality to make Newcastle an 'older people' friendly city?

If you would like to be involved, or have a particular issue which you think should be considered as part of this programme of events, please contact Barbara Douglas on [barbara.douglas@qualityoflife.org.uk](mailto:barbara.douglas@qualityoflife.org.uk) or 0191 255 1986.



\* 'Talkabout' and 'Thinkabout' are two of the activities which form part of 'Let's Talk Newcastle' – the way the City Council listens and responds to the views of the community. To find out more about all the activities and how you can get involved see <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/your-council/community-engagement> .

# Working Group Updates

## Older Person Friendly City

### Parks and Recreation Areas

In the last newsletter we were urging everyone to enjoy the Summer Programme in the Parks. Unfortunately we haven't had much of a summer – but we hope there has still been some enjoyment somewhere! There have certainly been some comments about the new Visitor Centre and Café in Jesmond Dene (not forgetting the NEW TOILETS!) And Pets Corner has been refurbished. So a good place to take the grandchildren. There are also new paths with easier gradients – and some seats – so a good place to take a walk on your own or with friends.

And what about outdoor exercise equipment? Readers will know we have been pushing for this for a long time. We're keeping our fingers crossed that the first set of equipment will be in position by the autumn – and we shall be arranging an introductory event to try it out – SO WATCH THIS SPACE!

### City Centre

Have you noticed what has been springing up in the City Centre? 'Pocket parks' in Grey Street and outside the Cathedral – and a beach on the Quayside ... and cinema screen in Northumberland Street! Just a few of the facilities promoted by the Business Improvement Company NE1 to enliven the City Centre.

If you are interested, there is also an opportunity to volunteer as a Street Ranger – further details on pages 11-12.

## Lifetime Homes, Lifetimes Neighbourhoods

To help us to understand the maze of processes involved in getting houses built, Nick Launder, Area Housing Co-ordinator, Newcastle City Council joined us for our July meeting. This included how Newcastle City Council develops an understanding of what housing is needed through to the role that a wide range of people play before bricks and mortar appear in our neighbourhoods. It's complicated! However, Nick's step-by-step explanation helped us to get a better understanding of the process. Nick will be coming back to the group on Friday 23 September (10.30 am-12.30 pm in MEA House) to take us through how housing is developed in regeneration areas, such as Scotswood and Walker Riverside. If this is of interest to you, you are very welcome to join us, but please let us know you are coming so that we can make sure that we have enough chairs. Please contact:

Anne Richardson on 233 0200 or email [anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk](mailto:anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk) .

# Working Group Updates

## Transport and Highways

### Summer Outings Leaflet

Once again this appears to have been an outstanding success. Over 600 copies of the leaflet have been sent out and many favourable comments have been received.

We would still like to hear of any unusual experiences you may have had, so please let us know either by writing direct to Mervin (see leaflet) or to Bill Ions (Co-ordinator Transport Working Group) here at the office.

### Two items to report from Nexus:

#### 1. Card Readers

The introduction of the new card readers on buses is settling in now and fewer problems are being reported.

Cards may not read properly for a number of reasons. If you keep two cards on top of each other in the same wallet or purse, the machine will be unable to read either of them. Also, it will fail to read a card stored with another smart card of any sort. The best advice is to keep your card where you can produce it separately to place on a reader when you start your bus journey.

If your card still doesn't read properly and you need a replacement card, you can get one free from a Nexus Travelshop by taking in your existing card. The normal £5 charge for lost cards does not apply.

#### 2. Haymarket Bus Station

Work on the Haymarket bus-station should be completed by early September but there may be delays in the installation of new seats and barriers.

#### 3. Metro Timetables

If you want a large-print Metro timetable, please contact Andrew McGuinness on 0191 203 3459.

## Communication



### ***Everyone's tomorrow – today!***

If you want to listen to the programme live, tune in to 102.5fm from 2-4 on the first Friday of every month or 10-12 on the following Monday.

And, if you miss either of these slots you can go to: <http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/audio/> and listen to all our interviews on line.

If you would like to join the team, please get in touch with Steve Whitley on tel. 273 4727 or email [steve.whitley@phoncoop.coop](mailto:steve.whitley@phoncoop.coop) .

# Working Group Updates

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

### Future Funding of Social Care

The Report of the Dilnot Commission was published in July and proposed some changes to the current system, which is widely agreed to be unfair and inadequate. The main recommendations are that responsibility for adult social care costs will be shared between the state and individuals. It is suggested that:

- the contribution to care costs for individuals assessed as having substantial needs should be limited to £35,000 but will be free above that;
- for people in residential care, the threshold for receiving financial help should be raised from £23,250 to £100,000;
- a national system of assessment could be fairer, and could be 'portable', i.e. would remain the same if someone moves to a different area;
- care home residents will be expected to pay if they can towards their basic living costs (i.e. food, heating and accommodation, perhaps about £10,000 per annum) although they may get help with care costs.

It is not proposed to change:

- free care for those without means;
- non-means tested benefits, such as Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance for current recipients.

### So who will benefit if these proposals are adopted?

People with limited savings and owners of moderately priced homes seem most likely to benefit because they may become eligible for help with cost before disposing of all their assets. It may, of course, benefit everyone to have a clearer system of social care assessments that is consistent wherever you live.

We do not know what the government's response will be to these proposals. The main snag is that substantial extra funding will be required to introduce a new system.

### How do we react to this Report?

In all our previous comments on health and social care we have emphasised the need for joined-up services and for policies that will delay, and even prevent, dependence on statutory care and support services. It is regretted that within the terms of the Dilnot Commission, it has not been possible to consider alternative investment in independent living in well-designed homes and in supportive neighbourhoods. So there is still a job to do if we want a better life in our later years!

# Working Group Updates

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

### Future of the NHS

The Health and Social Care Bill has still not completed its journey through Parliament so we shall continue to hold a watching brief over proposed changes. In the meantime (as we heard in the last Newsletter) Dr Meng Khaw is a strong protagonist of Public Health and is pushing ahead on all 'major and general' aspects of his role. We also know that the two GP Commissioning Consortiums Newcastle Bridges (which brings together 18 GP practices, mainly in the west), and Tyne Health (including 18 practices in the north and east) have both achieved pathfinder status and are taking over their own budgets. In following these developments we must not lose sight of what is happening in the here and now. The Working Group would like to hear of YOUR experiences – good as well as not so good – as services change around us.

### Future Meetings

- Friday 16 September;
  - Friday 7 October;
  - Friday 4 November,
- all 10.30am-12.30pm in MEA House Committee Rooms.

Please contact the office if you would like to attend.

## Reports

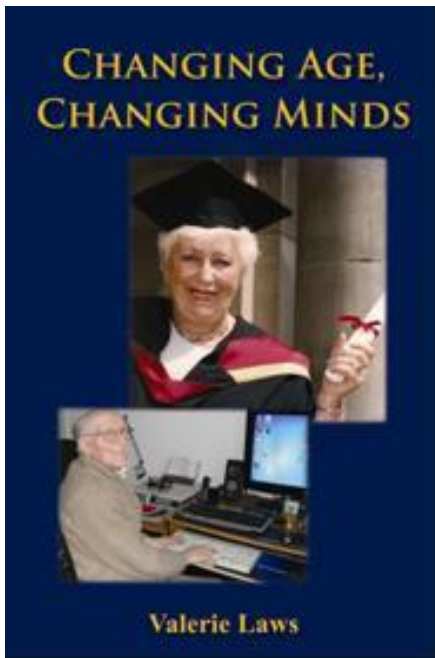
### Pensioners add £40bn to society

A report from the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) has completely discredited the idea that pensioners are a burden and drain on society's resources. The report, entitled *Gold Age Pensioners*, found that, through taxes, spending power, provision of social care and volunteering (£10b), the over-65s made a net contribution of £40bn to the UK economy. (The cost of social care is £34b). So, even allowing for the costs of pensions, welfare and health services, the older generation continues to make a valuable contribution to our society.

The report also revealed how older people are often society's social glue – making an active contribution to their local communities through volunteering. Norman Jemison, who comes from our region and is the Vice-President of the National Pensioners Convention, said: "This report shows the real contribution that pensioners are making to society that is so often overlooked. We are not a burden; we are an asset."

# Reports

## Book Review



When Valerie Laws was appointed writer in residence at the Institute for Ageing and Health, she intended to work with researchers of brain pathology. But things didn't quite work out like that.

She got more and more interested in the lives of older people themselves and decided to write a little pamphlet to challenge the stereotypes that surround us. Again, though, her intentions changed: she became so interested in the lives of the older people with whom she was talking that the pamphlet became a book.

*Changing age, changing minds* is the result. And we can say straightaway that we're glad that Valerie veered away from brain pathology to older people themselves. The book is a compilation of conversations that she had with older people and sessions that she held with 11- and 14-year-

olds in school. The older people talk about their lives, the hardships that they underwent when they were younger, the achievements that they have made, their sex lives, the activities that they undertake now and the contributions that they continue to make to society.

The sessions that Valerie held with the school pupils are in three sections. In the first, she asked them to write down words that they think of when they consider older people in general; and they come up with words such as *wrinkly, knitting, false teeth, dependent on the young, very forgetful, uncontrollable bowels, ill-mannered, sagging, cripple, slow, wet the bed, outcasts, stupid, "when I was your age"* and many more. Then she asked the pupils to write about an older person that they knew personally, and the contrast could hardly have been starker: *My grandma is the kindest person I've ever met; My granddad is always rushing to help; My grandma is simply amazing. She's kind, funny and is always there whenever I need her.* Finally, Valerie asked the pupils about the old age that they would like for themselves; and again it is clear that they are not thinking in generalised stereotypes: they want to be active, to help their grandchildren, to help society at large and to be happy and energetic.

Valerie considers that the mismatch between the general view and the younger people's actual experiences and aspirations may be because "the media are bombarding the young with negative stereotypes", which would accord very well with the conclusions of the research that the Elders Council Readers Group carried out in 2009 (see the July edition of the newsletter for details). In this wonderful book, which, as Professor Tom Kirkwood writes in his introduction, "is grounded in an essential humanity that celebrates the joy of being alive at any age", Valerie Laws has

# Reports

## Book Review – cont -

destroyed myths and stereotypes, and has given all of us older people material to answer those who decry us as of no further use to the society in which we live.

*Changing age, changing minds* can be ordered for £9.99 (delivery free) on the website at [www.ncl.ac.uk/iah/ageing/publications.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/iah/ageing/publications.htm) . We know that many of our readers do not have access to the internet, so we are willing to order the book for you – just send a cheque for £9.99 to Steve Whitley, c/o Elders Council office (enclosing your name and address) and he will go on to the website for you. (Please make the cheque payable to J S W Whitley).

## Newcastle Libraries

There are 17 public libraries in Newcastle so there is sure to be a library near you. As you would expect, all libraries have the usual range of novels and information books and a daily newspaper. They have a selection of books in large print and talking books on CD, an ideal way to continue reading if your sight isn't so good or just a great way to listen to a book while you are ironing or driving.

If you can't get out because you have health or mobility problems or because you are a carer, the library can come to you through the Home Delivery Service.

There are over 50 reading groups, including a visually impaired group who meet at MEA House; there is also a programme of author visits. The libraries are currently looking for a volunteer to run a reading group especially for older people.

Do you want to know more about computers or find out what getting online could mean to you? The library can help you with free one-to-one sessions which are for the absolute beginner; for the more confident computer user, the library offers free sessions on subjects like digital photography and how to use e-books.

If you want to know more about any of these services and activities, please contact Barbara Bravey at Newcastle Libraries on 0191 277 4100 or look at their website at [www.newcastle.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/libraries) .



# Reports

## Cheques



You may recall that the Elders Council has been protesting against the decision by the banks to stop the use of cheques by 2018. So we were pleased to hear in July that these plans have been dropped after the UK Payments Council admitted there was no better paper alternative.

They said that cheques will continue for as long as people need them and the target for possible closure of the cheque clearing system in 2018 has been cancelled.

Michelle Mitchell, charity director at Age UK, said: "We are delighted that the Payments Council has listened to the many people who said how difficult the loss of cheques would be for them. This is a vital first step that will help many older people."

However, we still need to be vigilant: most big shops have stopped accepting cheques and the feeling in the financial sector is that retailers will continue to drop them at an increasing rate. Please let us know if you have difficulty in using your chequebook and we'll see what we can do about it.

## Press Don't Panic



What's that about, then? It's a small highly visible audio medical ID measuring 4.5cm x 2.5cm x 2cm which can communicate vital information in an emergency at the press of a button. It can be attached to outer clothing, a handbag, belt or staff badge and it

allows the wearer to record a personal message containing emergency procedure and/or essential medical information in any language. (*John Telfer is pictured right*).



It is invaluable if assistance is required from somebody without medical training.

It is battery-operated, has both visual (LED) and audio battery-level indicator, and two sets of batteries are supplied with each device.

For more information or to buy online, visit [www.pressdontpanic.com](http://www.pressdontpanic.com) or telephone: 0172 173 0311.

# Things to do ...

## Do this in remembrance of me!

One of our trustees is attending a course entitled *Staying steady*, run by Healthworks, Newcastle. He found out about this at a recent Elders Council event. A combination of his age, together with the fact that he has epilepsy, means that his balance is not great.

This course is at Trinity Church, Gosforth. A group of about ten assemble in front of the altar, on which is inscribed *Do This In Remembrance Of Me*, and they are led through an hour-long session of exercises. There is nothing strenuous, but merely sitting and standing, and moving the arms and legs to increase flexibility and balance. (He does feel that if this course had been available to his 90-year-old mother twenty years ago, she might not need to use a wheelchair now!)

His balance and self-confidence have certainly improved and he would recommend the course – held in various venues throughout the city – to anyone who feels a bit uneasy about their balance.

He considers the inscription on the altar to be very apt!!

If you would like to join one of these courses, please ring HealthWORKS on 0191 272 4244 and ask for Lucy Flanagan.

## Old Spice



*Members of Old Spice with their 'out and about kit'*

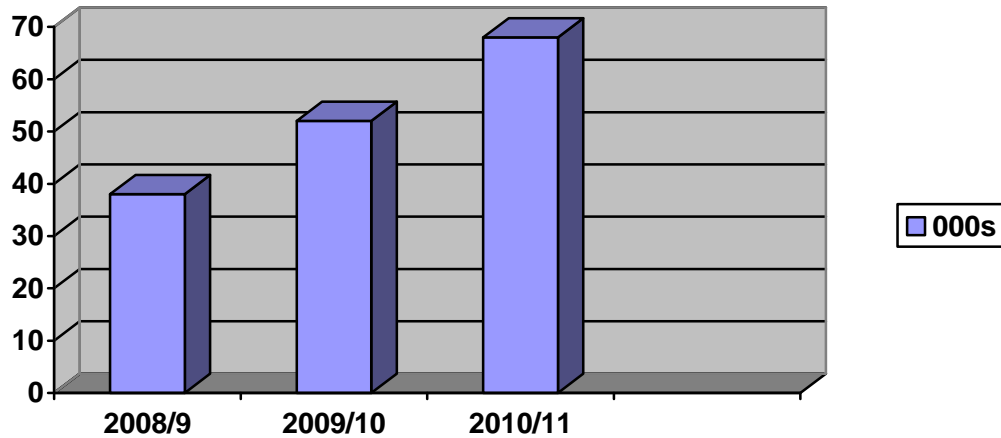
It's more than 12 years ago that Action for Health – Senior Citizens in Newcastle set up the Old Spice Drama Group with the objective of using performances by older people as an alternative way of expressing views about health and safety issues – and also challenging ageist attitudes. The first volunteers were helped to develop a repertoire of songs, sketches and poems which have been used in programmes covering a variety of themes, and reaching out to a range of audiences. In recent years Old Spice

has become involved in using performance at four universities in training programmes for social workers, nurses, and other therapists. We have found that drama is an effective way of conveying messages about services for older people. Now some of the 'old stagers' are ready to retire, so we'd like to hear from anyone interested in helping us to move onto a new phase of work – **Old Spice Mark 2**

**If you would like to know more, please contact Vera Bolter on 233 0200.**

# Did you know ...

... that there has been a steady increase in the number of age discrimination cases lodged with the Tribunal Service? The relevant numbers were 3,800 cases in 2008/9, 5,200 cases in 2009/10 and 6,800 cases in 2010/11.



If you come across an example of age discrimination, please let us know – or take action yourself!

... if you throw away anything made of styrofoam, it will take at least 5000 years to decompose (perhaps never)? And tin foil will never decompose.

Other decomposition rates include:

woollen clothing	1-5 years
cigarette ends	2-12 years
disposable nappies	10-600 years
margarine tubs	35 years
plastic cups	100 years
batteries	100 years
plastic bottles	450 years to never

Small wonder that Britain is running out of landfill sites to dispose of our rubbish!

... that in the year ending last April, Stagecoach made a profit of £240,000,000? This was 25% up on the 2009-10 profit and £153,000,000 came from buses.



## Volunteers needed ....

### Intergenerational work: business skills and experience wanted!



sported. is a national charity that provides support to community sport organisations that work with young people (aged 11-25) in disadvantaged areas.

sported. is now open in the Tyne and Wear area and over the next 18 months will be extending services to the whole of the North East region. They are now looking to involve people with skills and experience interested in mentoring and making a difference to the sustainability of local organisations that use sport for development with young people. They are particularly looking for people with skills and experience in any of the following areas: Business Planning; Finance; Fundraising; Governance; Organisational Policies and Procedures; PR and Marketing; Project Management; Staff Management; Volunteer Management. They also want people with experience in club/sport development within the voluntary sector or working with community groups.

After a 3-hour induction course, mentors are asked to commit to a minimum of 10 hours over a 3-month period. Most of the mentors meet with their member organisation for a couple of hours every 2-3 weeks.

For more information about sported. mentoring, please see the website [www.sported.org.uk](http://www.sported.org.uk) or contact Sandra Hillyard at [S.Hillyard@sported.org.uk](mailto:S.Hillyard@sported.org.uk) or on 0777 560 2137.

## Volunteering with the NE1 Street Rangers?



Thinking about giving something back to your community? Newcastle has so much to offer – great sights to see, places to eat, shop, socialise, to just name a few. So how do people who work and visit Newcastle know of these places? As an NE1 Street Ranger it will be your role to help people find these great places and with any other issues they may have.

The NE1 Street Rangers are the public face of Newcastle. They welcome visitors and offer help when needed, on information, directions and advice on attractions, activities and events taking place in the City Centre. – **cont.** -

# Volunteers needed ....

## Volunteering with the NE1 Street Rangers? – cont. -

They don't require any previous experience, just enthusiasm! Full training is given, uniform is supplied and out-of-pocket expenses will be paid. Applicants from all sections of the community are welcome.

Other benefits of volunteering include:

- meeting a diverse range of people
- boosting your career options
- providing motivation and a sense of achievement
- being part of your community
- learning and developing a new skills
- helping our great city

### Interested?

If you can spare at least two days a month to give something back to Newcastle, then please get in touch. For more information or details on applying, please ring 0191 235 7095 or 0191 235 7094, or e-mail [tariq.albassam@newcastlene1ltd.com](mailto:tariq.albassam@newcastlene1ltd.com).

## Contact the elderly

**Enjoy a lovely afternoon out...**by volunteering with Contact the Elderly. You can find enjoyment and fulfilment in helping to make a real difference to the lives of older people who are otherwise isolated from family and friends.

One Sunday afternoon a month volunteers use their cars to take older guests to and from a volunteer host's home, where they join them for tea, cake and companionship. The hosts take it in turn to welcome the small group into their home for a few hours. The Sunday afternoon tea parties are a lifeline of friendship bringing older people and volunteers together for an afternoon of stories, laughter and fun.



Contact the Elderly are looking for friendly people in Newcastle to help them in one of three ways:

1. **Driving** one or two older members to a tea once a month;
2. **Hosting** a tea party once or twice a year. All you need is easy access to your home, a downstairs loo and a large tea pot!
3. **Coordinating** a group and making sure that everything runs smoothly. Coordinators are often drivers as well.

If you can spare a few hours CTE would love to hear from you. If you would like to find out more, please ring Sheila Ryder on 0143 467 2110, or email [Sheila.ryder@contact-the-elderly.org.uk](mailto:Sheila.ryder@contact-the-elderly.org.uk).

# Research volunteers needed ....



## Brains for Dementia Research

That's right! The Newcastle Brain Tissue Bank wants to collect brains – your brain too! They don't want it until you are well and truly finished with it, though. There's a register of people who plan to donate their brain for research after they die. (This is quite different from having a donor card, which doesn't cover brain donation.) If someone has dementia, then a research nurse will visit them every year. People without dementia can go on the register too. They get a visit every other year. You have to be over 65 years to go on the register.

Scientists can use the brain material to research new treatments for dementia, and get closer to the causes of dementia. Deciding to eventually donate brain tissue can help to reduce the helplessness felt in the face of this condition. It might feel like a small fightback, but it's taking a personal and practical step towards research that will find new treatments for dementia. Getting a regular visit from a research nurse is an extra interaction with someone who knows about dementia. Families eventually get a report on the findings from the donated brain, establishing the type of dementia the person had. When the time comes to make the brain donation, the Brains for Dementia team deal with your funeral director, so there is no delay and no change to your funeral arrangements.

Healthy brains are important too; they show researchers how the brain would be without dementia, and it is comparing the differences that helps researchers understand what has happened to the brain to cause dementia.

For more information about how you can contribute to this project, please contact:

Debbie Lett on telephone 0191 248 1231 or email  
d.j.lett@ncl.ac.uk

## Research volunteers needed ....



Previous research has shown that how well the body regulates blood sugar (glucoregulation) and influences how you perform on a memory task. The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of task difficulty and glucoregulation on memory. After passing an initial screening, the study takes place over 2 days. It involves testing your blood sugar levels (takes approx. 2 hrs 15 mins) and a memory task (takes approx. 1 hr). Participants will be paid £20.00 for taking part.

If you are aged 65 and over and would like to take part, please contact Nicola Jones either by email [nicola.jones@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:nicola.jones@northumbria.ac.uk) or on 0191 243 7030 for more information and to arrange a time and date for initial screening suitable for you.

## Things to do ...



The Annual Exhibition of Disability North takes place on Wednesday and Thursday 21 and 22 September at Newcastle Racecourse. It opens at 10am; on the Wednesday, it will close at 5pm and on the Thursday at 4pm. There is lots to see, including digital technology, aids and adaptations for independent living, and accessible leisure facilities.

This free exhibition provides information, advice and equipment for disabled people, older adults, carers and health/social-care professionals on a range of disability-related issues. For more information, please ring Kevin on 0191 284 0480.

### HAVE YOU HAD YOUR FLU JAB?

This is the time of year for you to have your annual vaccination against flu. If your GP doesn't contact you, please remember to ring up and ask when they are having their vaccination sessions. Then go along and get it done.

## Things to do ...

**Are you a former World War 2 veteran (including Merchant Navy, ATS, WRENS and WAAFs)?**

**Then you qualify for a national-lottery-funded memorial tour.**

Did you know that the National Lottery will fund a return visit to the locations where you served? (For the Far East you will receive £1800!) However, this offer ends on 21 December 2011.

Not only do the veterans themselves qualify, but in the case where a veteran is deceased, their widow/widower qualifies instead. In addition, an individual or a couple are entitled to bring along a carer, for which there is a further generous allowance.

In the case of the RAF, any country you flew over is classed as 'where you served'. Any WW2 veteran who served with or alongside the British armed forces is eligible for the funding.

Veterans have used the funding to return to places including France, Holland, Italy, Greece, Malta, India, America, the Far East, and North Africa.

You can find full information on the "Heroes return" helpline on 0845 000 0121 or by visiting the website [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk) .

## Fancy a tea-dance?



Then go along to the Vermont Hotel at 12.30pm on Friday 23 September to enjoy a cup of tea and a cake or scone and some dancing. The music is provided by the Colin Haikney Trio and a dancing instructor will be on hand for one hour for those who wish to have a dance.

You will also be entertained by a short performance by the performing arts students of Newcastle College.

The cost is £7 per person and the event closes at 3.30pm.

To reserve a place, please contact Paula Burns on 0797 133 6576 or email [paula.burns@yhn.org.uk](mailto:paula.burns@yhn.org.uk) .

# Things to do ...

## Scottish Country Dancing

You may be interested to know about the Kenton Coxlodge & Fawdon Scottish Dance Group. From 12 September they will be meeting on Monday evenings from 7.15-9.15 pm in the hall of Coxlodge Methodist Church, which is situated at the junction of Kenton Road and John Street. The nearest Metro stations are Wansbeck Road and Fawdon; from either of these stations it is approximately a ten- to fifteen-minute walk to the church. There is



a small car park in the grounds of the church. Scottish country dancing helps to maintain bone density and improve basic levels of fitness.

No previous experience is necessary as full instruction is provided. The fee is £3 for each session of two hours. People need to bring soft-soled shoes and wear comfortable clothes which allow for movement to dance in.

## Get out those old photos



The Photographers' Gallery is running a project with Magic Me. It is called **Old New Borrowed Blue**, and is an online photography gallery encouraging people across the generations and especially older people to upload their favourite wedding photograph and accompanying story, and to browse through the online album of wedding photographs and stories displayed on the website. Each photograph submitted is displayed by decade, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when photography was invented, until the present day. Frocks, flowers and cakes are all on show, plus special moments whether happy, unusual or solemn.

You can see the gallery and some of the photos and stories already contributed here:

<http://oldnewborrowedblue.photonet.org.uk/> .

The gallery would really like to encourage more contributors, especially from older generations.

You can find out more about the project here:  
The Photographers' Gallery: [www.photonet.org.uk](http://www.photonet.org.uk)

Magic Me: [www.magicme.co.uk](http://www.magicme.co.uk)

# Dates for your diary ...

## Older People's Day – Full of Life, 1 October

Look out for things happening in the City Library. There will be a fun introduction to technology; find out how to use an iPhone; stay in touch with your family with Skype; use a Kindle, as well as talks, information and more.

Contact the organisers on 0191 277 4100 for more details.

## How about...



Do you cosset your Kindle? Are you passionate about your iPad? Do you know an Apple from an Orange? Or has the digital revolution left you feeling out in the cold? Over the coming months, the Elders Council will be developing ideas for how older people and the wider community can work together to address the digital divide. Watch out for events and local challenges. **In particular, please put this date in your diary now: Thursday 27 October**, when the Elders Council and the Youth Council will be in the IT suite in the City Library to help the uninitiated take their first steps into the digital world.

If you would like to be involved in the early stages of planning this work, contact Steve Whitley on 0191 273 4727 or at [steve.whitley@phonecoop.coop](mailto:steve.whitley@phonecoop.coop) .

# Poetry

## Why Garden?

Gardening keeps you fit – alert  
That's for sure – a dead cert  
Early morning bird song: what a treat  
Dove is ill but robin whistles a greet

Crow announces fox on patrol  
Old foxy with cubs – another role  
Wise old foxy cubs in tow  
Escapes once more to ground below

To hear the birds up in the trees  
Are all aware what's in the breeze  
As soil is turned – their earthly needs  
Are mostly found beside the weeds

Fruit all bright colour – tasty too  
All on display in front of you  
The scent of honeysuckle or roses red  
Herbs spread in containers or in beds

Nature's fertilisers rain, sun (comfrey too)  
Will provide fruit, veg – glorious flowers true  
With nature's help that compost heap  
All transformed – in time, a date to keep

Birds will call their distant mates  
Though gardeners always aware of dates  
A time to dig – time to sow – time to grow  
A time to harvest before the snow!

Wildlife is with us all around  
Study nature and wealth of sound  
Bees are busy throughout the season  
Sustaining garden life for all the season

**John Reid**

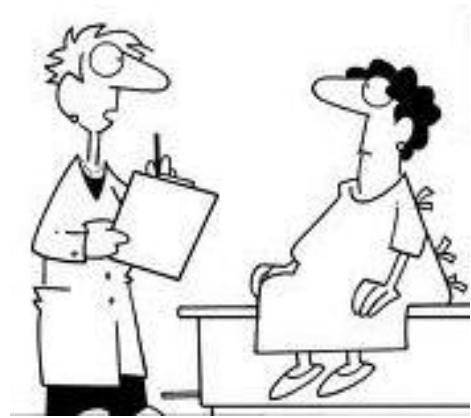


# Poetry

## Physician Heal Thyself

The doctor sadly shook his head.  
"You're really very frail," he said.  
"Those nasty-looking bumpy lumps  
Suggest you have a case of mumps.  
Apart from having laryngitis  
I suspect you've pharyngitis.  
And have you noticed when you sneeze  
Your chest develops quite a wheeze?  
There's clearly every indication  
You should be taking medication."  
So he prescribed a load of pills  
To cover a whole batch of ills,  
Hippocrates' entire range ...  
Everything including mange!  
This all surprised me, just a bit,  
To be diagnosed when I'm fighting fit  
So when my G.P. called a halt,  
I took his advice with a pinch of salt!

**Jane Smailes**



## Things to do ...

### Have you got something for our Gadgies Gallery?

Do you paint, draw, sew, embroider, produce photographs, write poetry or.....? If so, we need your contributions to our constant but changing display of older people's creative work in the office, where it can be seen by visitors. Please ring the Elders Council office for details.

### Some of the current contributions displayed:



*Display of silk painting by June Thexton*

# Correspondence

**Editors' Note:** We very much appreciate members' letters. Please note, however, that we reserve the right to edit them before publication.

Dear Editor,

I don't use a wheelchair but recently have had to request assistance at the airport. I cannot walk distances along corridors or stand for long periods for security checks; also I have the same difficulties entering the airport especially when travelling alone at 5.00am!

On my return after a night flight from Washington and flight delays, I was kept waiting on the plane 40 minutes before someone was available to take me out to departures.

I think Newcastle Airport needs to improve its arrangements for people needing assistance.

Yours faithfully,

J. Wilkinson



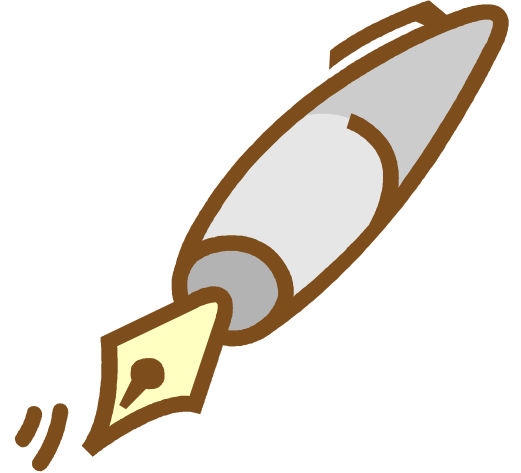
**Note from editors:** We forwarded a copy of this letter to the Airport Manager, who responded that he believed their “PRM (passengers with reduced mobility) service to be one of the most reliable and efficient of all regional airports in the UK”. He continued: “If requested, our terminal services team are able to collect customers from their car and assist passage throughout the process all the way to the aircraft.” He suggested that people who require assistance on arrival should arrange it through their airline; he would then be “happy to help”.

Dear Editors

## **AGE IS JUST A NUMBER**

You are never too young or too old to learn and discover new skills. Indeed learning and discovering is the key to a happy healthy life. It's amazing how babies, even before they can talk or walk, develop lots of skills.

I have always been interested in many things such as art and crafts, circus skills and magic tricks. I am pleased to say that my two grandchildren aged 15 months and 5 years also enjoy playing and learning with me. At the other end of the scale, I also enjoy visiting a day centre where I encourage everyone to take part in many different activities. This year I have also worked with children and learnt about philosophy and at last, at the age of 66, mastered the hula hoop. I would love to see lots of your members hula-hooping, juggling, spinning plates and diabolos as well poi-swinging in the park. So come on, everybody: show Newcastle that AGE IS JUST A NUMBER and have fun whilst keeping healthy. If need be, I would be happy to show you how.



I enjoy reading your newsletter but would like to suggest that you don't use initials without showing what they represent. I don't know what you are referring to by LGBT in your last newsletter.

Best wishes

Allan Robinson  
Clogs the Clown  
High Heaton

Editors' note: We thank Allan for this letter and apologise for not sticking to our policy of using initials only when we've given the full version first – an oversight, we're afraid. "LGBT" stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (people).

# Newsletter Information

## Newsletter Articles



If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the November 2011 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Friday 14 October. (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 £1 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 include 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 a 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 Nathan Gulliver 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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_