



# The Echo

**The Magazine of the Elders Council**

**Issue 106**

**August to October 2024**

At our 2024 Annual General Meeting Anne Raffle, our Chair, reminded us that we are all the Elders Council and it's through our combined efforts that we deliver the work of the organisation and make change happen. Her report was succinct noting the major work across the year.

She also took the opportunity to thank the four trustees who are retiring, Alan Gowers, Violet Rook, Bruce Davenport and John Telfer.



She welcomed three new Trustees joining the Board, Farida Rehman, Sylvia Leigh and Sue Harrop.

Our Treasurer, Keith Williamson, was equally brief. He told us that again we had a deficit budget and that our reserves are reducing. This means there will need to be a big effort to seek more funders to support the work.

We were pleased to see John Grundy, our Patron as health problems have kept him away for a year or two. As always he quickly had the audience laughing at his remarks. On a serious note, he reminded us the future will bring more problems and the Elders Council need to be able to hold those working with older people to account.

Bill Harbottle spoke about the genesis of EC Rider and explained how he had developed it over the years. Anne Bonner explained how she and Catherine Mackereth had undertaken a 'Stakeholder Evaluation' exploring the perspective of key stakeholders on the impact of our work. The final report will be given to the Trustees.

Tim Oxley and Clare Levi took us through the highlights of the year. Clare also gave us a brief overview of the strategic plan for the next three years.

There were lighter moments to enjoy as we were entertained by two very different dance groups. Both groups performed with eloquence and enthusiasm to the great enjoyment of the audience.



You can read the full Annual Report on our website.

<https://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/publications>

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## A Morning of Diet, Nutrition and Health

The Elders Council have worked with Dr. Adrian Holliday (Adrian wrote an article for the last magazine) in looking at nutrition in people aged 65+.

Adrian and his team were investigating low appetite experienced by many older people. At the research morning



in June we heard how your gut hormones 'switch on' the feeling of hunger and also the feeling of being full. Was the 'switch on' hormone (ghrelin) less active in older people?

The older people taking part in the research had to be prepared to fast and have blood taken at regular intervals as well as eat plenty of pasta and tomato sauce.

The researchers discovered that people with low appetites produced more of the ghrelin and that was a surprise. Perhaps over time, people have built a resistance? Several new ideas popped up to be followed through with more research.

Some of you will be aware of the protein-fortified milk drinks people may be offered when they find their appetite is low. The researchers worked with a focus group and discovered that people would much prefer a fortified whole food rather than a drink.

Adrian and his team are now working with the Big River Bakery in Shieldfield to produce affordable and sustainable protein-fortified baked goods.

Dr Oliver Shannon then took the floor and spoke to us about dementia and diet. We know that dementia is not a natural part of ageing although age is a risk factor. For his research Oliver turned to Biobank (many of you will have contributed to the data they hold) to supply his data, that meant thousands of people's data could be analysed. The results showed that we can help protect against some health problems including dementia by having a 'Mediterranean' style diet. This means eating vegetables/ fruit/ fish and using olive oil for cooking and drizzling and not very much red meat or processed food.

These are the broad suggestions:

- Alcohol should be red wine and in moderation
- Snacks – fruit or nuts
- Eat fish at least twice each week
- Eat white meat rather than red
- Add extra veg to stews and casseroles

Protein is vital for skeletal muscle which declines as we age. So, eat more protein to keep muscle power and reduce the risk of frailty.

## **Mary Nicholls**

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### **Meet Meg**

Hello everyone, I am Meg and I am an intern here at the Elders Council. I am currently a student and I am set to graduate this July! I am working with the Elders Council to help make meaningful change in and around the city we all call home. Newcastle is a special place to me, as it is to you, so I would like to assist in making Newcastle a better place to age for all.



I am a creative thinker and I am keen to work on engaging projects to prompt discussions around continually improving Newcastle as a positive ageing space. In my spare time, I work on the Ticket Office at Dance City and I choreograph for primary school children. I am working on an exciting project with Hotspur school where I have created a piece for their forty-year celebration. I am excited to be working with the Elders Council, specifically the Research and Impact Group, and I hope that you will share your thoughts and ideas with me. I look forward to meeting you soon!

## **Meg Hardiman**

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### **Celebrating 10 Years of Jesmond Wellbeing for Life**

Despite heavy rain, a warm welcome awaited attendees at the 10-year anniversary of Jesmond Wellbeing for Life. Guests were greeted with hot drinks and guitar music, setting the tone for a joyful event. A town crier rang her bell to start the celebrations.

Hosts Chris Clarke and Pamela Denham led the record-breaking turnout through a decade of memories. The group's early meetings came to life through Marjorie's ringing bell and Francis's guitar music. The event's highlight was the launch of an anniversary booklet, filled with stories and reflections on the group's journey.

Pamela read from Vera Bolter's musings about ageing in Jesmond and older-person-friendly Newcastle, highlighting the need for accessible urban spaces. Chris spoke about the Gosforth Nature Reserve and the Wild Web project, encouraging participants to explore local flora and fauna.

Mary's verses from her poem, 'September', painted pastoral scenes of idyllic English villages. Alacia's chair exercises brought energy to the room, while John's story of a steel-capped boot saving him from a 1944 factory accident reminded everyone of life's surprising twists. A reading from Sylvia, representing the church community, added depth to the gathering.



The event ended with a buffet, and a cake cut by nonagenarians Shiela and Christine. As the festivities ended, there was a sense of gratitude and a renewed commitment to fostering community and wellbeing. Cheers to Jesmond Wellbeing for Life to the next 10 years!

Contact Pamela for a copy of the booklet at [events@jesmondlibrary.org](mailto:events@jesmondlibrary.org).

Wellbeing for Life sessions are on the first Wednesday of the month, 10:30 am to 12 noon. Sessions are free, but donations are welcome. For transport assistance, contact Francis 07926563160 or [info@gosforthcommunityminibus.co.uk](mailto:info@gosforthcommunityminibus.co.uk).

## Gill Spoor

### International Day of Older People 1 October 2024



This year's UK theme is: "The part we play: celebrating the integral role of older people in our communities".

Check our eBulletin, social media and Information NOW for activities and events around Newcastle during October

## **Thanks EC- Everything is now (almost but not quite) in Place!**

Like many people, I have put off making plans for my future, preferring to get on with the here and now. I knew I ought to think about who might make decisions for me if I could no longer manage myself and get round to updating my will.

However, an article in The Echo (Issue 99 November '22- January '23) made me sit up and think again. The article was about someone who had died suddenly and all the problems that then arose from the person not having a will nor any family nearby.

It certainly made me think about what would happen if I died suddenly and how difficult it could be for those left behind. So last year, when the EC offered free places on a course called *Everything in Place*, which was designed to get you thinking ahead, I was ready to sign up. Hopefully I thought to myself, this might give me the nudge I needed to get on and DO something at last!



I signed up for this programme which was run expertly and sensitively by a chaplain from a local Marie Curie hospice and the Newcastle City Council carers lead. Over a number of sessions, we got information and advice on a number of areas including wills, power of attorney, mental capacity, advance care planning, funeral planning and even subjects I had never thought about such as being careful about your digital legacy.

These are never easy subjects to discuss but somehow a small group of us felt a safe space had been created that enabled us to chat about all sort of things, use humour when appropriate and above all, have the time and practical tools to think ahead about what we might want for ourselves and our friends and family.

One year later, thanks to this course, I have now updated my will, sorted out power of attorney (should this be necessary) and discussed advance care planning with family.

It has not been easy nor cheap but, my goodness, it is such a relief to have got all this sorted at last! However, some things such as funeral planning will have to wait a little longer!

**Julie Irvine**

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Dear Editor,

I studied the photograph of the hands in the article (issue 105) which appeared to show an older hand being firmly gripped by a younger hand. I compared my own hands in the position illustrated and found that



they looked young or old depending on which parts were showing. A choice can be made as to which choice represents you.

I have two hearing aids so I am always pleased when someone looks at me and enunciates clearly.

I look after myself and go to easy exercise classes and I am not white haired as in the other photograph but am 88 and know that age diminishes physical strength, agility and balance so bravado can be dangerous. I welcome the assistance I am offered at the city's department store coffee shops. My impression is that they are happy and willing to assist and please.

Yours faithfully, William Lynn

*We are always pleased to receive letters emails and phone calls from you.*

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## **Intergenerational Exchange**

My name is Jake and I am 15 years old and coming to the end of my first school year studying for my GCSE qualifications. I have been given the opportunity for a week of work experience with the Elders Council. This experience has been both interesting and beneficial as I have had the opportunity to work and communicate with older people, an age group I had little experience with in the past and learnt how and why the older generation of Newcastle would like to have a voice in key decisions.

I began the week in the office of the Elders Council and learnt how the staff worked day to day to achieve their goal of giving the local



older people a voice. My project for the week was to photograph activity and create content for Facebook.

I went along to Jesmond library to witness The Jesmond Wellbeing group; a local gathering intended to improve and maintain health during older years of life. I then went to the Tyneside Irish Centre to meet the Chinese Healthy Living group and witnessed their session of Tai Chi, dancing, and announcements in both English and Cantonese.

My overall impression during these visits was that there was a rich atmosphere of community and joy, which could strongly increase mental health and wellbeing for those who took part. I am thankful to the Elders Council for this opportunity.

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## Looking Forward

### The Impact of the Elders Council

One of our priorities for this year is to demonstrate the impact of our work. We started this process by making a film last year with members talking about what the Elders Council means to them. You can find the film on the home page of our website <https://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/>

A couple of new Elders Council members have also conducted interviews with colleagues at Newcastle City Council to evaluate our role and effectiveness. These discussions highlighted the EC's substantial influence on local governance, particularly within Newcastle City Council.

### Amplifying Older Voices

Initial findings underscore the EC's crucial role in ensuring that older people's voices are heard by the City Council. Respondents praised the EC for challenging stereotypes and engaging with diverse communities.

### Influencing Policy and Practice

Interviews with council officers revealed that the EC significantly influences decision-making. EC initiatives have led to impactful changes, such as the revitalisation of the Age Friendly City



initiative; 'Managing the Home Care Circus' report - the whole service was rewritten as a response, in order to provide a more flexible service for older people.

### **Benefits and Opportunities for Growth**

Respondents all agreed on the benefits of integrating older people's perspectives into policy and practice. However, they also identified areas for growth. Suggestions included increasing collaboration with the NHS regional Integrated Care Board and improving representation of the diversity of older people.

### **Priorities for 2024 -2027**

We want to enhance our outreach and impact. We will grow and develop our membership through creative projects, research, events, and focus groups.

We remain committed to representing diverse communities, supporting outreach in local neighbourhoods, and securing funding for ongoing projects.

Through these activities we continue to address the important topics for older people such as housing, health, transport, digital exclusion, employment, social care, diversity and inclusion and the built environment.

By championing inclusivity, collaboration, and creativity, the EC continues to be a formidable advocate for the rights and interests of older people, challenging ageism, and promoting social justice.

**Clare Levi**

## **Heritage and Culture**

Our 'heritage' is our past, though we usually use the word to refer mainly to those bits of our history that we are proud of, and if we happen to live in Newcastle like I do, there are an awful lot of those to be found. In fact, I can't think of a city in this country which has a wider range of historic stuff than we do. The Great North Museum has prehistoric things found during excavations at the castle; there's Roman stuff all over the place (Aal ower, as they say – even our accent is a source of historic pride). Heaton, Fawdon, Jesmond and



so on are all Anglo-Saxon names while Benwell and Walker remind us that the Vikings were here too and after Easter 1080 AD, when Robert Curthose, William the Conqueror's eldest son, started to construct the castle, the town expanded at an extraordinary rate and became one of the shock successes of the Middle Ages, rich in surviving castles, towers and medieval churches. Its defensive walls were among the finest in the country and more of them survive than anywhere else except for York (and possibly Southampton).

For most places, that would be enough heritage to keep people happy for a month of Sundays or Bank holidays, but Newcastle had barely started. After a fascinating 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century history which has left us with a magnificent legacy of beautiful building from those times, there was still the Industrial Revolution to come, the invention of the Railways and electric lighting, Lord Armstrong and the development of hydraulic power, Charles Parsons and the Steam turbine, wonderful bridges and splendid Victorian and Edwardian commercial building.

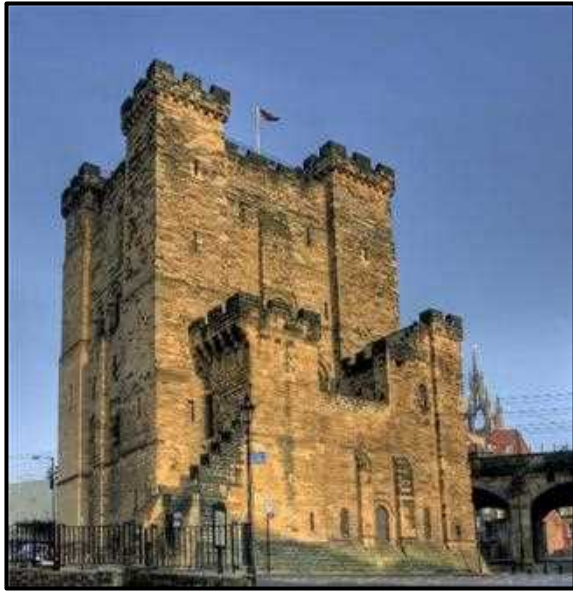
Tyneside in the broader national imagination is thought of as a hard and gritty post-industrial place – and so it is, but it is so much more than that, it is a place with a rich, varied and enthralling heritage.

**John Grundy** *Image: John posing as a Roman soldier*

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## **The Route of Hadrian's Wall through Newcastle**

Every year thousands of people walk the Hadrian's Wall National Path which runs for 84 miles, passing some of the most beautiful and rugged countryside in England. But how many of them realise that they are not following the real route of the Wall through Newcastle? The official Path diverts from the actual Wall at Heddon, and does not meet it again until Wallsend. This omission was acknowledged when the National Path was created, and a



commitment was made to add a waymarked route through Newcastle. More than twenty years later we are still waiting.

The route of Hadrian's Wall through Newcastle is actually part of a World Heritage Site. It was recognised by UNESCO in 1987, and in 2005 it became part of the International Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site. There were two major forts within the present-day boundaries

of Newcastle – Condercum in Benwell and Pons Aelius in the centre of the city. Although for most of the route there is little visible evidence of the Roman presence, there are some significant preserved remains such as the Roman temple and Vallum Crossing at Benwell, some substantial stretches of Wall at Denton Burn, and various places where the location of the ditch and vallum can be identified within the landscape.

The Roman heritage is an important part of Newcastle's history. In fact, the origins of the city can be traced back to the civilian settlement that grew up around the Roman fort whose site is now covered by Newcastle's castle.

*Image: Newcastle castle built on the site of the Roman fort of Pons Aelius, and it is believed that the Wall ran under here.*

Last year St James' Heritage & Environment Group published "Gannin' Along the Wall", a unique walk guide to the whole 12-mile route of Hadrian's Wall through Newcastle, which is also a journey through the fascinating history of Newcastle. Those who successfully complete the walk, whether in one go or in sections, are entitled to a certificate signed by Antenociticus the Roman God of Benwell. For more information, email [stjamesbenwell@gmail.com](mailto:stjamesbenwell@gmail.com). The Group has also made a short film about the route of Hadrian's Wall through Newcastle, free to view on the website [stjamesheritage.com](http://stjamesheritage.com).

**Judith Green, St James Heritage and Environment Group**

## Seaton Delaval Hall

This estate sits between Whitley Bay and Blyth has been a part of my life since my early teens.



As a schoolboy I heard tales of the ghost of the White Lady which could be seen at a window of the east wing of the hall. So, one early November evening two of my school friends and I set off on our bikes from Cullercoats to investigate, we sat on the grass outside the hall waiting expectantly, unfortunately our wait was to prove fruitless, and after an hour of freezing November cold we gave up and cycled home disappointed.

Some years later I attended medieval banquets at the hall, a somewhat warmer and pleasurable experience, but recently I have joined the National Trust as a house experience volunteer and now give some of my time to engage with the many visitors to the hall. Working as a volunteer has afforded me the opportunity to meet and engage with some really interesting people

Captain Francis Blake Delaval and his wife Rhoda moved into the newly built Hall in 1728. Over 20 years they had 12 children.

It was during this period that the hall gained its reputation for outrageous behaviour and wild parties and the family being known as the 'Gay Delavals'.

The architect of Seaton Delaval Hall, Sir John Vanbrugh was also the architect of some of the most important country houses of his era, Castle Howard (commissioned in 1699) and Blenheim Palace (commissioned in 1704).

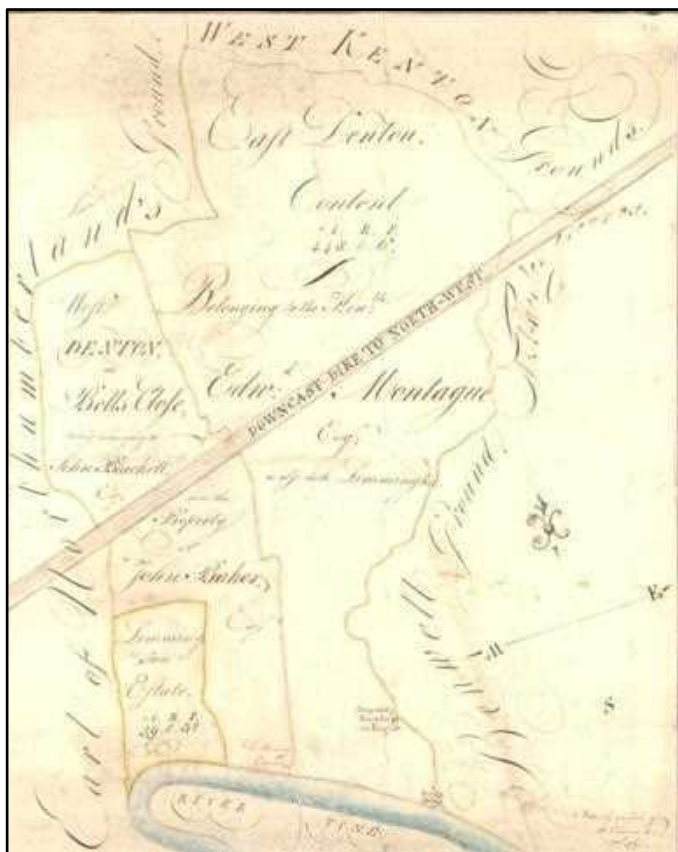
Unfortunately, Vanbrugh would not live to see the completion of Seaton Delaval Hall. He died from an asthma attack in 1726, two years before the work was finished.

**John Peacock** *Image: Seaton Delaval Hall provided by John Peacock*

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## **The Common Room (formerly The Mining Institute)**

The Common Room holds the collections of The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers. The archives include the original working collections donated by engineers back in the early days of the Institute including those of Buddle, Watson, Johnson and Forster.<sup>1</sup> These include notebooks, diaries, accounts, correspondence and manuscript plans. They are largely focused on the Great Northern Coalfield. The Common Room also has the collections of the Robert Stephenson Trust, the Stephenson Locomotive Society Newcastle Centre, and the Tyne Industrial



Archaeology Group. All the archives have a purpose designed storage space on the ground floor.

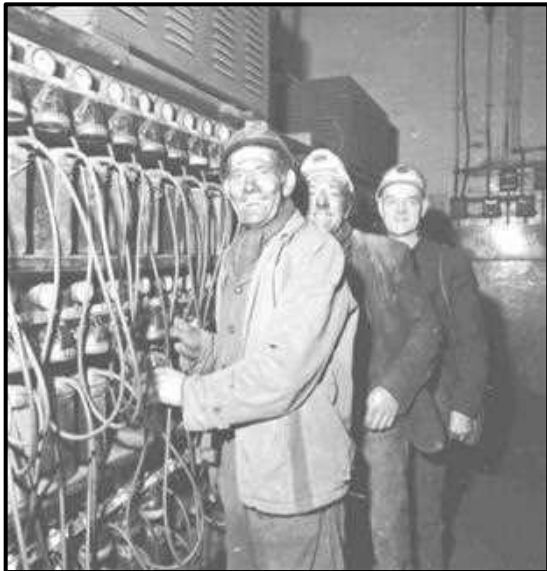
The map collection is focused on the Great Northern Coalfield and northern Pennine Orefield area. It includes both printed and manuscript maps and ranges from Ordnance Survey, to geological to underground plans.

Book collections remain on the balconies in the Wood Hall; researchers can ask for them to be brought to the reading room.

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<sup>1</sup> These collections were housed for many years at the Northumberland Records Office and were prefixed "NRO 3410/" The numbering has been preserved and documents can still be retrieved using these reference numbers.

Volunteers are working towards digitising the photographic collection, including slides and negatives. It is a mammoth task and will take years. It is also almost never ending as more photographs are donated. We rely on our volunteers with mining



expertise to identify machinery or processes shown on the images.

If you are interested in accessing the collections in person, please visit our website for information: <https://thecommonroom.org.uk> as all visits to consult documents must be prebooked. Visiting us is free of charge but donations are appreciated.

The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers itself is very much alive and continues as a Royal Chartered body to offer a growing lecture programme and other events<sup>2</sup>. They have retained an office within the building and have use of the lecture theatre for their programme.

## **Jennifer Hillyard Librarian at The Common Room**

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### **Lemington Gut**

The riverside at Lemington has a rich industrial heritage associated with a number of major industries including glass production and iron and steel working. Although the industries have gone, there are still significant traces to be seen, including structures associated with the ironworks and the Grade 11\* listed cone of the glassworks, some dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Lemington's history was inextricably linked with the coal trade. As the highest navigable point on the Tyne, it became an important Terminus for waggonways bringing coal from the collieries in the surrounding area.

From the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, there were staithe here where coal was loaded onto keels which transported it downriver. In the 1870s

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<sup>2</sup> Please see [mininginstitute.org.uk](http://mininginstitute.org.uk) for details of their upcoming events.

major works carried out by the Tyne Improvement Commission changed the route of the river by creating a new channel to bypass the loop south of Lemington, reducing the journey for river traffic on this stretch of the Tyne. The section of the river below Lemington



was turned into a backwater which became known as the Gut.

Before the development of the railways reached Lemington in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, river transport was crucial to the

movement of raw materials and finished goods. Extensive quaysides were built at Lemington for this purpose. Substantial remains of these quaysides remain despite the disappearance of the adjacent industries. There are even remnants of the old wooden staithe and of a bridge constructed to access a First World War munitions factory. An archaeological assessment carried out in 1999 described the Lemington quaysides as having a high state of survival and local rarity, comparable to those in the Ouseburn.

However, without some form of preservation, these historic remains may soon be lost forever, as the former industrial area north of the Gut is currently the site of major redevelopment plans.

*Image: this photograph from about 1905 shows Lemington's quaysides lined with industrial buildings. From left to right are the coal staithe, the power station, the ironworks' chimneys and the glassworks' cones.*

**Judith Green, St James Heritage and Environment group**

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### **The Library of the Literary and Philosophical Society**

On the ground floor of the Lit and Phil library you might enjoy a lunch-time jazz or chamber music concert or a knowledgeable talk about art. Or keep quietly away while music exams are in progress.

On two upper floors and in the basement there are books – about 200,000 it seems. The biggest independent library outside of



London. And tables and chairs, of course. And newspapers and magazines.

And coffee. And helpful staff. Who could want more? Well, I suppose I did and that's exactly where I got it.

I retired from work and spent the next twenty-five years pursuing my favourite hobby, writing. I wrote plays, memoirs and stories, some long, some short. I have a laptop but all of my initial thinking was done with a pen in my hand and in total quiet. When I make something up it's alive in my head, characters talk to each other, argue, laugh, weep. They disappear if the outside world interrupts, even just with 'would you like a coffee now?'

So, for all these years of my older-age writing I spent hours and hours in the basement room of the Lit and Phil. This room has floor to ceiling shelves of old history books. Some shelves protrude into the room and in the small space between two such protruding shelves there would be a table and a chair. Here was privacy and silence for me!

And then one flight of stairs back up to the main library - for a magazine or for browsing or for a planned coffee with a friend.

**Betty Weiner** *Image :The Lit & Phil*

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## **Newcastle's heritage and post-war planning**

It is said that a combination of councillors, town planners, architects and developers did more damage to the architectural heritage in British cities than the German Luftwaffe. Newcastle illustrates the claim. It did not suffer devastating air raids yet poor town planning can cost much in terms of the trashing of once beautiful buildings.



The city had a lucky escape just after the war in 1946 when the Percy Parr plan proposed the demolition of huge areas of central Newcastle to make way for a dense road network. Mercifully, it came to nothing. The real 'blitz' came in the 1960s.

City 'boss' T Dan Smith is often blamed but the real culprit was the new chief city planner Wilfred Burns. He actually put down his thoughts in a book revealingly entitled 'New Towns for Old'. It advocated widespread demolition in the name of 'modernisation'. To some extent, it reflected the fads of the time: for the 'brutalist style' architecture, urban motorways, 'skyways' and underpasses for pedestrians, tower blocks for council tenants.



It cost Newcastle dearly. Losses included the Royal Arcade, the Douglas Hotel, the old Town Hall, the first Central Library, the Handyside Arcade and most of old Eldon Square. But the costs were greater since many of their 'modern' replacements simply failed, some having to be pulled down. All lacked 'human scale' as well as aesthetic merit.

They included the Bank of England on Pilgrim Street and the particularly ghastly Westgate House outside the Central Station as well as the Cruddas Park housing scheme. The big tower blocks neither saved land nor money, whilst creating many social problems.

Looking at new constructions such as the Hadrian Tower or proposals for the Malmo Quay by the mouth of the Ouseburn, it is not clear whether lessons have been learned.

**Sandy Irvine** *Images: provided by Sandy*

# Information for you

## Landlines change to digital

BT has announced that it will be converting all landlines from copper connexions to an internet-based system called Digital Voice.



They claim that this will be a better service that “will give you the same reliability, trust and familiarity of your current home phone service and it will have crystal-clear calls and the ability to block nuisance calls at the touch of a button”.

They have a website [www.bt.com/help/landline/what-is-digital-voice-and-how-can-i-get-it](http://www.bt.com/help/landline/what-is-digital-voice-and-how-can-i-get-it) that provides further details.

BT says the change is needed because the existing network is 40-years old and becoming increasingly difficult to support. The changeover is compulsory, there are supposed to be some exempt customers.

BT encourage you to contact them if you have any misgivings. They will contact everyone who is affected at least four weeks prior to providing new equipment.

We believe there are many things BT hasn't properly considered.

**Our advice is to be proactive – contact your provider for assurances and to make them aware of your need for/ reliance upon your landline, be it for personal safety or something else.**

**BT contact 0330 1234 150**

The Elders Council is keeping this initiative under review and would welcome your views and concerns. If you've already had your landline converted, please let us know how it went.

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## Free Passports?

A group of older people, including some of our members were discussing passports over a cup of coffee - whether to pay for a new one given the ages of the group and health problems.

Someone had heard of free passports for those aged 80+ and one of our members asked the Elders Council to check this out. Below is the information.

'A scheme was introduced in 2004 to provide free passports for British citizens then aged 75 or over "in grateful commemoration for their wartime efforts". The scheme is aimed at those who were 16 or over at the end of the war.



From time-to-time calls are made to extend the scheme, so that it would provide for free passports for all persons above a certain age. However, successive governments have rejected this idea. They have argued that introducing an ongoing age-related concession for free passports would be considerably more expensive than the existing scheme, and could require an increase in the passport fee paid by other applicants.'

From: The House of Commons Library

We think this is still the case so if you were born in 1929 you may still be eligible. Happy travelling!

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## **Physician Associates**

Physician Associates (PAs) are a relatively new group of healthcare workers who work in hospitals or general practice. They are not doctors, but are dependent clinicians, working under the supervision of a named doctor. They work within a defined scope of practice and limits of competence. There are approximately 3,200 PAs working in GP surgeries and hospitals in England, with 10,000 more planned in the next decade or so. They were introduced to help doctors with their work - examining and diagnosing patients and discussing treatments.

Unlike doctors, PAs do not have a medical degree. They undertake a two-year training course - MSc in Physician Associate Studies. Entrants require a prior science or healthcare related degree. Newcastle University runs a course.

PAs can take medical histories, diagnose and manage patients with long-term conditions. Unlike doctors, they cannot prescribe or request X-rays or CT scans.

A dilemma for patients is that on occasions they are unaware that they are not seeing a doctor, as there are a number of clinicians from various professions seeing patients in clinic. As well as PAs, there are Clinical and Consultant Pharmacists and Nurse Specialists working in hospitals and GP practices. Of course, there is no confusion if the clinician explains to the patient at the beginning of the consultation, their role and their scope of practice. If this doesn't happen, it is within our gift as patients to ask what professional group the clinician belongs to, rather than assume we know.

PAs are currently unregulated but there is a planned law that they be regulated by the General Medical Council. However, the British Medical Association, the doctors' union, is requesting that PAs are not licensed by the same body as doctors, as they believe this could lead to patients confusing the different roles. Discussions are ongoing.

**Anne Henry**

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## **Alzheimer's Society**



In our role as a dementia charity, Alzheimer's Society is committed to providing help and hope to people affected by dementia. We operate across the North East and our services bring advice, support and an understanding ear to people living

with dementia - as well as their loved ones and carers. In the North East 41,000 live with some form of dementia and by 2040 the number will be more like 57,000. That's a lot of devastation being caused by an illness that is not an inevitable part of ageing.

Dementia Advisers in Newcastle have a varied role; supporting people living with dementia to come to terms with their diagnosis; providing advice to someone who is worried about their memory;

helping families to navigate the support and information they need on their dementia diagnosis journey; being involved with local networks to ensure we are aware of the support and options available for people we support – and so much more!

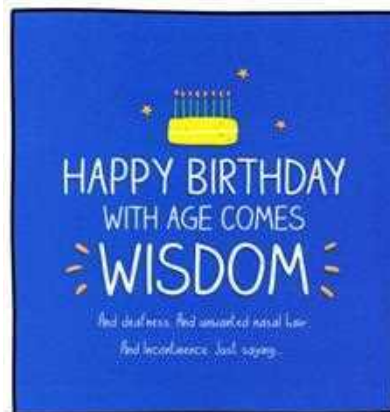
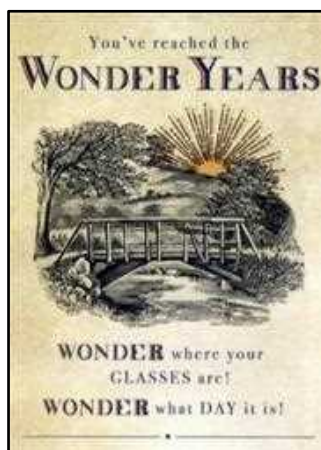
We liaise with a wide range of other professionals including doctors and community nurses, social prescribers, benefits advisers, the local authority and other charities. Anyone can come to us for support and they can get in touch independently. Many of our referrals do come from the NHS Memory Clinics, where people are sent by their GPs in order to get their diagnosis. The support we can give at that stage is vital.

In the local area anyone who would like a bit of advice and support can contact us **0191 2983989**. Our website [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk) is an excellent source of information. Our online peer support community, our Dementia Support Forum, is a great space in which to seek advice, tips and a listening ear from other people who are experiencing similar difficulties – I'd say to anyone who is worried or needs help – please, just reach out!

**Kathryn Walker, Dementia Adviser, Alzheimer's Society**

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### **How do you feel about birthday cards that mock age?**



The [Better Birthdays campaign](#) is an international partnership launched in 2022 between [Canopy](#) in the UK, [Changing the Narrative](#) and [Age-Friendly Vibes](#) in the USA. Please read the full version on <https://platform60.org.uk/>

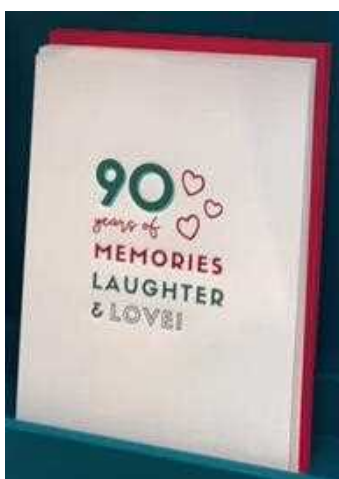
One of the goals is to influence card designers and retailers to start making and selling age-positive cards. We've met with senior executives in the UK Greeting Card industry to raise awareness of ageism. Ageism is now added to the agenda for the UK Greeting Card Association. In 2023 the [February issue of Progressive Greetings](#) included an article on ageism in Birthday cards.

In 2023 we ran an online workshop about ageism for the staff at [UK Greetings](#), one of the major players in the UK greeting card industry. They then informed us they were developing age friendly cards and were to publish Age Friendly Vibes cards in the UK. These were launched on 4<sup>th</sup> June and are on sale now. **The majority of ageist cards are sent by older people themselves** and they aren't doing so to upset their friends.

**But that doesn't mean that no harm is done.** What happens when they sit on a shelf in a supermarket looking out at everyone? They tell everyone who sees them that to grow old is to become less, is to be ridiculed and avoided if possible. General awareness of ageism remains low. However, once highlighted people 'get it' and respond positively. As long as older people buy these cards, card designers will continue to make them. We need to highlight the implications of internalised ageism amongst older people.

#### What you can do:-

1. Buy Age-Positive cards
2. [Take the Survey – Better Birthdays](#)



**Dave Martin**

Images: *All the card images provided by Dave*

# Ways to Donate

Every penny counts! No matter how small, the Elders Council really values your donation.

Your donation will help us provide information to our members by printing and posting this magazine.

Each magazine costs about **£2.62** to print and post.

## **Direct payment**

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Sort Code: 08-92-99                  Account Number: 65079623

**PayPal** A quick and easy way to donate via our website

<https://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/donate>

**Cheque** Post a cheque payable to the "The Elders Council of Newcastle" to the address on the back of this magazine.

**Cash** We also accept cash donations. Please ring the office to arrange collection.

**www.giveasyoulive.com** Log on to this address every time you shop online and nominate the Elders Council as your chosen charity. It costs you nothing and we receive a small percentage of the sale.

**Legacy** Some members have chosen to leave the Elders Council a legacy. By deciding to remember us in your will, you can really help the Elders Council to continue its work.

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# Magazine Information

## Magazine articles

Do you have a great article or an idea for one or an axe you want to grind for the next magazine? Then please send it to us by **Friday 13 September 2024**, to us at [info@elderscouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@elderscouncil.org.uk) You may also post articles to us at the address below. Articles that are typed or word-processed are really appreciated but hand-written articles are fine. **Please note the editor reserves the right to alter, adapt or change articles submitted to the magazine.**

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**Reminder** If you move, change your email address or telephone number, please let us know so that we can keep our records up to date.

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