

Advantage

Age Scotland's magazine: winter 18/19, issue 53

Age Scotland
Love later life



75 years of older people's groups!

Celebrating
75 years, Pg 4



Hip hop dancing
at 99, Pg 12



A royal occasion,
Pg 21



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Front cover image: Ellon and District Men's Shed making a prayer area for local Indian restaurant

Advantage is the Age Scotland magazine that provides information, inspiration and ideas to empower Scotland's older people, their friends, families and carers.

If you have news, events or issues that you would like Advantage to cover, please get in touch. We would also welcome ideas on how we might improve the magazine. To stop receiving Advantage, please just get in touch with us on the details below.

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Brian Sloan, Chief Executive

Welcome to your Winter edition of Advantage magazine. 2018 was certainly a busy year for the charity and we have some exciting announcements for our plans for 2019 and beyond, which you can read about in this edition.

As 2018 was our 75th Anniversary we took the time to reflect on the number of individuals, groups and organisations who have worked tirelessly on behalf of older people over the last 75 years. It was truly humbling to learn more about their efforts through our 'Speaking Up for Age' project and there was much to celebrate. It's wonderful to see how far we've come but there is still much work to do.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Advantage. We always appreciate your feedback and would love to hear what you think about the magazine. If you have any projects, stories or campaigns you'd like us to help showcase please do get in touch by writing to us at 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR or by emailing advantage@agescotland.org.uk.

Brian Sloan



Brian Sloan, Christine Grahame MSP, Christina McKelvie MSP, George Foulkes



Celebrating Age Concern Ayr, Dundee Age Concern, Falkirk Age Concern and Glasgow's Golden Generation

Celebrating Age Scotland's 75th Anniversary!

We were delighted to celebrate our 75th anniversary with a reception in the Scottish Parliament, where we were joined by the Minister for Older People, Christina McKelvie MSP.

Over 150 volunteers, individuals from our member groups and politicians celebrated the work of community organisations working to improve the lives of older people in Scotland over seven decades. We also heard from Age Scotland Chair Lord George Foulkes who has been heavily involved over the last 45 years, from his time on the Scottish Older People's Welfare Committee, the first Scottish Director of Age Concern and as the current Chair of Age Scotland.

In the last edition of Advantage, we told you about our "Speaking up for our age" project which documents the 75 year history of national and local older people's groups and organisations in Scotland. We were pleased to launch the project's publication and show a preview of a new film produced as part

of the project at the reception; watch out for the film on the Age Scotland website!

Four older people's charities received special awards at the reception. Age Concern Ayr, Dundee Age Concern, Falkirk Age Concern and Glasgow's Golden Generation. These are all important charities who were founded in the 1940s, have illustrious histories and are still providing outstanding service and support to older people in their communities today. We were thrilled that representatives from each charity could join us at the reception to celebrate – and be celebrated!

Minister for Older People, Christina McKelvie MSP said: "I warmly wish Age Scotland a happy 75th birthday. Age Scotland share our desire to ensure older people enjoy fulfilled and meaningful lives, where they are properly celebrated and able to play a full part in society. Reaching 75 is a fantastic achievement for any charity. I am confident Age Scotland is well placed to continue its great work helping older people in Scotland for many more years to come."



Our Chief Executive Brian Sloan added "We're delighted to celebrate this significant anniversary with so many older people's groups, supporters and volunteers who've built and contributed to our work over the last 75 years. It is especially welcome that Scotland's first Minister for Older People helped lead this celebration and thank you to Deputy Presiding Officer Christine Grahame for hosting this reception in the Scottish Parliament. Over the last 75 years, Age Scotland and predecessor charities from the Scottish Older People's Welfare Committee, to Age Concern and Help the Aged have been at the forefront of campaigning to improve the lives of older people

in Scotland. The history is fascinating and the issues affecting the lives of older people have broadly remained consistent. Housing, poverty, health and loneliness are all issues which affect older people as much today as they did 75 years ago. We have come far, but there is still a long way to go."

Thank you to Christina McKelvie MSP for delivering the keynote speech and to Christine Grahame MSP for hosting the event. We'd also like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund and Solicitors for older people for sponsoring the event. But most of all thank you to all our guests for joining us to celebrate!



A new Dementia Policy and Practice Forum for Scotland

For many people in Scotland living with dementia and their unpaid carers, a one-size-fits-all approach to their care does not always take into account the vital aspects of their everyday life and well-being.

This needs to change.

Thanks to a ground-breaking investment of £2.5 million from the Life Changes Trust, Age Scotland, the University of Edinburgh and Queen Margaret University to deliver two bold new initiatives; a National Forum for Dementia Policy and Practice and a School of Leadership in Dementia. Both projects will support people with dementia and carers to become experts, leaders and influencers in Scotland.

Our joint mission is a Scotland where having dementia doesn't matter to who someone is or how they live their life.

People affected by dementia and their unpaid carers will be at the heart of this work. They are the real experts and are on every street in Scotland. Together we will identify and demonstrate what works in terms of human rights, peer support, early intervention, prevention and a relationship-centred approach to care.

We will listen to them and respect their experience so they know they are valued.

Scotland has already led the way with its three National Dementia Strategies. The creation of the

Our joint mission is a Scotland where having dementia doesn't matter to who someone is or how they live their life.

National Forum will bring together people with experience and expertise in dementia, locally and nationally, with the aim of evidencing what will create better lives for people with dementia and unpaid carers. The Forum will provide space to scrutinise policy and practice in many areas, including housing and dementia, sport and dementia, the arts and dementia, and human rights and dementia.

We are incredibly proud that so many wonderful organisations are partnering with us to deliver this ground-breaking Policy and Practice Forum.

We will promote evidence of what works well so that national and local policy and practice can be reviewed and, where necessary, adjusted. This is so that Scotland can become an exemplar of how, in all aspects of life, people with dementia can find meaning, be fully supported and involved.

The Forum will work hard to ensure that policy makers, service providers and the public know what matters to people affected by dementia and use our evidence to show how to make Scotland a better place to live.

We're hugely proud and excited about what can be achieved for people affected by dementia and their unpaid carers.

More information about how Age Scotland member groups can get involved will be available in the next few months. To register your interest, please email dementia@agescotland.org.uk.



Christina McKelvie MSP with Age Scotland Chief Executive Brian Sloan and Telephony Manager Laura Stenhouse



Body Boosting Bingo (photo: Eoin Carey)

Minister for Older People visits Age Scotland helpline

We were delighted to welcome Christina McKelvie MSP to visit the Age Scotland helpline. The Minister spoke with our advisers and Community Connecting team to learn more about the issues faced by older people across Scotland and hear more about Age Scotland's work to address those issues. Ms McKelvie also listened to examples of the kind of calls we receive to the helpline, from queries about housing to social care to benefits checks.

In 2018, we helped older people across Scotland access **£530,778.24** in benefits that they were unaware they were entitled to. Make sure you are receiving all the support you are entitled to.



Call the Age Scotland helpline for a free and quick entitlements check on **0800 12 44 222** (Monday to Friday 9 – 5).

We're here to help.

Coming soon – host your own Body Boosting Bingo session!

Body Boosting Bingo is the health craze for older people that's sweeping the country. We've been hosting games from Gretna to John O'Groats and even did a special showcase game with MSPs at the Scottish Parliament. It's proved so popular that we've developed versions that you can use to host a Body Boosting session yourself - whenever it suits you. And it's free for Age Scotland members!

If you haven't already, you can request a fun game for your member group with our Allied Health Professionals Yolanda and Jenny. But we don't want you to stop your Body Boosting Bingo there! You will soon be able to download a version to your PC, laptop or tablet, or you can order a DVD to use with a TV. Alternatively you can use the pocket game to play anywhere.



Watch out for more details coming soon or reserve your copy now by emailing BBB@agescotland.org.uk.



Milan is a part of my Life

Mr Miah, Mr Choudhry, Mr Kapoor, and Mr Masih enjoy playing dominoes when they meet on Thursday



Representatives of MILAN accepting the 2014 Age Scotland Services for Older People Award

We open our hearts and listen to each other

As part of Age Scotland's Speaking Up for Our Age project marking 75 years of older people's groups and organisations in Scotland, this August Milan Social Welfare Organisation in Edinburgh organised a special event for members, staff and supporters to celebrate their history and their work today.

Milan means friendly meeting place and started in 1991 providing day care, educational and social activities and information and advice for older members of the, Bangladeshi, Indian, Mauritian and Pakistani communities in Edinburgh and Lothians. The word is common to the languages of all four communities. Over the years the charity has grown to also provide company and support to older people who are housebound and isolated, and a space for informal carers to have some quality time outwith their caring role.

Mrs Farooq is one of the founders of Milan. Born in India before partition, Mrs Farooq moved to

Edinburgh in 1968 to join her husband who was an automobile engineer working with Ford. In the late 1980s she helped to set up Shakti Women's Aid to support black and minority ethnic women and children experiencing domestic abuse and also started a number of Asian women's groups in the city with support from the Council's Community Education Service and other voluntary organisations in the city.

"We started women's groups in community centres, in the Southside of Edinburgh and Leith Walk, and by managing those women's groups we realised that there were older people who had nowhere to go. The parents were living with the families of the women we were working with. The name Milan means place for a meeting. We thought that there is a need for Milan - where the older people can meet. At first it was for one day, then we made it three days. The Tuesday and Wednesday groups are mixed groups but the Thursday group is especially for very old people and people who are vulnerable, who use wheelchairs, and need more comfort and patience. It is a very good idea to have this group on Thursdays."

Part of the success of Milan is that from the very beginning the charity welcomed older people from across the Bangladeshi, Indian, Mauritian and Pakistani communities. Mr Choudhry first joined the Milan Thursday lunch club three years ago on the recommendation of his sister and now attends three days a week. As well as being able to eat a hot nutritious meal, he enjoys the varied activities, the games, the information talks on keeping healthy, the group walks and the trips, but the biggest difference he finds is the company. "We open our hearts and listen to each other", he explains. Before attending the lunch club Mr Choudhry sat in the house focussing on his troubles and feeling stressed. One of the recent additions to group activities is a garden plot where members are enjoying growing vegetables and herbs such as coriander for cooking.

Older members who are unable to attend events and outings are not left out either, thanks to Mrs Mirza, a Milan member and volunteer. For the past 15 years Mrs Mirza has been writing about Milan's activities for the charity's newsletter which is distributed regularly to members. It all started with a request to write about the holidays to Bradford and Liverpool organised by Milan.

Mrs Mirza speaks several languages, writes in English, Urdu and Hindi and enjoys putting her skills to use so that as many members as possible can keep up with the news at Milan and remain connected to the charity when they are unable to join in some of the events. "I live alone. I have nothing to do, just watching television all the time. It's better to come here and talk with friends. Milan is a part of my life."

All members are full of praise for the staff and volunteers. The main challenge the charity faces is their need for better premises so that they can expand, open up spaces to people on the waiting list and run activities every weekday.

Milan has so much to be proud of and celebrate and members, volunteers and staff did so in style on 30th August 2018 at their Speaking Up for Our Age event. There was a history display and quiz, music, dance, tasty food including Lentil Dahl (the popular dish from the 1990s) and a minute's silence in memory of past members.



Lanarkshire Hindu Welfare Association attends Age Scotland training



Update from our Early Stage Dementia Project team

Training Programme Officer Julie Turner shares what the Early Stage Dementia team has been up to.

Being dementia aware

Our Early Stage Dementia Awareness workshop has continued to prove popular with member groups and organisations across Scotland. In fact since January 2018 we have delivered training to over 570 Age Scotland members! Dementia is a serious topic but that doesn't mean that learning about it can't be fun. We've designed our workshops so that everyone can join in, and enjoy learning more about dementia.

A workshop leader, learning materials and equipment are provided but any group requesting a workshop will need to provide a suitable venue and any catering required. To book a Dementia Awareness Workshop or to find out more, please contact the team on the details below.

Support for older people's groups

We have teamed up with the Age Scotland's Veterans' Project to develop a free training day for older people's groups and services.

The day encompasses dementia awareness and raising awareness of support available for older veterans across Scotland. We have been as far north as Forres and down south to Castle Douglas.

Making training go further

We are now also offering free 'Train the Trainer' workshops which enable organisations to deliver a short Dementia Awareness workshop to staff and volunteers in their organisation. The more we can raise awareness of and increase understanding of dementia, the better so we are keen to support organisations looking to get involved. Please do get in touch if you would like to know more.

An exciting new project

Over the past few months we have been working on a new piece of work called 'Your age and dementia aware community'. Across Scotland we've been meeting with Age Scotland member groups and Life Changes Trust-funded Dementia Friendly Communities to find out what is important to people in their Communities and what they think could be better.

As part of the project we also launched a survey aimed for those over 50 to find out what works and what doesn't work in communities. We have had an excellent response, so many thanks to all those who have taken part.

We are now in the process of putting together our findings and a report and resource pack will be launched later this year and available for member groups. Watch this space!

Want to know more?

Get in touch with the team on **0333 32 32 400** or email ESDTeam@agescotland.org.uk



Veterans' project



How does previous military service impact later life?

Does a military background make an older person different? With almost half of Scotland's 260,000 veterans age 75 or older, it's a question every group or service working with older people should ask.

For many older veterans their military service will have no impact on their quality of life now. Some may not think of themselves as a veteran, for example if their service was short and long-past, or they weren't involved in combat. Regardless, they could be entitled to additional support, as **one day's service and one day's pay** is considered sufficient by the UK and Scottish Governments for someone to be a veteran. Veterans, and those working with them, can find out more by calling the Age Scotland helpline on **0800 12 44 222** for a free copy of **The Veterans' Guide to Later Life in Scotland**.

Other older veterans live daily with the consequences of their military service. Hearing loss is three and a half times more common in veterans than civilians, as hearing protection wasn't introduced by the military until the 1990s. Mobility problems are commonly reported; often age-related, but sometimes caused or made worse by military service. Alcohol misuse is more common, partly explained by a culture of drinking in the military as a means of coping, bonding and a reward for winning.

For some veterans military culture becomes a barrier to getting support as they age, and as their needs change. That's where local groups and services that understand military life are vital. One is Falkirk Veterans. Chair Maggie Brown says: "It's long been normal practice to set up support services and

expect veterans to go to them. But when individuals have been trained and conditioned by the Armed Forces to persevere and succeed, under all circumstances and despite all adversities, it makes it very difficult to accept, or even admit that you need help in the first place. That is why drop-ins like ours are so important. We build veterans' confidence and self-esteem to accept the help that is on offer."

To be welcoming to older veterans it's not necessary to dress activities in khaki. Julie Muir, organiser at the Veterans' Café at the Kings Church Motherwell (VC at the KC) says: "We've learned a military-style environment is the last thing you need. Some veterans served for a few days, some for 22 years. No one gets treated any differently, and all feel they belong."

Could yours be a 'Veterans Warm Welcome' group or service?

Age Scotland's Community Connecting service helps older people find and take part in local clubs and activities, and is available through the Age Scotland helpline **0800 12 44 222**.

We're highlighting local groups and services committed to reaching out to older veterans, whether exclusively or as part of work with older people more generally.

Find out how your group or service can gain a Veterans' Warm Welcome badge:

T. **0333 323 2400**
E. veteransproject@agescotland.org.uk
www.agescotland.org.uk/veterans



L-R: Audience members try out some hip hop moves. | Billie Jordan

CREATIVE AGEING - FROM NEW ZEALAND TO SCOTLAND

Together with Luminate, Scotland's creative ageing organisation, and The Ageing Lab of Heriot Watt University, we were delighted to host an afternoon exploring the theme of arts and older people.

We welcomed the inspirational Billie Jordan, founder of New Zealand's The Hip Op-eration Crew - a hip hop dance group consisting of members aged 73 to 99 years old. Describing how the group came about, Billie shared with us that she had been living with PTSD after an abusive childhood, then suffered repeated trauma after losing everything in a catastrophic earthquake. She decided to use her traumatic experiences as a catalyst for improving the lives of other people. After speaking to some

of the older people in her local community, Billie noticed many were living quite isolated lives and felt that no one in their lives had any expectations of them. She asked herself "What would no-one expect a group of older people to do?" and came up with "compete in an International Hip Hop Dance Competition!"

Despite having no experience as a dance teacher, Billie taught herself some basic moves and managed to recruit an enthusiastic group of older people to teach and learn with. And so The Hip-Operation Crew was formed.

Billie beamed with pride as she told us about how her dancers threw themselves into the routines, despite having some health complaints (there are seventeen hip and knee replacements between them!) The dance crew have also learned about hip hop culture and all members have picked their own hip hop names including Missy Rodeo, Cara Bang Bang (the oldest member at 99 years old), Big Deal and husband and wife duo BB Rizzle and JJ Rizzle.

Billie spoke passionately about how working with her dancers has given her an insight into how older people are viewed, commenting "at what point in life does someone go from being viewed as a capable, interesting person who is equal to being somehow less than?" During a photoshoot with her dancers, Billie felt she had to stress to the photographer not to portray her dancers as "lavender and lace" but for who they actually are - energetic, tough and strong.

Concluding her speech, Billie emphasised how important it is to not assume that because someone is older that they don't want to try anything new. That we must focus on what people are capable of and who they are. Speaking of her dance crew, she said "I have such an amazing family - they're animated, they're fun, they're adventurous, and they want to do more exciting things."

Dancing and debates

In the afternoon we were treated to a dance performance by Edinburgh Dance Base's PRIME. PRIME is Scotland's first semi-professional dance company for the over 60s, chosen by audition in February 2015 by Artistic Director Morag Deyes. Created from a growing need and desire from dancers over 60 to see themselves more widely represented on the stage and in the world of dance, PRIME was

?
What would no-one expect a group of older people to do?
...

born from a commitment to challenge preconceptions around notions of age, to help establish a culture of dance in Scotland that is truly equal and representative of its population.

We then had a panel discussion exploring themes of the arts, ageism, barriers and representation where we had some excellent questions and comments from our audience. Some audience members voiced a feeling that once you reach a certain age you are invisible and by not being represented in the arts, some may be discouraged from participating in the arts. Others commented that the media just don't want to promote older artists. One audience member suggested that we don't call it creative ageing - just creativity! It was a fantastic afternoon with lots of lively discussion.

In the next edition of Advantage we will continue to explore the theme of creativity, with a guest article from Advantage reader Barbara Tropp. Barbara will share with us how she discovered her passion for creative writing.

...
Compete in an International Hip Hop Dance Competition!
Billie Jordan

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GOOD DAY CALLS

A new service for Scotland's older people

Age Scotland's social enterprise arm has launched a new service to tackle loneliness and help older people live well independently at home.

The new 'Good Day Calls' service, offers a daily call to bring reassurance to older people, and their family, that someone will call to speak with them 365 days a year as a check in ensuring they are well, offering support and having a friendly chat.

The Good Day Calls service operates as part of Age Scotland's social enterprise arm and costs £50 per month. The service's small profit margins are reinvested back into the charity's activities. We will be offering this service for free to a number of older people identified as being on low incomes and unable to afford it (read more on page 19).

Good Day Calls is part of Age Scotland's new Independent Living service which includes our free information and advice helpline for older people, our Community Connecting service to tackle loneliness and isolation, Care and Repair Edinburgh, and Fire Service home safety checks.

Age Scotland Chief Executive, Brian Sloan said: "We know that more older people are living alone in Scotland and may not have regular visitors. Some feel lonely from time to time and worry that no one will notice if they take ill or are not up and about in the morning.

"It can also be hard for family members who lead busy lives to find the time to check in every day. Our phone calls will put everyone's minds at ease and ensure that the visits and phone calls from family and friends are focused on spending quality time together.

"We want older people to live independently in their own home for as long as possible but they may need some extra support, advice or friendship. Our 'Good Day Calls' will help with this."

To find out more about Good Day Calls, visit www.agescotland.org.uk/gooddaycalls or call **01856 898 222**.



Loi Trang collects the tablet on behalf of her group

WE HAVE A WINNER!

We are delighted to announce to winner of Advantage's Samsung tablet competition – **The Edinburgh Chinese Elderly Support Association!** The group offers support and friendship to older adults living in Edinburgh and the surrounding areas, through social activities, Tai Chi, a lunch club, home visiting project, a support group for carers and regular day trips.

Loi Trang who manages the group said: "We are delighted to have won the tablet competition. Our members will use the tablet to develop their online skills such as using email and browsing the internet."

Congratulations to the group – we hope you make great use of the tablet! You can contact the Edinburgh Chinese Elderly Support Association by calling **0131 228 5808** or by email on info@ecesa.org.uk.

COMMUNITY CONNECTING



The need has never been greater.

Here at Age Scotland, we know from our own research that 200,000 older Scots will go half a week or more without a phone call or visit from anyone – with half of all over 75s saying their main form of company is their television or pet.

The Community Connecting Service aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness in older people across Scotland by providing details of organisations that offer friendship, social activities, health and fitness groups and events. With an ageing population and a digital divide, we understand the difficulties in accessing information and having someone there to listen. Community Connecting has grown in response to the fact that quarter of all calls to the Helpline were seeking companionship and conversation.

Our friendly and dedicated volunteers will contact the person to find out what they are interested in and then research opportunities to suit their needs in their local area. Over a period of weeks or longer if required, our volunteers will make a regular weekly call to talk through the options they have found, have a friendly chat and offer encouragement, as the older person establishes links in their community.

Over 100 Age Scotland's member groups have already been in touch with our Community Connecting Development Worker to tell us about their group and what they offer. In turn we can promote them to our callers and publish their details in our information guides and on our website.

There is no typical person who uses the service - the newly retired individual who suddenly has lost a sense of purpose is just as likely to need support as the older, less confident person who has become isolated over a long period of time, for whom leaving their home is daunting.

Muriel from South Lanarkshire found out about Age Scotland through Cruise Bereavement. "My life had been turned upside down due to my husband's death and since then, I had felt desperate and wanted to find a way to cope with the loneliness. I had never called a helpline before, but I wanted any thread of support I could find. When I finally plucked up the courage to call, I spoke to an advisor in the Helpline who suggested the Community Connecting Service.

A member of the Community Connecting team got in touch with me to discuss what I was looking for in my local area. I had always wanted to find a computer class, but I just wanted a means of getting out and meeting other people. Within a week, they got back to me with local computer classes and lunch clubs. I didn't know any of this was happening in my area!

Some of the groups didn't start till later in the year but the Community Connecting team member suggested a local befriending service. They were fantastic and made a referral for me on my behalf. During the wait for a befriender, the team member encouraged me to try a local lunch club in the meantime.

Calling Age Scotland was the best phone call I have ever made. I have a lot in common with my befriender and we chat away and suddenly 2 hours have passed! The Community Connecting Service has made a huge difference to my day to day life. I have been shown kindness and compassion and in return I feel more confident. It's the only service I have felt I have been able to speak freely to and just say how I feel. I would never have known about the services and groups around me had I not made that call.

I would highly recommend Age Scotland's Community Connecting Service. No question about it."

Margaret from Glasgow shares her story. "I used to be very active but health issues in the past year meant I wasn't able to get out for a few months. As I had to stay in the house, my mood became quite low. I wanted to look for social activities but was worried that I wasn't capable of the things I used to do. When I phoned the Age Scotland Helpline, they suggested the Community Connecting Service. I received a phone call from a very friendly volunteer who took the time out of their day to get to know me and find out what I was interested in.

The volunteer called me back within a week and talked me through all the activities and groups that were in my area. The content was amazing, I didn't even know some of them existed down the road from me! They even sent me out a hard copy in the post with names, contact details, addresses, everything! They were so helpful and there were

200,000 older Scots will go half a week or more without a phone call or visit from anyone

several activities that I really wanted to pursue.

One day when they called up to catch up, I was feeling quite down but soon after I felt uplifted. They really made me feel as if someone was listening to me. It

soon got to a point where they didn't have to say their name on the phone when I answered! I could always tell who was calling from their distinctive, lively voice.

The volunteer had done everything and more than I asked for. They followed through with everything they said they were going to do and kept in touch with me to see how I was getting on. It really changed me. Community Connecting has improved my social life as I have two classes on the go and already looking for another! I'm just glad I have my confidence back."



If you are interested in our Community Connecting service, either for yourself or to promote your organisation, please get in touch by phoning our Helpline on **0800 12 44 222** or emailing **helpline@agescotland.org.uk**

Give us a call and feel connected again!



Autumn Voices:

a new book

raising funds

for Age Scotland

Age Scotland are grateful to be receiving proceeds from the sales of a new book, Autumn Voices. The book has been published as part of a project exploring how ageing relates to writing and other forms of creativity. We hear from the book's editor; author, dramatist and lecturer Robin Lloyd-Jones.

Three years ago, for the first time in our history, there were more people over the age of 60 in Scotland than under 18. This trend is increasing. The percentage of elderly people in the population of Scotland becomes greater each year. Our economy will not survive unless we stop regarding our elderly citizens as a burden and start seeing them as potentially productive and useful people whose maturity, greater life experience and insights are valuable assets. A society that is better for older people is better for people of all ages. To address the problems and the opportunities of the elderly is to benefit the welfare of our society as a whole.

This was my motivation for undertaking the Autumn Voices Project (funded by Creative Scotland). When I began the project, in 2015, I was 80, and 83 when it ended. During this time I interviewed twenty Scottish writers ranging in age from 70 to 92 about their later lives and their continuing creativity. The majority of these men and women had made for themselves a benign circle. That is to say their creativity contributed to their health and wellbeing, and their health and wellbeing, particularly their mental health, was an important factor in maintaining their creativity.

It has certainly been my own experience that to forget self in a worthwhile project is like a tonic. Being completely immersed in what you are doing, having the mind fully engaged, having a purpose in life, waking up with something to look forward to, and knowing that you are still doing something useful to, and valued by, society – these things contribute massively to a happy, healthy and fulfilled old age.

These twenty autumn voices represent a total of over 150 years of varied, fascinating and colourful life experience since passing the age of 70. They are certainly proof of the saying: 'You don't grow old, you become old when you stop growing.' I learned a great deal from them - not only about creativity in later life, but also about successful ageing.

Many of those to whom I spoke thought they had become more accepting and more tolerant not only of self, but of others. This, they reported, had opened the way to being able to forgive. Instead of huge amounts of mental energy being tied up in feelings of hatred, annoyance, suspicion and other negative feelings, it became available to channel in creative directions. They spoke, too, about having a new relationship with time and about a heightened appreciation of everything around them. As hunger sharpens the appetite, so age had intensified their awareness of the beauty and wonder of the world, of love and of blessings.

One thing they definitely did not accept was the negative stereotype of the elderly – the self-fulfilling prophecy of old folk as people whose useful life is over and who no longer have the physical or mental capacity to be productive or creative. We live in a culture that is still learning how to age. Through their writing and their example, the remarkable men and women I was privileged to meet are at the frontier of this learning process.

Autumn Voices, edited by Robin Lloyd-Jones, PlaySpace Publications, June 2018, can be ordered through the project website www.autumnvoices.co.uk.

IMMEDIATE, TANGIBLE, LOCAL IMPACT

Age Scotland's Independent Living services are our response to a rapidly ageing population and a loneliness epidemic. Through its linked services, we'll ensure we meet older people's needs where they're felt greatest.

Part of our offering is Good Day Calls – an outward-bound telephone welfare service with calls made 365 days a year to subscribers. Potentially vulnerable older, older people, including those who've returned home from hospital, benefit from daily calls at agreed times. The purpose is to monitor clients' welfare and provide companionship and conversation. If there's no reply or all is not well, there are clear and proportionate procedures to follow in escalating a response.

“Clients really appreciate hearing a cheery voice and knowing that if we couldn't reach them we'd send someone round. Many can go a whole day without speaking to anyone else so the call really matters. Isolation is often the main issue and it makes older people frightened – what if they fall and can't manage to reach their care button?”

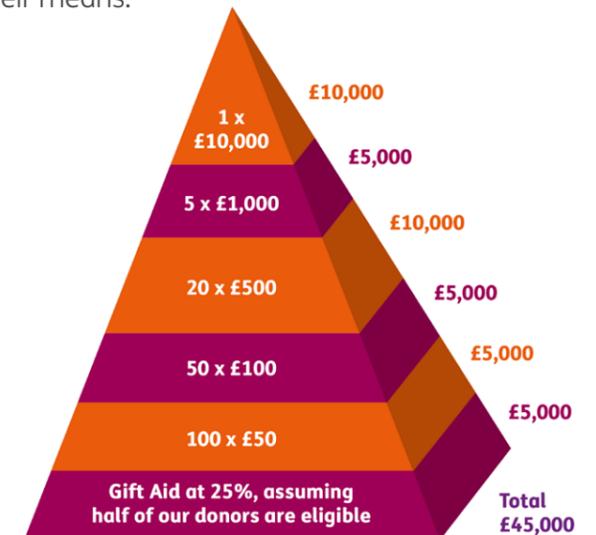
Kerry, Good Day Call handler

Age Scotland has committed to providing 75 places free-of-charge each year with older, older people who qualify for pension credit. No-fuss applications can be made by speaking to our Good Day Calls team on **01856 898 222**. This will positively impact the lives of older people, especially those who live alone, are at risk or vulnerable, living with dementia, in rural communities, experiencing loneliness, and suffering loss or bereavement.

We're actively fundraising from grant-making trusts and foundations and building corporate partnerships where we have shared values. We also need the support of individuals – both loyal supporters and new friends. Here's our proposal for your consideration:

To enable 75 older people to benefit from a Good Day Call every day throughout Age Scotland's 75th anniversary year, we need to raise £45,000 from individual supporters.

This can be achieved by individuals contributing at different levels, as illustrated here, according to their means.



Please consider carefully what you can contribute to make life better for the older people who need to receive a daily phone call. Thank you.

Please send your donation, as a cheque payable to Age Scotland, to Stacey Kitzinger, Age Scotland, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR or go online to donate securely: www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/get-involved/donate

Thank you.

Stacey Kitzinger

Supporter Engagement

Tel: **0333 323 2400**

Email: stacey.kitzinger@agescotland.org.uk



MEN'S SHEDS UPDATE

Shedders Loving Later Life

Age Scotland has been working with Barrhead, Carse of Gowrie and Macmerry Men's Sheds to produce films celebrating their fifth anniversaries and highlighting the difference they are making to Shedders, their families and their local community. These Sheds, along with Westhill and Kinghorn Loch Tool Shed, are the pioneers of the Men's Shed Movement in Scotland. They have smoothed the path of over one hundred and twenty Sheds following on behind them. We carried out interviews with trustees, Shedders, and Shed supporters, including elected representatives, schools and community organisations. We will continue this work in recording and sharing Men's Shed stories and their impact: in tackling loneliness and isolation; promoting positive images of later life; and helping older people be as well as they can be.

In September, Lothians Men's Shed Network came together at Men of Leith Men's Shed. Fife Men's Shed Network convened at Glenrothes Men's Shed. Kinross and District Men's Shed hosted the Perth and Kinross Men's Shed Network meeting. Hot topics were inclusiveness, safety, sustainability and premises.

There was a great deal of competition for Age Scotland Development Grants. Our membership steering committee had the difficult job of deciding on funds and awarded four grants: Moffat & District Men's Shed to assist with the purchase of dust extractors and heaters; Selkirk Community Shed for the purchase of electrical items in order to make their shed safe and fit for purpose; Comrie & District Men's Shed to pay for building materials to enable them to install wheelchair accessible toilet facilities; and Three Towns Men's Shed to develop publicity materials.

Age Scotland Regional Ambassador Graham Reece has been busy: both catching up with Jason Schroeder the Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA) and organising a Stonemasonry workshop at the Forth Valley Men's Shed where he is Vice Chair.



Trustees at Barrhead Men's Shed prepare for the filming



(L-R) Tim Green, Age Scotland's Community Development Worker (Men's Sheds), Jason Schroeder, CEO, Scottish Men's Shed Association, Glen Douglas, Chair of Kinross and District Men's Shed



Perth and Kinross Shedders and Development Workers, Shona Fowler and Tracey Ramsay



Regional Ambassador Graham Reece with Jason Schroeder, Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Men's Sheds Association (SMSA)



Mobile Men's Shed - South Lanarkshire



Rise of the SHEDDERS!

Paul Creechan, Men's Shed Development Officer at Seniors Together gives us an update on the Mobile Men's Shed!

The last few months really have been a fantastic time for Men's Sheds in South Lanarkshire with the launch of our Mobile Men's Shed and the establishment of new sheds it would seem that the sky is the limit.

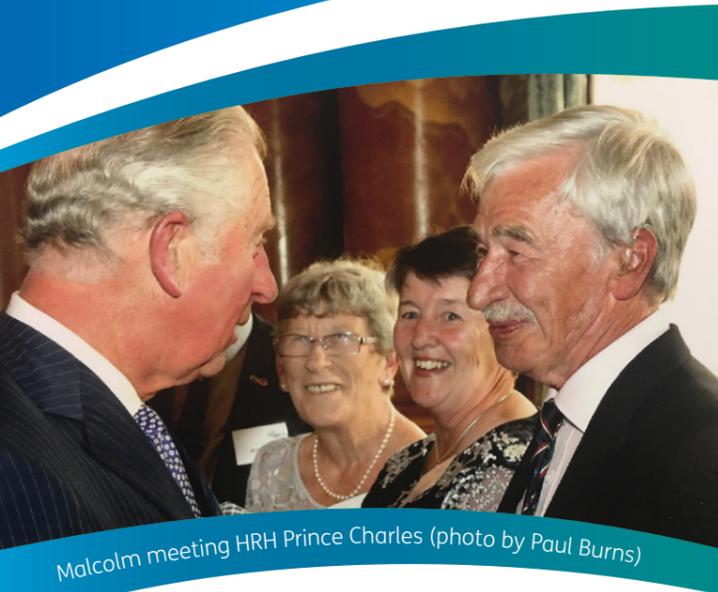
Our Mobile Shed was launched way back in April 2018, designed to tour South Lanarkshire to support the development of sheds, we are already succeeding in growing our shed network in the area. Our first port of call was Stonehouse, where we were based throughout the summer. And what a summer we had. The summer weather complemented a welcoming environment at the Shed with the mobile bus looking glorious on days when we planned BBQ's and had several workshops provided outside by fellow Shedders. Towards the end of our time in Stonehouse we organised a few visits to local Sheds just to let locals see exactly what is possible when you persevere. Our time in Stonehouse finished with a coffee evening and information night to find out what appetite there is for a local Men's Shed. With 18 people in attendance we have now established a committee working towards developing a permanent shed in the area.

As we continue to link in with as many organisations as possible to benefit the Sheds and their members it was our pleasure to help welcome so many local and international visitors to the Sheds over the summer. We have had visitors from Pittsburgh, New York, Cheshire, Catania, and as far flung as Chapelton. The reach of the mobile shed has far exceeded our expectations and we have welcomed many international enquiries who are looking to replicate our success.

Carluker could be next on the list for a permanent shed as the Mobile Shed will be based there for the next 10 weeks. Guessing there will be no barbecues though!

For any more information on any Sheds or the information above please contact **Paul Creechan**, Men's Shed Development Officer, Seniors Together on **01698 454156 / 07388955049** or **Paul.Creechan@southlanarkshire.gov.uk**





Malcolm meeting HRH Prince Charles (photo by Paul Burns)

An afternoon to remember

Malcolm Wetherill Age Scotland Regional Ambassador shares his story of a special trip to London.

First of all it was an utter surprise when I got the letter from Age UK, I thought it must have been a mistake, but having confirmed it with the Edinburgh office I was truly honoured to be asked to represent Age Scotland at an Age UK reception for community organisations in honour of HRH Prince Charles' 70th birthday.

As I was leaving Elgin to travel to London for the reception on 6th June my phone rang and Helen from Age Scotland head office asked whether I was busy tomorrow afternoon and would I like to have tea at the House of Lords with Lord George Foulkes. Obviously I couldn't refuse our chairman and I didn't want to as I had never been to the House of Lords so on went my journey down to London.

At 4pm I presented myself at the gates of the Houses of Parliament and after the normal security checks set forth to meet George. As always he is a pleasure to meet and he gave me the grand tour of the House of Lords. Having been in the publishing industry for 30 odd years I was most impressed with

the library. After a lovely afternoon tea we departed for Buckingham Palace which I had passed many, many times when I lived in London but this time I wasn't peering through the railings, I was striding in with a lord of the realm!

Though I had seen the front of the palace many times what amazed me was the depth of the building. Having had our credentials checked we were ushered upstairs to two very large rooms that overlook the gardens. There were approximately 150 guests. We were each given a high standing table for our drinks and canapes and met up with other members of Age UK and Age Northern Ireland. The wine and food flowed in abundance, and after about 40 minutes a buzz went round the room as Prince Charles entered speaking to each table in turn.

Many years ago I worked for the Scottish Youth Business Trust advising young people who had started up their own business and as we had our own tie indicating this, I chose to wear this tie at the function. As Prince Charles talked to members at our table he was introduced to me and bent down to look at my tie. He said, "That's mine". I said, "No Sir, it's mine. I worked for you many years ago." That brought a chuckle. He had different things to say to each member of our group. He thanked me for my work with Age Scotland and moved on.

The whole thing was so smoothly run it was truly amazing. As he left we were ushered into the art gallery where the Chairman of Age UK gave a speech thanking Prince Charles for allowing the charity to hold the reception in Buckingham Palace. He then picked up a parcel from the floor of the lectern which I was sitting quite close to. It was wrapped in brown paper. As the chairman handed the parcel over. Prince Charles said, "It feels like a flower pot". And the reply was, "It is a flowerpot, Sir!" After a short speech by Prince Charles the event was over. It was the most memorable afternoon - one that I shall never forget.

Malcolm Wetherill is Age Scotland's Regional Ambassador for Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray. If you'd like to find out more about becoming a Regional Ambassador for Age Scotland, please contact our Community Development team on **0333 32 32 400** or email **members@agescotland.org.uk**.



Celebrations in the main hall | Performance from the Red Road Young Uns



it's such an important beacon of hope

Paul Sweeney, MP

Alive and Kicking celebrate 30 YEARS!

A crowd of over 200 people gathered at member group Springburn Alive and Kicking to celebrate the group's 30th birthday. A marquee was hired for the occasion, and members and guests were entertained to a series of songs and sketches from Alive and Kicking's very own concert party - The Red Road Young Uns, ably directed by Robert Newth from the Royal Conservatoire. The event was opened by Annie Kinniburgh, Alive and Kicking member, who has been chairing Alive and Kicking for the last ten years. Amongst the invited speakers were local MP Paul Sweeney who confessed that he wasn't born when Alive and Kicking started out. Congratulatory speeches were also made by local MSP Bob Doris; former MP Willie Bain; and former Deputy Provost of Glasgow Allan Stewart. A fine celebratory meal was served to attendees in the main hall following the entertainment and speeches.

Alive and Kicking is a community centre offering a range of social, recreational and educational opportunities to its 150-200 membership. They provide 500 meals a month on the premises as well as offering home delivery. Activities include Carpet Bowls; Keep Fit; Singing; Dancing and Bingo in addition to classes on Horticulture and Arts and Crafts. They organise four holidays per year for group members. The project has garnered numerous local and national awards over the years, including the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2008.

At the birthday celebrations MP for Glasgow North East, Paul Sweeney, described Alive and Kicking as "an institution in Springburn and Balornock", adding "I think sometimes you just don't realise the positive impact it's had over the last 30 years, something as simple as providing companionship for people....It's such an important beacon of hope for that part of Glasgow."

Scotland's helpline for older people



0800 12 44 222

**Providing free information, friendship
and advice. We're here to help.**

Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm