

ISSUE
12
WINTER
2010

The Voice

of older people
in Gateshead

Inside this issue:

Chair's Foreword

Strength in Numbers

Community Learning
Champions

UP2U Funding News

My Generation

Healthy Heritage Walks

'A Winters Tale'
Digital Photography
Competition

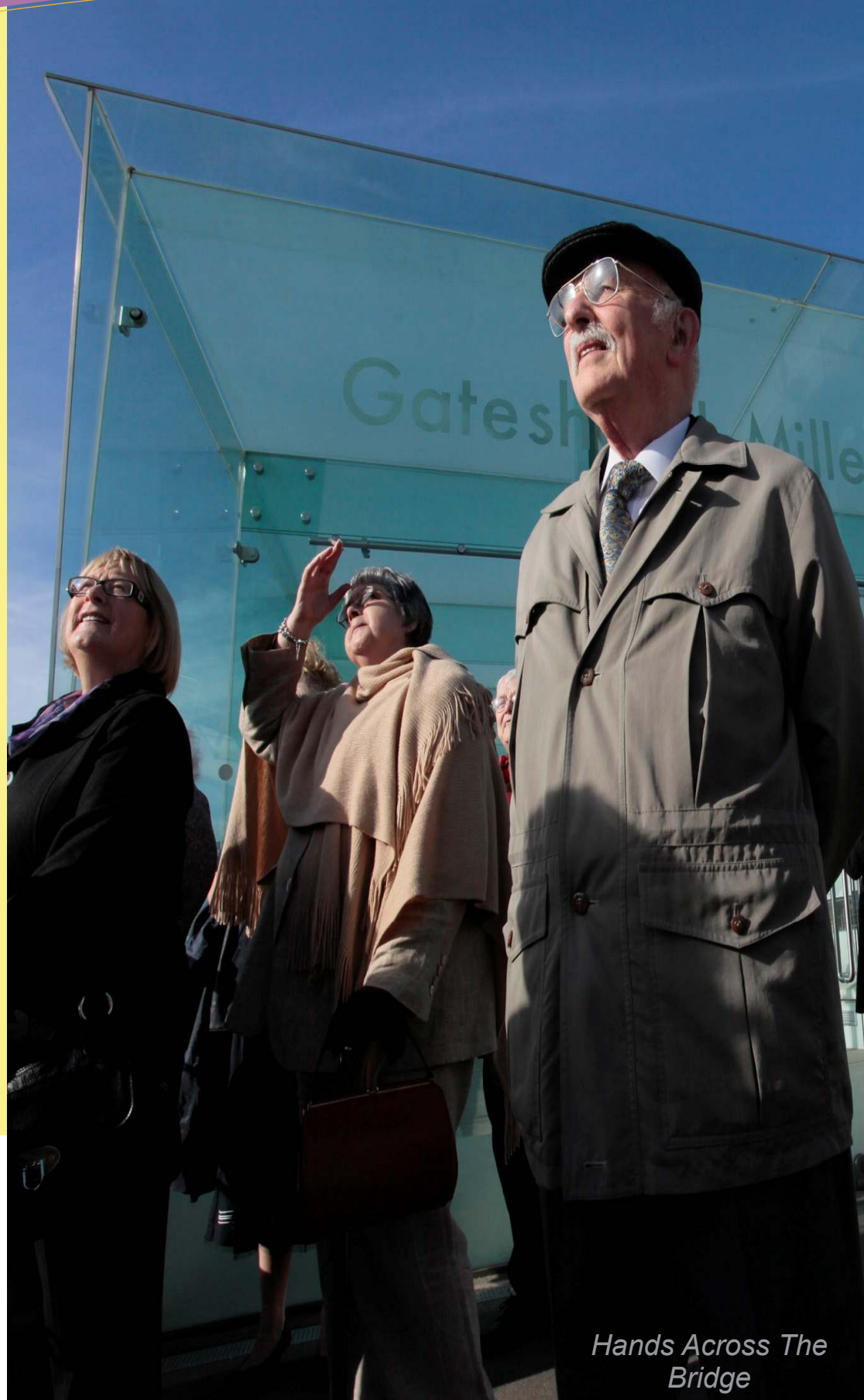
Universal Services

Pushing the Possibilities

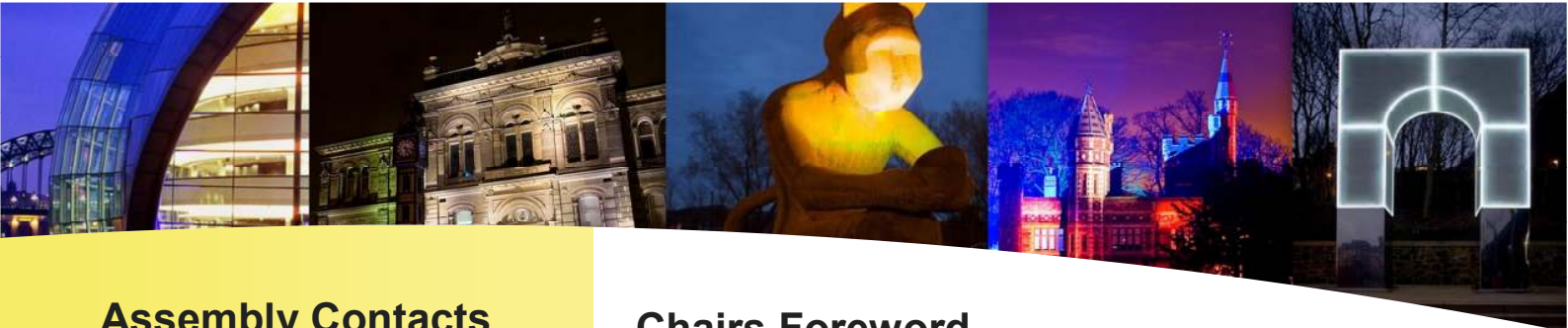
New helpline launched to
report Hate Crime

A Christmas with
'Inspiration'

Diary of my
'Coast to Coast Walk'



*Hands Across The
Bridge*



Assembly Contacts

Esther Ward
Chair

esther.ward@btconnect.com

Chris Barker
Assembly Coordinator

chris.j.barker@btconnect.com

Kerry Pattison
Finance & Information Officer

kerry.pattison@btconnect.com

Stephen Scullion
Generation Together
Volunteer Coordinator

stephen.scullion@btconnect.com

Helen Cowlyn
Receptionist / Administrator

admin.assembly@btconnect.com

Susan Byrne
Safer Gateshead Development
Worker

susanbyrne1@btconnect.com

Kevin Brown
Community Support Assistant

Telephone: 0191 438 1721
Fax : 0191 469 5648

Or

Visit our website
(address on front cover)

Chairs Foreword



Dear member

We are now approaching winter and hopefully it won't be as bad as it was last year. We are all aware of the concerns the bad weather brings when it changes and the nights are darker.

We will be working in Partnership with Gateshead Council's Safer Communities Team, to ensure that you are all aware of the things that are happening in Gateshead and to provide you with the information you need to help stay safe.

In order to do this, the Assembly have been awarded funding to employ a new member of staff for four months to put together a programme of activities, which will help you find out about the many things you need to be aware of to help keep you safe.

As part of the programme of activities, we will be holding events over the next few months that will have a theme of Community Safety and what that means. Please try to attend some of these events as I am sure it will be to your advantage.

Once again we had a very successful Annual General Meeting. I would like to thank those of you who came along to support us and our Management Committee, staff and young volunteers for their hard work to make the day a success.

We will be getting out and about more often next year as we will soon have another worker who will be funded for 3 years from Comic Relief. They will be employed to expand our Branch Assembly network. This will enable us to set up small groups in many areas throughout Gateshead.

This is the last edition of the Newsletter before Christmas so may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and healthy New Year and also to thank you in advance for your support during my next 3 year term of office.

Take care of yourselves and keep warm this winter

Esther Ward (Chair)

Welcome

Welcome to the latest newsletter from your Older People's Assembly. For those of you who attended our AGM in October you may remember that I spoke about how we intend to develop the 'Branch Assemblies; that is, smaller groups of like minded older people who are interested in improving the lives of older people in Gateshead. Here at our main premises in Felling, we are very keen to speak to anybody over the age of 50 who would like to get involved with setting up Branch Assemblies.

We have secured funding from Comic Relief to employ a new worker to support and assist with setting up these new groups. When they are all up and running, Gateshead will have an integrated support network to address the issues of older people from all over the Borough.

If you would like to become involved in any way at all, we'd love to hear from you. You don't need any experience, and you can devote as much or as little time as you wish. If you are interested but would like to know more, then please contact me on **0191 438 1721**.

With all the uncertainty that exists at present around service provision, pensions, health and social care and transport to name just a few, there has never been a more important time to be part of the Assembly, and you are not only welcome, but positively encouraged, to get in contact with us here about anything that interests you, good or bad, about being an older person in Gateshead.

There are a lot of interesting things happening here at present, which you can read about in this issue, and the Assembly is continuing to grow. So why not get more involved in what we're doing? We're waiting to hear from you!

Chris Barker, Assembly Coordinator

Help Us Keep Our Mailing List Up To Date

If you have received this newsletter through the post, it is because the person named on the envelope is on our membership list. Like all charities, we want to make sure we do not waste valuable funding, so if you have received this mailing and you know the named member no longer lives at the address please let us know.

If you are a member and would prefer to receive a copy of The Voice via email instead please contact admin.assembly@btconnect.com and you will be added to our electronic list.

If you know of someone who is aged over 50 and lives in Gateshead and would like to become a member (it's free!!) please ask them to complete the membership form on the back of this newsletter and post it to the address stated.



New staff at the Assembly

Hello everyone

I'm delighted to have been appointed to my new role with the Older People's Assembly as **Safer Gateshead Development Worker**, and I am very much looking forward to meeting the ever-expanding family of members at the Assembly.

I began my career in the 1980s as a secretary at Newcastle University and, after many years in this role, transferred to working as Administrator for the Pain Management Programme at Newcastle General Hospital.

In 2004 I joined Age Concern Gateshead as Assistant ActivAge Co-ordinator, organising exercise activities and events for the over 50s. This post gave me valuable experience working directly with older people in the community, as well as a good grounding in partnership work tackling issues which directly affect them.

On a personal note, I'm a keen walker and animal lover, having homed a menagerie of various cats and dogs over the years.

Looking forward to meeting you all soon.

Susan Byrne

Come along to our Christmas Open Day

**Monday 20th December, drop in
anytime between 11am to 2pm for
a sweet mince pie and a chat.**

Strength in Numbers



Hands across the Bridge

As the population of the UK is ageing at a growing rate, it is becoming increasingly important that agencies and service providers take notice of the 'Voice' of older people.

On 7th October, Gateshead Older People's Assembly and Newcastle Elders Council came together, along with The Lord Mayor of Newcastle and The Mayor of Gateshead, on the Gateshead Millenium Bridge, for a symbolic handshake which symbolised a united aim, to strengthen the voices of older people on both sides of the Tyne. As a special bonus, both Chairs were invited to open the Millenium Bridge to allow a boat through.

The photo shoot proceeded a joint working group, themed around community safety. Our goal is to ensure that older people are consulted and engaged with wherever and whenever possible. It is hoped that both organisations can to work together to form a joint group to look at this issue.

If you are interested in this, and would like to become involved in our joint working group, please contact us. We are in the early stages of developing the group, so all ideas are welcome.

Esther Ward, Chair of Gateshead Older People's Assembly said, "Knowledge and skills are accumulated over time, as we grow older we gather a wealth of experience, which should not be over looked. Our older population has so much to give, if we are only prepared to accept their wisdom and advice.

Our combined organisations, have a membership of over four thousand five hundred people, but represent a total population of almost one hundred and fifty thousand over 50's.

Assembly Staff and Volunteers sign up to be Community Learning Champions



What is a Community Learning Champion?

Community Learning Champions, are people who are active in their community, promoting the value of learning to others – friends, relatives, neighbours, workmates or people they meet at the school gates, at the local shops, or in groups or clubs.

What is the eCLC project?

Gateshead Council Adult Learning and Skills, realise that it is not always easy, for those people who do not have access to a computer, to find up to date information on courses and local sessions and classes. All Community Learning Champions have been given a mobile electronic notebook called an iPad, which is preloaded with current information. It will also allow them to add details of any local class which would normally not be included in the councils directories, such as classes ran in local village halls and community centres.

Is further learning for me?

Of course it is! Learning can be fun. Learning can cover a huge range of topics from pottery and creative writing to beginners language classes and cooking or sewing. Anybody can start to learn again. It does not matter how well you did at school or whether you enjoyed education then. Nor is it ever too late to start learning. Lots of older people learn with Adult Education even though they have not undertaken any structured education for years. Why not give it a try. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

If you would like to find out that's on in your area, or if you would like to promote any local learning opportunities then give **Kerry Pattison** or **Chris Barker** a call on **0191 438 1721**. Alternatively you can contact Adult Learning and Skills on **0191 433 8646** or visit **www.gatesheadcouncil.gov.uk** and select Education and Learning from the A - Z directory.

Coffee and Computers Sessions

Still Listening to 'The Voice'

Work has started on the production of the final report of our recent survey 'Still Listening to The Voice'.

The report will be ready for the new year. We hope to use the information gained from the report to assist the development of our new Branch Assemblies

If you would like to learn about computers or would like to brush up you skill, then why not drop into our Coffee and Computers sessions.

Sessions are very informal and are based on each persons own skills. We will show you how to do the things that **you** are interested in learning and go at **your** speed not the speed of others in the group.

Sessions run on Fridays and the next dates are:

**10th December, 14th January, 28th January,
11th February, 25 February, 11th March.**

Sessions are held between 10.30am to 12.30am

We are also looking for volunteers to help teach IT skills, so if you have experience or know of anyone who would be interested, please contact **Stephen Scullion on 0191 438 1721 or email: stephenscullion@btconnect.com**



Transport Working Groups

Every six weeks, Iris Dodds from The Assembly attends the Transport and Highways Working Group at Newcastle Elders Council. The meeting is attended by representatives from Nexus, Stagecoach and other local transport operators.

Iris will also be representing The Assembly at the next meeting of the Gateshead Community Network Transport Forum.

Current consultations on the third local transport plans for Tyne and Wear are now open. The Local Transport Plan covers a wide range of objectives, including reducing road accidents, pollution and congestion, maintaining and improving local transport infrastructure, helping people and goods move around quickly and easily, and encouraging healthy modes of travel such as walking and cycling.

The 3rd and final proposals is for the creation of 20mph zone covering many of the streets between Durham Road and Saltwell Road South .

Gateshead Council is seeking to introduce sustainable transport improvements involving new cycling, bus and pedestrian facilities on Leam Lane. The proposal also involves reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph. . If you have any comments or require further information please contact Neil Frier on 0191 4333108 or by email neilfrier@gateshead.gov.uk

Do you find yourself saying
“Can you remember the time when....”

If so come along and join our
Reminiscence’ sessions



Thanks to further funding from Gateshead Council, UP2U, we are delighted to be able to carry on our popular ‘Reminiscence’ sessions. In addition to our men’s group, we have now set up a new ladies group. If you are interested in talking about your memories, then pop along. Everyone is welcome, you don’t have to be a member, in fact we would love to see some new faces. Sessions are lead by Local History Tutor Ray Wildsmith, and are very light hearted and fun.

Sessions are held on a Thursday and times are:

Men's group 10.00am to 12 noon, Ladies group 1.00pm to 3.00pm

Term 1 - 4th November, 11th November, 18th November, 25th November, 2nd December

Term 2 - 20th January, 27th January, 3rd February , 10th February, 17th February

Term 3 - 3rd March, 10th March, 17th March, 24th March, 31st March

Some sessions will be held as trips to local places of interest. All sessions and trips are **FREE** and transport and refreshments will be provided. Group sessions are held at The Assembly office, 65 High Street, Felling. For further information please contact us on 0191 438 1721 or email: admin.assembly@btconnect.com.

HELP US TO HELP CARERS!

WOULD you like to contribute to a major piece of research into the lives of carers in Gateshead? Gateshead Carers Association is leading work on a survey, which will highlight the issues facing those, who care for a relative or friend who is ill, disabled, elderly or in need of emotional support.

The charity is looking for volunteer market researchers to help conduct face-to-face and telephone surveys with carers. It is also looking for volunteers, who can help input carers’ responses from written and electronic surveys. Volunteers don’t need market research experience but they will have excellent communication skills, sensitivity and an awareness of confidentiality. They will receive some training/briefing prior to undertaking interviews.

The project will run from November 2010 to March 2011. Gateshead Carers Association will reimburse volunteers’ travel and meal expenses. Some flexibility may be required with regard the location and hours of volunteering.

For more information, contact **Judith Dunn, Campaigns and Development Worker**, on (0191) 4900121 or email: judith.dunn@gatesheadcarers.com.

Gateshead Primary Care Trust (PCT) in partnership with GatNet (Gateshead's GP practice commissioning consortium) is constantly looking to improve health services for the people of Gateshead. Gateshead PCT is responsible for commissioning (buying) dermatology services for people registered with General Practices in Gateshead. Currently, we are looking at improving dermatology services.

What are dermatology services?

Dermatology services are available for people who need specialist advice, diagnosis and treatment for a range of skin conditions, such as eczema or psoriasis. At the moment, Gateshead residents needing specialist advice, diagnosis and treatment are referred to hospital by their doctor. Patients can choose where to go and at the moment, hospital services are located in Newcastle, Durham, Sunderland and South Tyneside; there is no local service for local people within Gateshead.

An opportunity to tell us what you think and get involved.

To improve the quality of the service that is delivered, it is important to understand what patients think about their care and treatment. One way of doing this is by asking patients who have recently used local services to tell us about their experiences.

If you have or someone you care for has been referred by a doctor to hospital because of a skin condition, we would like your help. We would like you to tell us what you think of the dermatology services that you have experienced which will help us to develop and improve these services.

If you would like to get involved and share your views, please can you give Norah Stevens a call on 0191 497 1510 or email norah.stevens@sotw.nhs.uk by 10th December. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you want to ask any questions before you decide whether you would like to get involved.

*Working together to make
South of Tyne and Wear healthy for you.*

Gateshead Primary Care Trust • South Tyneside Primary Care Trust • Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust

No early retirement for Brits

The average British person expects to work for five years longer than they would like before they can afford to retire, research shows.

The typical person would like to give up work at age 62, but don't think they will be able to do that until they hit 67. The research found that 40% see themselves working until they are past 70, and that for most respondents delaying retirement is a financial decision.

A third of 1,200 people who responded to the poll from Friends Provident admitted they are not paying into a pension fund. Social concerns are at the forefront of a quarter of respondents, who fear boredom if they gave up work, while almost half said they would miss the socialising aspect of work.

Pensions minister Steve Webb said: 'We want to urgently restore the savings culture in this country so that this doesn't happen. This is why our workplace pension reforms will ensure that people have the opportunity to save for their retirement on top of a decent and fair state pension.'

Source Age UK website, dated 10th November



Hearing Loss Support

Helping hard of hearing people locally

We are a volunteer led small charity based in Gateshead

We provide the following services free of charge:-

1. Re-tubing of NHS hearing aids.
2. Issue of batteries
3. We trouble shoot NHS aids
4. Support new hearing aid users in the use and maintenance of their aid.
5. We offer a home visiting service to housebound users.
6. We offer a home visiting service to care/nursing homes and sheltered accommodation.
7. We offer impartial and confidential advice to families and users.
8. We demonstrate equipment where necessary.

We also provide deaf awareness training where required and hearing aid maintenance training to care/nursing home staff.
(There is a small charge for these services)

Most of our volunteers have more than 12 years experience in this work. Some of our volunteers also have a hearing loss.

We will shortly be opening our office/drop-in centre in suite 207, Jackson House,

Do you feel like your memory is not as good as it used to be?

Opportunity to Participate in Research at Northumbria University

Northumbria University are looking for healthy 50-70 year olds who feel like their memory has declined in recent years to participate in an exciting study that is currently on-going.

The project is investigating whether a nutritional supplement containing Omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins has a beneficial effect on measures of memory, attention, mood and well-being.

They will also be incorporating new state-of-the-art measures of cerebral blood flow to assess whether the supplement impacts on the flow of blood to the brain, which is vital for preserving cognitive function later in life.

You may be eligible to take part if:

You do not eat oily fish (e.g. salmon, mackerel) more than once per month

You have not regularly taken omega-3 fatty acid supplements in the past 2 years

You have not regularly taken any other herbal/vitamin supplements in the past 3 months

You are not taking blood thinning or cholesterol lowering (statins) drugs

You are able to attend Northumbria University in Newcastle City Centre for the study sessions

Participants will receive £50 as recompense for their time and any expenses incurred, plus a 6-month supply of the study supplement with a value of £60.

For more details please call 0191 204 8818

This study has received ethical approval from the ethics committee of the School of Life Sciences

My Generation



Urgent Appeal - Calling all followers of fashion!!!

Can you remember the end of rationing and the launch of fashion designers such as Dior, Mary Quant or poodle skirts and bobby socks? Do you still have photographs of the type of clothes that you wore in your teens and yearly twenties?

We are looking for people to get involved in a short, fun project called ' My Generation'

The aim of the project, is to bring together people between the ages of 16 to 25 and those over 50, to recreate the style of clothing that you used to wear in your youth. This may involve trips to local shops / charity shops to buy garments to recycle, or you could even bring clothing that you have tucked away in the attic !!

We are also looking for other suggestions and ideas that could be incorporated into the project.

***Were you a hairdresser, can you show us how to set victory rolls or beehives?
Do you have sewing skills that you can show others?***

If you or anyone that you know would like to get involved, or if you would like to find out more information, please contact Stephen Scullion on 0191 438 1721 or email: stephen.scullion@btconnect.com

We would love to involve grandparents / grandchildren in this project.

The project will end with a final show on Saturday 22nd January 9.30am to 3pm at St Josephs Church, next to Gateshead Interchange.

Healthy Heritage Walks

Would you like to learn interesting facts about Gateshead— and enjoy a healthy walk at the same time? We will also supply you with a pedometer (which lets you know how much you have walked) free of charge.

The next walks are:

***Friday January 21st 1000 to 1200: Route, Windmill Hills,
to meet at the Trinity Centre 9.45am
Friday February 18th 1000 to 1200: Route Derwent Walk,
to meet at The Assembly office 9.30am***

All walks are very gentle over about 2 miles and last around 2 hours from start to finish, including frequent information stops.

The information from the walks may be used in collaboration with Dr. Paul Scott, who is a commissioning artist for Gateshead Council. Paul will be using material regarding the history of Gateshead, using the medium of digital photographs, which may then be used for a national project, which has been commissioned by Gateshead Council. Paul Scott owns and runs a company called 'Cumbrian Blues'



“ A Winters Tale” Digital Photography Competition

Between 8th & 12th December, Saltwell Park, will be transformed with illuminations and installations inspired by tales of winter. As the year turns, there are many stories inspired by dark night and starry skies.

As part of The Assembly’s Generations Together Project, we would like to offer you the chance to take part in our own Digital Photography Competition ‘ A Winters Tale’

Entry tickets to ‘Enchanted Parks’ would normally cost £5.00, but we are offering participants the chance to come along on the opening night, Wednesday 8th December for **Free**.

Contestants must be aged between 16 to 25 or over 50.

We will be looking for photos that capture the spirit of the event. No previous photography experience is needed, in fact we have some cameras to use if you don’t have your own.

All photographs will be exhibited at our Christmas open day on Monday 20th December.

The winning entry will receive a Nikon Coolpix Digital Camera

For further details please contact Stephen Scullion on:

0191 438 1721



PUSHING the POSSIBILITIES



FREE outdoor activities for Gateshead residents aged 50 or over

No previous experience needed, small adult groups and fully supervised. All equipment, outdoor clothing and transport provided.

The ‘Pushing the Possibilities’ programme is offering a new exciting range of outdoor activity experiences!

All courses consist of 1 full day per week for 3 weeks

Only 1 course can be chosen

1. The ‘Classic’ Walk, Canoe & Climb Pushing the Possibilities course
2. Map Reading & Outdoor Photography
3. Learn, Plan, Do – Map reading and Navigation
4. Exploring and Researching Outdoor Places of Interest
5. Canadian Canoeing Course
6. Mountains of the Lake District
*£10 per person transportation charge
7. Rock Climbing and Abseiling in the North East
8. Map Reading & Overnight ‘bivvy’ sleeping under the stars



For further information contact Nick Coates
Tel. No. 0191 487 9356
email: nickcoates@gateshead.gov.uk

Making learning an adventure

Home Safety Checks



At our AGM in October, we invited various organisations to come along. One of those was the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. One of the people who agreed to receive a free home safety check was our Chair, Esther.

After our AGM, Esther received a call to arrange an appointment for officers to visit, at a time that was suitable for her, (they were willing to call at any time).

When they arrived, they made sure that they showed their identity cards, (which you must see before you let anyone in). They found some faults which Esther didn't even know existed. They installed another smoke alarm free of charge and gave her lots of advice about home safety.

The total time for the officers to carry out an assessment to between 30 to 45 minutes. Please consider having a **home safety check**, it is in your best interest.

To request a visit, please contact The Assembly Office on **0191 438 1721** where a member of staff will complete a Home Safety Request Check Form, which will be passed to the Fire Service. Or alternatively you can contact the Fire Service directly on free phone number **0800 032 777**

For over-50s looking for new social opportunities Age Concern Gateshead's Timebank project is offering the following new opportunities.

Monthly Friendship Group

The Friendship Group provides an opportunity for over 50s to get-together each month for a friendly chat over coffee. The group meets at **10.30am** on the first Tuesday of every month at **Bewick's Café** in **Gateshead Old Town Hall**. Drinks and light refreshments can be purchased in the café.

Singles Club

The new Timebank Singles Club is aimed at Gateshead residents aged over 50 who are single and 'looking for love' or companionship. Singles Club meetings will be held in the Community Rooms of the newly-refurbished Gateshead Library from February 2011 onwards and will have a light-hearted 'speed-dating' style approach. To find out more come along to our Coffee Afternoon to launch the Club on **Friday 10th December 1-3pm** at **Age Concern Gateshead Resource and Information Centre** on Gateshead High Street.

Coming Soon – Timebank Film Club

The fortnightly Film Club will bring together film lovers to enjoy films and chat with fellow cinema fans. The Club will meet every 2 weeks in the cinema room at Rosewood Care Home, Bensham. Members of the Club will choose which films are going to be shown and free refreshments will be available. Lunch will also be available at Rosewood before the films start at a cost of just £1. Dates and times of film showings to be confirmed.

For more information on any of the above groups please contact Clare Cook or Trudi Jackson at Age Concern Gateshead on 0191 4773559, or e-mail timebank@ageconcerngateshead.org.uk



REPORT HATE CRIME IN GATESHEAD

Hate crime can take many forms from name calling to physical attack and in the form of racist, religious, homophobic, transphobic and disability.

A new system for reporting hate crime in Gateshead has been launched to support victims of hate crime and take action against perpetrators.

Gateshead Council, Northumbria Police, The Gateshead Housing Company and Victim Support will now be able to tackle hate crime better together using the new system.

Victims and witnesses can report incidents of hate crime to any one of the organisations on the system confidentially via the 24 hour help line - **0191 433 2648** or visit designated reporting centres including Gateshead Council and The Gateshead Housing Company offices.

For further information visit www.gateshead.gov.uk/safergateshead

or contact Gateshead Council's Community Safety Team on : 0191 433 2701.



Getting Information in Gateshead

One of the most common phrases we hear is 'There isn't enough information on what's available in Gateshead'.

So when we were asked to take part in a task group, to help developing a new web tool which can be accessed through Gateshead Council's website, we were happy to help.

As part of The Universal Programme, a new search feature has been added to their website under the Care & Health section, which looks like the picture above.

It is hoped that it's simplicity will make it easier for the public to find out information on services or advice and guidance.

For example, you may want to find out more information on living with a long term condition or information on Blue Badges scheme and concessionary travel passes. You can also find links to report problems or you may want to find out what is on in your area.

The new web tool will also work hand in hand with another part of the universal services project which has been developed. Organisations involved in the project such as Sight Services, Age Concern, Gateshead Citizens Advice Bureau, Care Call, Gateshead Housing Company, Anchor Staying Put, Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire Service, Gateshead Crossroads and The Assembly, have all signed up to pilot a First Contact Referral Form.

Staff from the above organisations, who have direct contact with the public will be able to use the forms to signpost directly between the services, if a need for those services is identified. For instance information and support for carers would be signposted to Gateshead Crossroads and Gateshead Carers.

For more information about the project contact Paul Gertig at Gateshead council on **0191 433 2143** or email: paulgertig@gateshead.gov.uk



How Much ??

Almost eight in 10 people have no idea how much they will have to pay to be cared for when they are in old age.

An ICM poll for the BBC found that 77% are either oblivious to the cost of social care, or they underestimate it. Consequently they have no plans to save money to pay for any care which may be needed.

Fewer than half of those surveyed (47%) believe they will need some form of social care but this is means-tested and is not necessarily free of charge.

The study was carried out for BBC Radio 4's 'You And Yours' show as well as BBC Local Radio and suggests that people underestimate the costs of care for elderly people, and their chances of needing it.

Statistics show that 20% of people will need basic social care costing more than £50,000 over a lifetime, with 5% requiring care costing more than £100,000. Care includes help with daily tasks such as washing, dressing and cooking. It is also estimated that almost four out of five people will develop significant disability needs after turning 65.

However, more than 40% of people have not made any financial plans for care in their old age. Of those who have made some plans, 40% are relying on using pensions income, 29% are expecting to use money from property or other assets, 23% are saving for care and 11% are relying on friends or family.

Eighty per cent of those polled say it is unfair to have to fund basic care through selling their home but three out of five say they do not expect their children to play a regular role in providing it.

*Source Age UK website
dated 9th November*

What's On in Gateshead

Gateshead Deaf Forum

Saturday 18th December 6pm to 11pm. At the Gloucester Pub, Gateshead

Everyone is welcome—Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind and their hearing friends.

Fully licensed bar, bingo and transport is available.

For more information and to arrange transport please contact the Forum via text message on **07547817476** or email: **gatesheaddeafforum@hotmail.co.uk**

A Victorian Christmas

Wednesday 8th December 7.30pm. At Gateshead Heritage @ St Marys.

How did the Victorians celebrate Christmas? Join Malcolm Grady, Anthea Lang and Ednie Wilson in an evening of Victorian prose, poetry and parlour songs plus of course, audience participation! £3 **Contact: Box Office on 0191 433 6965**

Ryton Choral Society Christmas Concert.

Saturday 11th December 7.30pm . At Ryton Comprehensive School.

Vaughan Williams: "Fantasia on Christmas Carols"

Vaughan Williams: "Serenade to Music"

Bob Chilcott: "Gaudete"

Traditional Carols

Tickets: £10 (£8 concessions) at the door or call 01661 843783



Gateshead and South Tyneside over 50's 'vulnerable'

People aged over 50 living in Gateshead and South Tyneside are among the most "vulnerable" in the UK, BBC-commissioned research has found.

More than a quarter in Gateshead - 27% - have health problems, are socially isolated and living on very little money, the research found.

Gateshead is ranked 12th worst in the UK for vulnerable older people in the UK. The figure for South Tyneside was only slightly better at 25.6% - a ranking of 16th worst in the UK.

Source BBC news

A Christmas with 'Inspiration'

Gateshead and South Tyneside Victim Support are holding a fund raising evening on Saturday December 11th 2010 at St Mary's Church, St Mary's Square in Gateshead.

The Inspiration choir will be performing Christmas Carols within this fantastic venue, which sits high above the river Tyne next to The Sage Gateshead. Tickets for the event are £5 and included within the price will be a glass of wine and sweet mince pie. The singing starts at 7.30pm, and doors open at 6.45pm.

If you would like tickets for this event please contact Gateshead Victim Support on **0191 4778395**.

Diary of my Coast to Coast Walk

.....By Jimmy Wilkie

I undertook to do this walk for sponsorship for ward 3 at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead. I had arranged for my main rucksack to be transported from one days halt to the next by a system called 'Pack Horse'. This meant I only had to carry my days pack.

Day 1& 2. Left the Gateshead Interchange by bus to Whitehaven, then down to St Bees for my 1st night. Off on the 1st leg to Ennerdale Bridge. The day started to drizzle. At my 1st rest halt outside of a cottage a woman opened her garage for me and gave me tea and biscuits, she then put my wet shirt in her tumble dryer (apparently she does this for a lot of walkers). The weather improved and after a couple of pints (purely to replace lost liquid) at Cleater, on to Ennerdale Bridge. The 1st 20 mile behind me.

Day 3. The 2nd days walking was appalling. I think it was the only place in England where it rained all day. I took the north side of Ennerdale Water along a forest road to The Black Sail Hut Youth Hostel/ This was closed but I found shelter in a coal store. There were four other walkers there, one gave me a cup of blackcurrant from their flask. I pushed on to walk over 'Haystacks', to get to the next hostel at Honister. However when I reached the Becks, the stream was a torrent and unsafe to cross alone.

I would have turned back however I met a couple and we all crossed together. We reached the top and met 5 men on an orienteering exercise trying to find Great Gable. Eventually we made it to the Hostel then on to Rossthwaite. My feet were peeling because of the water in my boots and my camera was kaput. This was definitely my worst day.

Day 4. Weather fine, but the climb was hard beyond Eagle Crag. I joined 2 Germans for safety. After Lining Crag the route was very rocky, wet and dangerous for someone my age. However I reached Grassmere for my B&B.

Day 5. Great weather. The route was well marked. I joined another group towards Grisdale Tarn. I met a group coming the other way doing the 'Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award'. They were all fed up and looking forward to a wash at the Tarn. The best stop I had was the Patterdale Hotel for a very welcome pint.

Day 6. This was a hot day with a long journey to Shap. The landlady helped by giving me a lift into Patterdale to drop my main rucksack at the Pack Horse pick up point. I was off again, eventually I reached Shap Abbey, so I knew I was almost there. At Shap the B&B provided a 5 star treatment.

Day 7. Another hot day onto Kirkby Stephen, my lunch stop on this day was Orton, however the pub was not open when I got there so it was off to the tea room for an orange, until the pub opened for a pint and a bowl of soup. When I collected my rucksack I found a strap was coming apart. The local 'Old Fashioned Cobbler' repaired it free of charge.

Day 8. The day went well until I lost the path, due to erosion and I finished up in a bog area, until I found a path south of Nine Standards Rigg where I met a fellow from the Yorkshire Evening Post. He took a photo and said he would send me a copy, however as I had nothing to write with, I had to phone him from my home later. We walked together to Ravenseat, there I met a group from a walking club, who walked with me onto my next B&B at East Stonesdale Farm.

Day 9 . My next stop was Richmond, this was fairly easy walking, but hot. I had a stop at Marske, there a woman in a cottage was selling refreshments to raise funds for their church roof. I had 3 pints of lemonade, I don't like to pass up a bargain! At Richmond my B&B was too far to carry my main rucksack from the Packhorse drop off point, so I left it and did without a shave that night.

Day 10. Onto Dansy Wiske. I picked up to coast to coast track again although I got off the track a little by accident at Whitewell Moor. At Dansy Wiske I got some laundry done, by wearing it in the shower.

Day 11 &12. This stage was to Ingleby cross. At a stop at Sydale Lodge, an enterprising woman had her garage painted out and fitted with tables and chairs to offer walkers refreshments. My B&B for the night was an Outdoor Pursuits Centre where a group of young children with learning difficulties were staying with their carers.

Day 13. The day started with a shower, but improved as I headed to Clay Bank Top. I took a detour to Osmotherly and Swainby. I was surprised to see a seat dedicated to a man killed at Kohima on 6/5/1944.

Day 14. My second last day, I was almost there. The target was Glaosdale. My B&B host drove me and two other backers to Clay Bank Top to continue the route. The weather was cold, wet and windy and the temperature had dropped to 7c compared to 30c on other days. The least said about that day the better. I was please to reach my B&B that night.

Day 15. Last Day !! Robins Hood Bay at the end of it. The weather was good and whereas on the previous 14 days I had walked mostly on my own, I joined up with others I had met on route. The climb to Grosmont was steep, but you know how the sight of the finish line, lends wings to your heels. Our refreshment stop was at May Beck. I felt that as the days had passed I had got stronger, on that day although it was 20 miles, I think I could have done a further 5. At Robin Hood Bay we waited at a pub at the bottom of the bank for another 2 couples who were following. 11 of us walked into the sea together, amongst us were 2 Americans and 2 Dutch.

When I started the walk I looked at it as a job to be done. By the time I have finished it I think I enjoyed it (well parts of it).

Jimmy completed the walk in 1996

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Would you like to share a life story, maybe you spent time in the services or have a precious memory to share. It may be a family recipe or old photographs of places or people.

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Whatever it may be, please contact:

Kerry Pattison

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