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NOW and THEN

Raising the Profile of Older People in the Newry & Mourne area

Welcome to the first edition of the Now and Then Times. This feature contains lots of useful information including citizens advice, keeping warm in winter, upcoming events, old photographs and recipes. Articles have been developed by a group of local community voluntary representatives involved in the [Cooperation and Working Together \(CAWT\) Older People's Project](#). If you would like to get involved in the group please contact Denise McBride, Senior Citizens Consortium on 07885210488. The CAWT Older People's Project, [which is supported by the European Union's INTERREG IVA Programme](#), aims to support older people to live safely and independently in their own home by providing assistive technology (telecare) and a range of social supports available in the community. The project is working closely with statutory, community and voluntary organisations to identify and address issues such as social isolation, information and support for carers.

LEEK & POTATO SOUP

A Cheap & Cheerful Winter

Warmer

Ingredients

2 medium leeks

1 small onion

4 medium size potatoes

1 tablespoon unsaturated oil (i.e. sunflower or corn oil)

1 pint chicken stock

3/4 cup of semi-skimmed milk

Black pepper and chopped parsley to taste

Method

Cut the leeks in half lengthwise then cut into slices, wash well and drain. Peel and chop the onion, peel and thinly slice the potatoes. Add the oil to a large saucepan and heat gently. Add the leeks and onion and cook gently for 7-10 minutes until they are soft but not brown. Add potatoes, stock and black pepper. Bring back to the boil, cover, reduce heat and simmer gently for 20-30 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.



By Patsy Carville

I remember reading the findings of a survey which appeared some time ago in a magazine that catered for the interests of senior citizens. The survey posed the question: Apart from family members and neighbours, who do you consider to be among your most important contacts?

One of those contacts turned out to be the local postman. And the reason most frequently expressed, especially by those people living in rural and remote areas, was: 'a dependable friend who not only delivered the mail but was always there to lend a helping hand if needed.'

The finding of that survey came to mind again when I recently read an article by Brian Connolly, one of Warrenpoint's best known and highly regarded former postmen. During his long service, spanning more than 50 years, Brian spent much of that time delivering the mail to members of the community scattered around the Clontifleece, Donaghaguy and Burren area, a few miles from Warrenpoint.

"When I started out much of my work had to be carried out on foot; later with the aid of a bicycle and later still postal deliveries were motorised" Brian explained.

Much of the terrain he had to travel necessitated walking miles to reach isolated farm holdings, a challenging undertaking especially when the landscape was in the

grip of winter with the added hazard of snow and ice.

"Clontifleece Road with its steep hills and its famous 'hollow' is a testing walk at the best of time" said Brian. "Under deep snow it can sometimes resemble the Klondike. Somehow the road seems to attract more snow than others. I remember during one of the very bad winters trying to make my way along a narrow path at the side of the road. At times I was slipping into snow right up to my waist.

"But" added Brian, "there were many compensations, not least the welcome cup of steaming hot tea that was always offered and during the Christmas season this was usually accompanied by a slice of Christmas pudding warmed in hot butter on the frying pan. And from time to time I would come away from a farmhouse with a pot of home made jam, or a few eggs or even a bottle of butter-milk."

One memory that lingers in Brian's mind was the extraordinary generosity of the people. "These folk didn't have the benefit of our modern day appliances and other comforts," he said. "Indeed, very few houses in the area had running water let alone electricity. Water had to be drawn from a well often situated a hundred yards or more distant from the dwelling and all the cooking had to be done either on a range or on an open fire perhaps with the aid of a fan bellows.

“But, despite the hardships, they were very happy people” added Brian. “Even those who lived alone never complained. Some would ask me to help with filling out some document or helping them to draft a letter to a relative living abroad. Many of the families had elderly relatives living with them including some who had never learned to read or write. If a signature was needed from them they would be guided to make an ‘X’ on the paper and some member of the family would print the required name alongside. Another custom I noticed in some houses was that of setting the clocks one hour fast. At first this puzzled me but I soon learned that it was their way of “making” a little extra time if they needed to go out somewhere.”

Needless to say, during his long career, Brian would experience many lighter moments when humour shone through.

Like the morning he was having a chat with one elderly man who was blind. “He always smoked a clay pipe and when I asked him: ‘why a clay pipe’ he replied, ‘Well Brian, if I drop it, I don’t have to pick it up.’”

Or the other occasion when he was given some advice by a man who lived alone in quite a remote area. “We were enjoying a cup of tea when suddenly he grabbed me by the arm to say: ‘Whatever you do Brian make sure you get a blouse.’ I was single at the time but I did eventually take his advice.”

Brian concluded his article by saying: “As with life, nothing stays the

same. In time I moved on and was given other rounds to do and I have happy memories of them all. But somehow it’s those from Clontarfleece and the surrounding areas that have lingered longest.”

Brian Connolly pictured on the day he retired.



I am 70 years old and have a lot of health problems. I find it difficult to manage and wonder if there is any benefit I can claim?

Attendance allowance is a non-means-tested, non-contributory benefit, paid to someone aged 65 years or over who has care needs because of a mental or physical disability. It is tax-free.

Attendance allowance is a benefit for the disabled person. It is not a benefit for the carer.

The carer of a disabled person may be able to claim carer's allowance

Attendance allowance can be paid to a person with a disability who:-

- is aged 65 or over; and
- is not permanently in hospital or living in accommodation provided by or funded by a local authority; and
- has lived in the UK for 6 out of the last 12 months, actually lives in the UK when s/he claims and normally lives in the UK, unless s/he is terminally ill; and

has care needs

Someone who has care needs will have to meet certain qualifying criteria to be entitled to attendance allowance.

A person will have care needs if s/he:-

- needs help with 'bodily functions', for example, washing, dressing and going to the toilet. It can also include help which enables someone to take part in social activities; and/or
- needs supervision to stop her/himself being a danger to her/himself or others; and/or is terminally ill.

It does not matter if no one is providing you with care, but you must show that you need the care.

How much will the claimant get

Attendance allowance is paid at two rates:-

- The lower rate is paid to somebody who needs frequent care throughout the day or night. From April 2011, the lower rate is £49.30.
- The higher rate is paid to someone who needs frequent care throughout the day and the night, or who is terminally ill. From April 2011, the higher rate is £73.60.

Attendance allowance will be paid as long as the person has care needs and may be awarded for a fixed or indefinite period. It cannot be paid until the person has had care needs for six months. This time limit does not apply if the person is terminally ill. Attendance allowance will stop after four weeks in hospital.

The claim form for attendance allowance is lengthy and you can get help with filling it in. You could consult an experienced adviser at your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

The claimant will need a health professional to complete part of the form.

For more information contact your local CAB, Ballybot House, Cornmarket, Newry, Tel:028 30262934

Requests for Bone Health, Osteoporosis and Falls Prevention Information

To request a talk, presentation, information leaflets or a display on the issue of bone health, osteoporosis and falls prevention relevant to older people's groups, please contact:

[Ashleen Wilson](#), Tel: 028 3831 1526 or [Ciara McGoldrick](#) Tel: 028 3741 2521

This can include:

A 30 minute-1 hour presentation or talk entailing:

An introduction to the issue of bone health

A brief overview of the three key messages to support good bone health:

- 1) Healthy Diet/Lifestyle (including the importance of calcium and vitamin D)
- 2) Weightbearing exercise
- 3) Responsible exposure to sunlight

Key statistics relating to osteoporosis

Key statistics relating to the incidence of falls among older people within SHSCT/NI

Signposting to Regional and Southern Trust based resources and directories.

Signposting to the National Osteoporosis Society, Helpline, Website, Information and Resources

A range of information leaflets on osteoporosis

A free copy of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust booklet, 'The Ups and Downs of Falling'

Display Materials for support weeks, awareness raising

Use of the 8 minute Falls DVD 'Wise Up...Watch Your Step', produced by Home Accident Prevention Group Northern Ireland and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

SDFHI Programmes 2012.

Please note that all places must be booked in advance. All course fees can be paid in full at commencement of course or in two equal instalments. For further information on any of the courses or activities please call

Allison on

Tel 028417-74248 to register, or e-mail us on allison.slater@southdownhealthinitiative.com

Course/Activity	Dates	Cost	Venue
Cook It with Sinead – Fun, Fast Food for Less - 6 week programme focusing on nutrition and healthy eating	Thursdays 10.00am - 12.30 noon	£18	Carcullion House Hilltown
Cook on a Budget with Chef Roger: This 3 week course packs in all the chef's secrets to making your meals and your money go further	Begins February Date to be confirmed 2.15pm - 4.15pm	£9 per course	SDFHI offices Warrenpoint
Gentle Gym – 6 week personalised induction to using the gym. Males or females 60+ are welcome. 4 people per class	Please contact the office for further details	£18	St Marys Youth Club Burren
Circuits for Men aged 40+ - group based activities to improve overall fitness and wellbeing	Mondays 7.00pm-8.00pm	£3 per session	St Marys Youth Club Burren
Circuits for Women aged 40+ - group based activities to improve overall fitness and well-being.	Mondays 10am - 11am	£3 per session	St Marys Youth Club Burren
Circuits for Women aged 40+ - group based activities to improve overall fitness and well-being.	Thursday evening 7.00pm – 8.00pm	£3 per session	St Marys Youth Club Burren
Start Your Day With a Smile at the Comfort Zone Coffee, Cookery and Craic with Sinead and Mary.	Wednesdays 10.30am – 1.00pm	£1 per week	SDFHI offices Warrenpoint
Advanced Computer Course - 6 week course for those who have completed the Basic programme`	Begins February Dates and Times to be confirmed	£15	Rathfriland Enterprise Centre
Pick 'n' Mix Computers - 2hr weekly computer clinics where you pick the topics you want to cover	Dates & Times to be confirmed.	£5.00 per session	SDFHI offices Warrenpoint
Beginners Computers 4 week course	Begins Wednesday 15 th February 2012 7.00 pm – 9.00pm	£10	SDFHI Office Warrenpoint
Beginners Computers 6 week course	Mondays 11.30am-1.30pm	Details on request	St Bronagh's Hall Rostrevor

