

October 2015

Promoting well-being by valuing people's memories

News Update

Follow us:

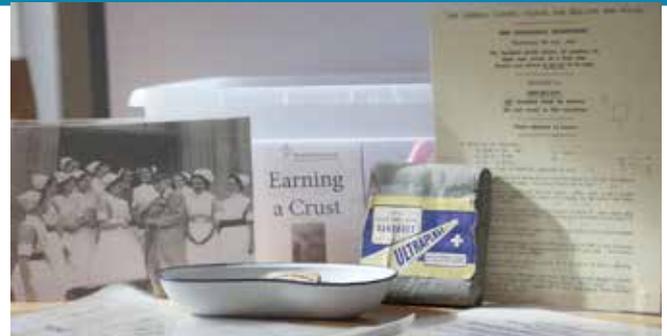


Annual General Meeting

Memory Boxes

RNNI's AGM will be held from 10.30am to 12.30pm at our office on 19 November 2015, when we will launch our new Reminiscence Loan Box service especially for our members.

These 10 Memory Boxes contain multi-sensory items to help stimulate memory and encourage reminiscence. An activity booklet is included in each box.



**Home Life
In Style**

High Days and Holidays

**Cooking and Baking
School and Childhood**

Winter Wonderland

Love and Marriage

**Earning a Crust
1940s 1970s**

If you would like to attend the AGM please email avrilfairbrother@rnni.org Information about membership can be found on our website www.rnni.org



Awards Ceremony at Titanic-Finalists

The first ever Dementia Friendly Awards Northern Ireland took place in September at Titanic Buildings Belfast. The awards are designed to create dementia-friendly communities and improve the lives of people living with dementia and their carers. RNNI were nominated for the 'Best Dementia Friendly Involvement Initiative (NI)' for their night class programme for older people with dementia held during the summer months at Wilson House, Broughshane. This programme is part the Big Lottery Fund, Sharing Memories Building Communities project that RNNI is running in partnership with the Northern Trust. There were over 300 applications for the award and we were delighted that RNNI were among the finalists and as a result received a crystal plague marking the event. The overall winners were the The Spectrum Centre for their Social Sofa. The event was hosted by Sarah Travers, and as guests we were treated to a champagne reception and a fantastic afternoon tea, and we were entertained by Belfast's Singing for the Brain group, made up of older people with dementia.



Representatives of RNNI & the Trust



Singing for the Brain choir

Training Opportunities

Introduction to Reminiscence and Life Story Work

8 February and 21 March 2016



Accredited training by the Open College Network – QCF level 2 with 2 credits
This aim is to give participants an introduction to reminiscence work through information, examples, practical exercises and discussion.

The two-day course covers the benefits of reminiscence work, the risks and ethical issues involved, the use of multisensory triggers, adapting reminiscence activities to meet the needs of different disabilities and guidance for planning reminiscence sessions.

For more information and if you are interested in attending, an application form can be downloaded <http://www.rnni.org/pages/training%20courses#Introduction>

100th Birthday!



Joe celebrated his 100th birthday at Wilson House on 27th September 2015. He is an enthusiastic participant in the weekly creative reminiscence class. Joe has reminisced about his school days in Parade National school where his kindly young teacher let the class choose their Christmas presents which were little wooden toys. He also remembered her baking soda bread on the griddle for them but this was disrupted when some 'bad boys climbed on the roof and put a dead crow down the chimney and had us all screaming'. Joe became a school bus driver. At his 100th birthday a woman handed him a special birthday card, because she remembered Joe being very good to her on her first day at school. She had felt very nervous and sick and he diverted the bus to the local chemist to get her travel sickness tablets. The young lady later went on to be a teacher herself but she never forgot Joe's kindness to her on her first day at Ballymena Academy. Joe is very tech savvy, he has his own mobile phone and chats to his son who lives in Canada on Skype every day and he gave permission to feature his birthday on the RNNI twitter feed.

Joe's school photo Parade National School



Kirk House Exhibition

Putting training into practice

A reminiscence exhibition was held on 8th August in Kirk House, a residential care home run by Belfast Central Mission, to raise funds for a garden renovation.

The project was spearheaded by resident Sammy Gordon, and supported by the home manager Andrea Selby, all the staff and volunteer Susan Headley. Susan is a member of RNNI and recently completed the Post Qualifying Specialist Award Module in Reminiscence, Life Story Work and Life Review.

The items on display were intended to reflect the lives of the residents, many of whom provided information for short life story profiles. These stories, accompanied many photographs, were exhibited alongside a range of objects loaned by residents, the RNNI and The Rusty Zip vintage clothing shop. A great day was had by all who took part, and over £350 was raised. A reminiscence group was set up to prepare for the project and is now growing from strength to strength.



Bringing Men Together

One of the aims of the Sharing Memories, Building Communities project is to use reminiscence activities to develop friendships and give participants the opportunities to widen their opportunities to meet others. As all the members of our groups suffer from some form of disability we also aim to be inclusive as possible. On a beautiful sunny Thursday in May, two buses arrived at Patterson's Spade Mill in Templepatrick. Both buses dropped the men off in the car park where we had tea and coffee flasks waiting on the picnic tables. The groups hadn't met before but quickly introduced themselves and joined in with the craic and banter and feeling refreshed, we all made our way to the Mill.



There was a large display of spades in the reception area, some which would need two or three men to carry and the men had great fun trying to figure out the purpose of each. Following the viewing of a short video showing the spade making process, there was a very informative and interesting talk and demonstration with plenty of good humour which they all really enjoyed. Physically this was challenging for some of the men but by providing chairs and informing them about how much walking was required at each stage, we were able to ensure that everyone had a good day. It can be tempting to rule out such visits as it may not be suited to some peoples' illness and disability but we must not forget these men are adults and can decide how far they can push themselves.

Just as any good trip can't begin without tea and coffee, refreshments are needed at the end too and we had a lovely meal together in the Chimney Corner Inn.

Upperlands Summer Workshops

Participants from Upperlands Community Development Group celebrated the end of their 16 week creative reminiscence programme with 4 workshops paying homage to fashion, style and hat making.

Deirdre Doherty, Community reminiscence worker highlighted 'What better way to take our hats off to the Upperlands reminiscence group but to collaborate with Rosie Moore, a textile artist from Belfast to add the finishing touches to what has been a very interesting programme. The ladies of Upperlands revel in their linen heritage and have an amazing appreciation for style so these workshops were perfect!

As a starting point, participants brought in their own fashion photos and reflected on clothes from their childhood. They looked at images of working life, including wartime and the 'factory girls', recalling the Doffers: the name given to women who doffed or tied up the full spindles of linen thread throughout the country.

The group tried on an array of hats provided by Rosie and trawled through fashion magazines of eras gone by for inspiration in making their own hats. Their piece de resistance! They pondered over quotes from famous designers and provided their own 'take' on fashion and feeling good! At the end of the workshops participants stepped into their very own 'fashion booth' to be photographed in their individual hats.

The fun and atmosphere was infectious as participants enjoyed dressing up and having a singsong lead by Rosie entitled 'The Doffing Mistress'. Philip Treacy, the famous hat designer couldn't have put it better 'How a hat makes you feel is what a hat is all about!' "Another feather in the cap of the Sharing Memories Building Communities Project.



'Celebrate a Life' Exhibition at the Ulster Hall



Participants of the 'Celebrate a Life' workshop, at Wilson House Broughshane were invited to mount their work at the Ulster Hall as part of the Imagine Arts Festival 2015 - the only event of its kind in Northern Ireland. The workshops were held over 16 weeks, the workshop enabled participants to get to know about each others lives. Each week personal photographs were shared, which afforded participants an opportunity to find out what they had in common and learn their differences. Anna revealed that she was an avid walker and cyclist who had completed the Mourne Walk, she had practically walked and cycled the length of Ireland.

The artists were collected by bus early in the morning to set out for the 'Big Smoke'; Belfast, some had not been to Belfast in years. Songs such as 'A bicycle built for two' and 'It's a long way to Tipperary' were sang on the way, everyone arrived in high spirits. John was delighted to see the poster advertising the event outside the Ulster Hall, Jan Carson the event coordinator informed him that there was over 20,000 visitors to the exhibition over the month of October, his image was also used on the web site. John celebrated his wife who he calls his 'buddy', Anna pictured below celebrated her daughter who is a teacher, she was very proud of her becoming an academic. Tracy Smyth a co-ordinator from Hemsworth Court a specialist dementia friendly sheltered housing unit visited the exhibition with some residents, she thought it was 'amazing work for older people and people who have dementia'.



Volunteer Training Event



RNNI provided a training and team building event for it's facilitators and volunteers. Artist McCall Gilfillan facilitated a session on three dimensional plaster hand casting at her Elements Studio at Downhill, Castlerock, County Londonderry. Volunteers Loretta, Kathleen and Nigel and facilitator Geraldine attended with Trust day care worker Amanda attended the workshop with nervous trepedation.



Volunteer Training Event

It was a beautiful sunny day and we were surrounded by pictureque mountains and a babbling stream which helped to relax us. Milk cartons, bowls and wooden spoons were our tools, as each participant took turns in being the facilitator and the model. The feeling of the mould tightening around our hands was cold but gently gripping. The second stage of the process involved removing our hands from the mould and mixing the plaster to pour into the mould. We shook with excitement as we tore away the pink mould to reveal the ghostly wrinkled copy of our hands, it was truly magical. We then learned an alternative method using sand as a mould. Everyone enjoyed learning something new which they can use in future workshops, the training provided an opportunity for volunteers to learn more about each other and to discuss their experiences of working with older people. It was also an opportunity to plan how we could use this valuable learning in our future work. It is hoped to create hand casts which demonstrate elements of older people's employment, watch this space for notice of the future exhibition which will take place at Wilson House in January 2016.



Tea Dance

A tea dance was also held as part of the Imagine Arts Festival for Older People in the Ulster Hall on 20 October. A group from Moateview Clanmil sheltered housing scheme and Wilson House at Broughshane, travelled to and attended the event together, exchanging memories, sharing laughs and becoming friends along the way. RNNI volunteers Nigel, Kathleen and Loretta were present as well as day care assistant Maura and social work student Sandra, to ensure everyone was able to engage safely at the event. We were all seated at long tables filled with sandwiches, scones with jam and delicate cakes, tea and coffee were on tap all day. Over a thousand older people attended the tea dances which were held at 12.00 and 3.00. The hall was electric with an excited hubbub of people enjoying the dancing, the food and music. A live band provided the entertainment and the floor quickly filled with couples showing off their 'strictly' moves.

We were especially pleased that Ruth, who lives at Moateview, had made a special effort to attend as she stated that she never went out and kept herself to herself. It was not long before she had a procession of partners asking her to dance. Although Anna was not able to join in the dancing she said she enjoyed watching everyone dancing and reminiscing about going to dances with her husband in their early years of dating. Marian RNNI's manager was hosting an information stand on one of the upper floors and when she called in to see the group Tommy whisked her on the dance floor. Tommy hardly sat down and Loretta commented on his stamina compared to some of his younger partners. The event ended with a conga, the whole room seemed to join in as they snaked around the room.

The bus was a lot quieter on the way home, but we had a rendition of 'Show me the way to go home', everyone was happy to have attended the event and Ruth and Tommy became firm friends.

