

Senior Citizens Forum Newsletter December 2018

Message from the Chairperson, Celia Steventon

I am very honoured to have been voted on as Chairperson for the Forum for a second year.

I really cannot believe where the year has gone!

We had a very successful Celebrating Age Festival in October which many of you attended and we hope to run a similar event in 2019, but possibly in a different format.

This year we have again organised two Christmas parties because of the numbers having grown each year. They will already have taken place by the time you read this, but I know they will have been a fantastic success and a great start to the Christmas season. Our next open forum meeting is on February 4th, 2019, so come along and join us at The Wakes in Oakengates, more details below.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy Happy New year and look forward to seeing you in 2019.

Events

Our first 2019 Forum will be on Monday 4th February 2019

10.30am - 1.00pm, doors open at 10am at The Wakes, Oakengates, TF2 6EP

Event is open to all, members and non-members, free entry. Free light buffet lunch and refreshments.

Come and join us, everyone welcome!

We haven't been able as yet to confirm the topic for the forum, but we'll try our best to offer an interesting, informative and sociable event. Further details will be available on our website twseniors.org.uk nearer to the date.

The Forum and The Wakes are excited to introduce a new exercise class for over 50's – Mature Movers

Tuesdays 1pm - 2pm, starting 8th January 2019 at The Wakes, Limes Rd, Oakengates, TF2 6EP

Exercise session led by Sarah Gamble-Warner, 45 minutes of exercises for the over 50's, all abilities welcome and exercises adapted where needed. Followed by tea & coffee.

Also open to adults who cannot access mainstream activities because of a disability or health problem. If you have any queries regarding the session, please contact Sarah on 07821 739943.

Why not come along and have a go? Low impact gentle exercise, fun and a great way to get fitter and meet new friends. Exercise to 60s and 70s music. Everyone can enjoy their first session free, followed by a charge of £2.50 per session, to include a hot drink. Free parking available and close to Oakengates Bus Station.

Environment & Transport Action Group by Dave Wright, Chair of ETAG

The Group has had 2 meetings since the last issue of Forum, the first attended by T & W Council Cabinet Member for Transport and Roads plus the Service Delivery Manager for Highways. The group was updated on the new footbridge from Telford Central Station going across the two dual-carriage ways, which is scheduled to be finished just before Christmas. Both platforms will be served by a lift which can take 16 persons. A number of you have told us that you like the look of the new bridge.

We were then briefed on the Telford Bus Station. You will have seen that phase 2 has started and by the time you are reading this the electronic timetables should be up and working. Phase 2 toilets will be available just outside of the town centre and alongside the new café.

We have had several complaints about how cold the bus station is and how bad the seating arrangements are. We have passed these on however until the council lease the bus station from the town management team there is little they can do about these issues.

The final update was on the annual maintenance programme. Work should be starting in and around Oakengates in the spring. We were informed that the new highways contract from 1 April 2019 has been completed and will have more benefits than we currently have and more performance measures for the contractors.

The members of the action group raised questions on traffic lights, speed humps and our favourite, fly tipping. We were told that covert operations are taking place around known fly tipping areas however there were no plans for CCTV due to the number of sites which would need to be covered.

The second meeting was our Annual Review and Point of Reflection meeting. The Chairperson presented what we had covered in the year and then discussions took place on our Terms of Reference. We confirmed our 6 meetings for 2019 and our first update will be from the Service Delivery Manager for the Environment and the new contract from 1st April 2019.

If you have any concerns about transport or the environment, please get in touch with the Senior Citizens Forum team and they will pass your concerns on to the action group. The contact details are given on page 2. If you are interested in joining the action group please get in touch. Your details will be passed to the group and then we will be in touch with you.

Driving habits that drive us nuts, and are extremely dangerous too.

Tailgating

Have you seen the road safety campaign from Highways England yet? It was launched earlier this autumn to show the dangers of driving too close to other vehicles. With over a quarter of drivers admitting to tailgating, the campaign tells road users: "don't be a space invader".

Visit the website highwaysengland.cstaysafestayback/co.uk to view a video raising awareness of the risks, based on the popular game 'Space Invader'. You can also apply for a free sticker pack to warn other motorists about the risks.

Casualties on our roads

Tailgating is a factor in 1 in 8 casualties on the roads. While it may not be intentional by the driver behind, to those in the car in front, it feels aggressive and personal. Some drivers readily admit to

tailgating but many of them think and say that they are good drivers. “There is absolutely no upside to tailgating – you will not get to your destination faster, you are not a skilled driver for doing it, and you are putting so many innocent people at risk. So, we on ETAG very much back this campaign to highlight the dangers of tailgating.” Dave Wright

Failure to Indicate

So those flashing amber lights on vehicle...apparently they're called directional indicators! However it does appear that indicating has now become an optional driving procedure. Is it laziness, forgetfulness, lack of concentration or just that some drivers couldn't care less? Needless to say failure to use indicators contributes to a high proportion of road accidents.

A survey conducted by AA Streetwatchers of some 40,000 vehicles at junctions and roundabouts around the country concluded that 33% of all vehicles did not indicate before making a turn.

Forum Computer drop in sessions (free)

Butter Cross Court, Stafford Street, Newport, TF10 7UD
Hartshorne Court, Burton Street, Dawley, TF4 2BY, Wed, 10am - 12noon
Oliver Court, Ladycroft, Wellington, TF1 3BU, Wed, 2pm - 4pm
The Hub on the Hill, Southgate, Sutton Hill, TF7 4HG, Mon, 2pm - 4pm

Call us on 07932 828333/07552 975676 for more details.

We offer help to absolute beginners through to experienced users, using our computers or your own, whether a laptop, tablet or smartphone. We provide problem solving, online safety advice, computer clean up, and much more. Even if you have only one question to ask, or just one problem to solve, please call in. No need to book, just turn up.

What is Smart Technology?

Simply put – smart technology goes one step further than the average ‘on and off’ mechanics of electronics. It has interactive qualities which often grant the user remote control via the internet.

More than just smartphones and smart meters, this rapidly developing technology is just the tip of the iceberg. Some industry experts believe that thanks to smart technology we are on the verge of a fourth industrial revolution and predict that over the next few years we could all be living in a much more connected ‘smarter’ world, from self-driving smart cars to smart rubbish bins. There are already fridges that create shopping lists, allowing you to access cameras remotely to see what food and groceries you might be running low on.

Smart Speakers

When Amazon unveiled its first Echo speaker with Alexa voice-control in 2016, we took one step closer to realising our sci-fi dreams of controlling the tech in our lives with simple voice commands.

They are wireless speakers with voice-controlled personal assistants built into them, so they're capable of doing all sorts beyond just emitting sound. You can ask your smart speaker to play a song or playlist, ask it for the weather report, to check the traffic, find a restaurant, tell it to create a to-do list or tell you a joke.

They start at about £40 for the small Amazon Echo Dot, but there are others available including Google and Apple products. If you want one to play music you may need to opt for a more expensive, better quality speaker.

Thinking of getting a new TV in time for Christmas?

Most new TVs are now 'smart', but what does that mean?

A smart TV has a higher picture quality but also comes with integrated internet, allowing you to access on-demand content from sites such as BBC iPlayer, ITV Hub and All 4, streaming services like Netflix and web browsing, without the need to connect a box or computer. With the more expensive models, you can operate them by voice control.

Do you know your LED from your OLED?

Most budget TV's are LED, (Light Emitting Diodes) shone through an LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) panel to produce the individual pictures.

OLED stands for Organic Light Emitting Diodes. Individual pixels create their own light source to make up the picture, which means a more premium viewing experience with deeper blacks, more vibrant colours, and improved viewing angles. OLED TVs also have a lower energy consumption than LED and the screens can be super-slim.

And your HD from your HDR?

4K Ultra HD and HDR resolution offer improved contrast, greater levels of brightness, and a wider colour palette. However if your budget is lower, Full HD and HD Ready versions will still provide a very good picture but may become outdated in the not too distant future.

Celebrating Age Festival 2018

The Celebrating Age 2018 Launch Day event attracted around 220 people who came to find out about local activity groups.

The event on 1st October, held at The Place Theatre in Oakengates, launched the 2018 Celebrating Age Festival, which showcased the range of activities available and suitable for the over 50's across Telford and Wrekin.

Visitors were encouraged to have a go at ballet, painting, tai chi, morris dancing, salsa, woodwork and more, and find out about many more. The event gave people an opportunity to chat to the group providers ahead of attending one of the many taster sessions listed in the festival programme for the week 8th to 13th October.

The festival is coordinated through a partnership between the Senior Citizens Forum, Age UK Shropshire Telford and Wrekin, Wrekin Housing Trust and Telford & Wrekin Council, and is aimed to help combat loneliness and enhance the wellbeing of senior citizens in Telford and Wrekin.

We were overwhelmed by the attendance this year and the fantastic atmosphere all day. We received some brilliant feedback from activity groups and visitors alike.

We'd like to say a big thank you to all those who made it possible. As well as funding from the organising partners, the festival received a grant of £1,000 from Veolia EnviroGrant, and some sponsorship from Fodens Solicitors, ResourceBank and ReAssure Ltd. Volunteers from Denso helped out on the day.

We are currently in the process of reviewing this year's festival and looking at how it might be delivered next year in the hope that even more people might be encouraged to take up a regular activity.

If you're a local activity provider or are involved in a local group or club, or just interested in taking part, and you'd like to be kept informed about plans for next year's festival, please email us at info@celebratingagetelford.uk

If you've recently taken up a new activity or hobby, or joined a new group and club, whether or not you found out about it through Celebrating Age, perhaps you would like to share your story, how you felt about trying something new and how you've found the experience so far.

What's happening at The Wakes

Theatre Square, Oakengates TF2 6EP

Adult ballet, Thursdays, 11.00am.

Contact 01952 201803. Please wear close fitting clothing, socks or ballet slippers, and bring along some trainers to wear during the warm up.

Yoga with Anne-Marie Tuesday, either 5.15pm or 7.30pm Booking required, contact Anne-Marie 07734 107383

The Wakes Film Club

A community friendly cinema with affordable movies, wheelchair access and large adjoining free car park, we have an exciting programme of themed and one-off film nights.

Ladies Movie Party Nights have proved fantastically popular offering a tasty meal, a movie and at a bargain price. Recent hit screenings have included Mamma Mia and The Greatest Showman. Age 50+ Screenings will be a regular feature, taking place early afternoon these include tea/coffee and a cake in the price.

Not forgetting the grandchildren, we have half term and holiday relaxed screenings with a matted area at the front so you don't have to worry if they struggle to sit still for an hour and a half!

TV Licence Scam Alert!

There's an email scam going round either promising a refund on licensing costs or claiming that your payment is overdue, or saying that TV Licensing has been trying to contact you. You are then asked to follow a link to a convincing fake TV Licensing website, designed to steal your bank account and credit card details.

If you know for certain that your license is not due for renewal, that all payments are up to date and you are not expecting a refund, just delete the email. If you're not sure, have a look at the email address it has come from, or contact TV Licensing to check, on 0300 790 6130.

Don't click on a link or reply to the email and never provide bank details or personal details by email.

Free Courses for Registered Carers & Former Carers

Are you, or is someone you know, bereft? Lost? Stuck?

No matter what the cause, grief is the normal and natural reaction to loss of any kind. Society these days expects us to 'get on with it' without any idea of how to do that. Whilst talking about how we feel can be helpful, often it isn't enough. This unique 8 week group course teaches you the simple steps to let go of the pain and move forwards and is delivered by Phyl Edmonds, Certified Grief Recovery Specialist®. Drawing upon her professional skills, as well as her personal experience of significant loss and recovery, Phyl will guide you in taking the small and correct action choices to help you complete your relationship to the pain, isolation and loneliness caused by significant emotional loss.

Thursday 7th February and every Thursday up to and including 28th March, 8 x 2 hours, approximately one hour notes plus reading in between sessions. 1:1 options also available.

Life Planning for a Sense of Purpose

Following a significant life change, we often experience conflicting emotions and can lose our sense of self and purpose. The course will guide you in taking the actions that lead to a sense of self and purpose, whilst improving wellbeing and life opportunities.

Tuesday 12th February and every Tuesday up to and including 12th March, 5 x 2 hour weekly sessions.

Both courses are delivered by a qualified Coach and Grief Recovery Specialist and are suitable for people experiencing loss and change in their life, eg taking on the role of carer, a caring role coming to an end, grieving for the loss of your relationship with a loved one who has dementia, bereavement, health issues or relationship breakdown.

The Glebe Centre, Glebe Street, Wellington, TF1 1JP, 10.15am -12.30pm.

Free for carers and former carers registered with Carers Centre, Telford.

To register your interest for either course please contact 01952 255952, mobile 07817 910552, email phyl.edmonds@severnwd.co.uk

WEA Courses starting January 2019

Creating Portraits Using Pastels, Mon 14/1/19 - 28/1/19, 12.30 – 3.30pm £35.00

Using Palette Knives and Acrylic Paint, Mon 4/2/19 - 18/2/19, 1.30 – 3.30pm £35.00

An Introduction to Ink Drawing and Washes, Mon 25/2/19 - 11/3/19, 12.30 – 3.30pm £35.00

How to Draw and Paint Birds and Animals, Mon 25/3/19 - 8/4/19, 12.30 – 3.30pm £35.00

All the above courses at the Park Lane Centre, Woodside, TF7 5QZ

Art for Everyone, Tues 22/1/19 - 2/4/19, 1.30 – 3.30pm, Ketley Community Centre, TF1 5AN £77.00

More Art for Everyone, Tues 22/1/2019 - 2/4/19, 10am – 12.00, Jubilee House, Madeley, TF7 5AH £77.00

Yoga for Calm and Relaxation, Mon 24/1/19 - 4/4/19, 6.30 – 8.30pm, Dawley House, TF4 2ES £77.00

Tai Chi for Beginners, Wed 27/2/19 - 27/3/19, 1.00 – 2.30pm, Hadley Community Centre, TF1 5NL £30.00

Tai Chi, Wed 27/2/19 - 27/3/19, 10:00am – 12:00, Ketley Community Centre, TF1 5AN £30.00

Our courses are free to eligible students claiming certain benefits.

Enrol online at wea.org.uk or call 0300 303 3464

All you need to bring is your willingness and excitement to learn.

The WEA is the UK's largest voluntary sector provider of adult education, believing in access to adult learning for all, learning that counts towards a better, fairer society for everyone, whether it's about feeling better equipped with the skills to take on tomorrow, or it's simply about learning for the joy of it.

The Brussel Sprout

Has there ever been a bigger cause of Christmas disagreements than the sight of Brussels sprouts on the dinner table on December 25?

The little green monsters polarise opinion like football and politics. Yet every year we munch our way through more than a billion of them, so someone must be eating them. Here's some things you didn't know about the humble sprout...

- It won its name after becoming popular in the Belgian capital in the 16th Century, but is originally thought to have come from Iran and Afghanistan.
- Around 5,000 years ago sprouts were prescribed by Chinese physicians as a medication for bowel problems.
- There are 50 varieties to avoid if you're not a fan.
- Packed full of folic acid and anti-cancerous properties, a cup of cooked Brussels sprouts contains only about 60 calories.
- In December, supermarket Morrisons sells about 650 tonnes of sprouts each week. That's more than the take-off weight of an A380 Airbus.
- It's not an easy journey to your table. The sprout has an astonishing 46 pests and diseases trying to kill it off, which makes growing them organically in the UK virtually impossible.

- Overcooking sprouts makes them smell like rotten eggs. With high levels of sulforaphane, sprouts should be cooked for only four to six minutes.

And the reason why lots of people don't like them? Sprouts are hard to digest and full of sulphur-containing chemicals to deter animals from feeding on their leaves. It's this that can clear a room in seconds...!!

It won't be too long before you'll have to do a 'digital transaction' to give your grandchildren some pocket money!

From the beginning of our time we have used some sort of physical currency, starting with bartering in lieu of money to buy goods. Domestic livestock, vegetables and grain were among the earliest forms. The first known coins were created around 600BC and bank notes around 1661 AD.

But cash use is declining rapidly. In the UK in 2007, cash accounted for 61% of all payments. By 2017, only 34% of the 38.8 billion consumer payments were made in cash, and debit card payments exceeded cash for the first time. This trend is likely to continue, with cash usage forecast to halve over the next decade.

The increased use of contactless cards and smartphone payment apps has made a big impact. People pay taxi and bus fares this way and even for a cup of coffee or a newspaper. It's likely that in the future, shops and services will refuse cash as the costs of handling it outweigh the loss of business due to turning away cash customers.

While many embrace and welcome paying by technology, in 2017, 4% of UK adults still relied almost entirely on cash. Evidence shows that many cash users are from the more vulnerable groups.

On October 15th, Chris Fox, Forum Co-ordinator, attended a workshop as part of the independent Access to Cash Review (www.accesstocash.org.uk) which has been established to consider consumer requirements for cash use over the next five to fifteen years.

The Review's main objective is to ensure that there remains a cash access service that meets the needs of all consumers, regardless of their personal circumstances, for as long as is necessary. It wants to understand the importance of cash now and in the future so that they can ensure that no one is left behind as the digital revolution progresses.

The workshop attendees put forward their concerns (summarised on the opposite page) about how this might affect older people and other vulnerable groups which are the biggest cash users.

Some of the issues discussed at the workshop

- People who choose not to use online banking or smartphone payments, along with people on low incomes and those with a poor credit history who cannot get a bank account or debit card, need to be able to access cash.
- The technology required needs to be affordable and accessible to all groups in society and not just geared to the younger market .
- The UK broadband infrastructure needs to be able to cope to avoid systems failing regularly.
- There needs to be effective action on fraud and measures to prevent financial abuse.
- It's a huge change to take on board, shopping may become daunting which may keep people at

- home and lead to more isolation.
- As the number ATM cash machines reduces, many will have to travel further to obtain cash.
- Who will bear the cost of access to cash, will this mean ATM charges and higher prices for paying in cash?

The ROC Centre Telfrd

ROC's main aim is to bring about community transformation by creating strategic partnerships between statutory agencies, voluntary groups and churches. These partnerships form new volunteer-led projects that address a variety of social needs. There are over 165 active partnership projects, and many more at the planning and enquiry stage.

The Telford scheme holds a Regular open café at

St Michaels Church, Madeley, Mondays, 5 - 6.30pm

Park Lane Centre, Woodside, Fridays, 5 - 6.30pm

With affordable food and drink, monthly cinema clubs, fun, games and laughter.
Drop in or call 07547 780746. Visit www.facebook.com/roccentretelford

Can I go it alone? Taking the fear out of solo travel

At our October forum and AGM, guest speaker Pen Turner shared her experiences of travelling on her own. If this inspired you to pack your bags and see the places you've always dreamed of visiting but you're on your own, you may view the prospect with apprehension and even terror.

On the positive side, holidaying alone has its advantages. There are no arguments over what you do and where you go, and solo travellers will tell you that they've met some wonderful people, broadened their minds and boosted their confidence.

One of the best and less scary ways to start is by taking a short organised trip for solo travellers. They are more expensive than putting together your own itinerary, but being part a group means you'll be met, escorted, guided and looked after. You'll find out that way that you can actually travel solo. You'll meet many others in the same boat and maybe even make friends with whom you can plan a trip in the future.

You could search online for a solo travel company for a suitable trip, one that visits the countries you are interested in, but you may prefer to consult a travel agent or independent travel counsellor. They'll point out some things that you may not have thought about and will help identify what is best for you.

Other options to consider include (lots of information available online)

- volunteering abroad, either for a couple of weeks or for longer.
- getting paid work – such as teaching English abroad, by taking a TEFL qualification in the UK.
- adventure or hobby holidays.
- registering with some online forums to get tips and advice and even find a companion, eg Travel Buddies, Lonely Planet's Thorn Tree Forum, Trip Adviser's Solo Travel Forum

Age UK and Silver Travel Adviser offers lots of advice and ideas as do Saga, who also offer solo holidays.

We'd love to hear from anyone who has tried travelling solo over the age of 50, and hear how you found the experience, and any advice you may have for fellow single travellers.

The world is for single people too!

Are you 75 and still paying for your TV Licence?

Almost £38 million has been paid back in the past three years to people aged 75 and over continuing to pay for their TV licence even though they no longer needed to.

A standard colour TV licence costs £150.50 a year for most people, but if you're aged 75 or over, you are entitled to a free licence for your main address and it will cover anyone you live with as well.

But you do not automatically get an over 75 TV Licence on your 75th birthday. You have to apply for one.

There are lots of different ways to buy your licence:

- On the TV Licensing website www.tvlicensing.co.uk
- By calling 0300 790 6130
- By post (ring for address)
- Wherever you see the PayPoint sign

Call 0300 790 6130 if you have any queries about how to apply for your free over 75 TV licence.

If you're 74 – you can get a short-term TV Licence to cover you until your 75th birthday. This lets you pay only for the months you have left until you turn 75.

I'm over 75 and I've been paying - can I get a refund?

If you're over 75 and have been paying by mistake, you can apply for your free licence. When your free over 75 licence application is processed you will be refunded any money overpaid since your 75th birthday.

Do I need a TV Licences?

You need to be covered by a TV Licence, including a free over 75 TV Licence, to watch or record live TV programmes on any channel, or to download or watch any BBC programmes on iPlayer, catch up or on demand. This applies to any device and provider you use.

Moving into a care home?

If you're taking your TV with you to use in your own room, you will need to move your licence to the new address.

If you're taking a TV but not moving the licence, talk to the scheme administrator as soon as convenient as they may qualify for an Accommodation for Residential Care (ARC) Concessionary TV Licence.

What is Heartfulness Meditation?

Heartfulness offers a simple and practical approach to meditation and relaxation which is easy to learn and integrate into your daily life. The emphasis is on the needs and experience of the meditator.

Heartfulness can help you develop:

- better relaxation and sleep
- improved focus and attention
- a greater sense of being present in the moment
- a more peaceful calm and balanced life
- an individual meditation practice
- a deeper connection to your own creativity and intuition

Heartfulness can be practised in the comfort of your own home and also within a local group with trainers available throughout the UK and Ireland. We invite you to experience Heartfulness for yourself.

Who are we?

We are a non-profit organisation with centres throughout the world. There are never any charges for Heartfulness. Sessions are free and open to anyone interested, however donations to support our work are welcome.

Heartfulness Meditation is a way of uniting heart and mind and can be described as a subtle energy that helps us to focus, to shift our attention away from the outer world and to go deeper into our inner world. It can best be understood through direct experience. We invite you to experience the unique benefits of this transmission at regular sessions:

Sundays 8.00 - 9.00am, Randlay Community Centre, TF3 2LH
Wednesdays 7.00 - 8.00pm Randlay Community Centre, TF3 2LH
Fridays 1.30 - 2.30pm Strickland House, Wellington, TF1 3BX
Thursdays 1.30 - 2.30pm Court St Medical Practice, Madeley, TF7 5EE
2nd Wed every month 5.00 - 6.00pm The Wakes Oakengates, TF2 6EP

For more information contact Gill Tel 07957 434809 Email: gillmhall@talktalk.net

Taking care of your teeth can actually make a huge difference to your quality of life.

Your oral health can change a lot of things that are probably important to you, from being able to eat what you want, to socialising with confidence.

What happens to your teeth as you get older?

Your teeth can become darker in colour, due to a loss of surface enamel, and staining from food and nicotine.

The surfaces of your teeth may gradually become worn down, by grinding your teeth and by erosion by acids in your food and drink.

Your gums can recede putting you at greater risk of tooth decay near the roots and gum disease can lead to loss of the bone around your teeth.

What can you do?

1. Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and change your toothbrush regularly.
2. Visit your dentist and hygienist regularly and take your dentist's advice. They can help with showing you the best techniques for brushing and also advise if any particular products, such as mouthwashes or toothpastes may be helpful for you.
3. Quit or cut down on smoking.
4. Be aware of 'hidden sugars' in your diet. For instance, you may not realise that mints can be high in sugar, and sucking them for a long time can really increase your risk of tooth decay. Some medications may also contain sugar, so ask your doctor if sugar-free versions are available.
5. Using an electric toothbrush can help if it's hard moving your arm or hand. If you have arthritis, you could adapt the handle of your toothbrush yourself, to help improve your grip, by wrapping a couple of elastic bands around the handle. Or you may prefer to invest in a toothbrush that's been designed specifically for your needs.
6. Saliva helps to strengthen your teeth and protect them against decay. If you suffer from a dry mouth due to a health condition or medication you take ask your doctor or pharmacist about saliva sprays and rinses. There are various types that are available on prescription or over-the-counter. Make sure you're regularly drinking water throughout the day too.

Based on an article on Bupa.co.uk

1914 - 1918 The Great War – Women By Dave Wright

During the last 5 editions the "100 Years On" articles have looked at the different battles during 1918, leading to the Armistice on the 11th day of the 11th month. This time we are focussing on women and the vital contribution they made during World War 1.

Women had been in paid employment prior to the war, mainly in the textiles industry. In 1915 women were brought into the manufacturing of munitions and records show that by 1918 there were almost a million women employed in some aspect of munition work.

For these women who wanted to or needed to work, childcare could often be a problem. This was recognised by the government which put in money to allow childcare within day nurseries, This money only applied to women working in munitions so in all other areas of women's employment, childcare had to be provided by friends and family. By 1917 statistics show there were over 100 day nurseries across the country, which also provided an area of work for women.

Compared with domestic service, working in the munition factories was relatively well paid, but unpleasant, involving long working hours. It was also hazardous, as several women were killed by devastating explosions. Filling the shells with TNT, a poisonous explosive, could cause a potentially fatal condition called toxic jaundice which as the name suggests turned the women's skin yellow.

Records show that the first women police officers were employed during the 1st World War and one of the main responsibilities of the Women's Patrols was to maintain discipline and monitor behaviour around the hostels and factories. They carried out inspections to ensure nothing was brought into the munitions environment that might cause an explosion. They could also be found patrolling public areas such as railway stations, parks and even public houses.

Another area opening up for women was driving and back home during the war you'd find women driving the buses, acting as conductresses, working within the ticket offices, as carriage cleaners and even porters. On the railways too in 1914 there were about 9,000 women working within the rail network and 50,000 by the end of the war.

The First World War brought changes in the lives of British Women and is often represented as having had a wholly positive impact, opening new opportunities in the world of work and in the latter years strengthening their case for the right to vote.

However not all the opportunities the war provided for women were entirely positive or even long lasting. Many new jobs did become available during the 1914 – 1918 war but many of these were closed to them after the war as men who had served returned to their old jobs.

Lest We Forget

Fancy a Go at Bowling?

Keep fit and have fun joining in with a group of seniors meeting every week.

Short Mat Bowls - Monday & Tuesday, 1.45pm - 3.30pm, at Randlay Community Centre, Randlay Avenue, TF3 2LH.

10 pin bowls - Thursday morning, 10am - 12noon, at Tenpin, Telford, St Quentin's Gate, TF3 4EJ.

Contact June on 01952 598704 for more details.

Uncover the skeletons in your family closet! By Chris Fox, Forum Co-ordinator

When delving into my family history, finding clues from before the national census began in the early 19th century used to mean doing a lot of leg work. After visiting one graveyard on a very windy north east coastal clifftop, I'm very pleased to find that many more resources are now available to view on the family history websites; images of archived hand written documents from the 16th to 18th centuries.

Telford & Wrekin library members have free access to Ancestry UK at any T&W library, but from home you'll need to pay a monthly or annual subscription. There are several websites and most offer a free trial, and you can get help from the Community History Volunteers at Wellington library, and at our computer drop in sessions.

Why not suggest a subscription as a Xmas gift from a family member? It'll fill many hours over the cold winter months and who knows what you might find in your family closet!

I was born in County Durham but I discovered that my father's ancestors came from Somerset, having made the long journey with their families in the 1850's to take up work at the then prosperous Durham minefields. Other branches originated from Scotland, Northumberland, and Westmorland, and some made the sailing to settle in America.

Our very minor claims to fame include a London publisher (my great great great great uncle) whose trial for defamation led to the passing of the Libel Act 1792. His brother emigrated to Bermuda to publish the island's first newspaper and was commemorated on a stamp in 1984. A great great great uncle was a baronet, manufacturer of the first transatlantic telegraph cable and an MP, said to have advised Disraeli to invest in the Suez Canal. Less illustrious were at least 3 ancestors who had served time in jail due to petty theft, and there was no shortage of tragedy with several young men losing their lives in mining disasters.

Silly Xmas Humour

There's something about Christmas that's magical. Money just seems to disappear into thin air!

What nationality is Santa Claus? North Polish.

Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle age is when you're forced to!

A man with a sore throat went to see his doctor. The doctor prodded and poked and finally said, "Your throat's a bit swollen. Have you eaten anything unusual lately?"

The man said, "Well I know this sounds weird, but last night I ate all my Christmas decorations."
"That's it!" said the doctor. "You've contracted tinselitis!"

Join us today! Become a member of The Forum

To become a member of the Senior Citizens Forum, either phone 07932 828333/07552 975676 or email us at enquiries@twseniors.org.uk

Membership is free and open to people resident in the area, in middle and later life, or anybody with a particular interest in older people's issues.

As a member you will, unless you notify us otherwise, receive our newsletter every two months by post or email.

How we handle your data

The Senior Citizens Forum is committed to ensuring that your privacy is protected by using your data fairly, lawfully, securely and solely for the purposes for which it is required.

We collect data to allow us to register you as a member of the Forum so that you may receive our newsletter every two months. If you choose to receive it by post, we pass your name and address to a mailing company. We sometimes use the data for statistical purposes. We will not sell, distribute or

lease your personal information to third parties unless we have your permission or are required by law to do so.

If you believe that any information we are holding on you is incorrect or incomplete, or you wish to have your details removed from our records, or wish to stop receiving any correspondence from us, please contact us at the address above, or by calling 07932 828333, email enquiries@twseniors.org.uk.

The Senior Citizens Forum is a registered charity and has no regular income. Don't forget that you can help – if you get the opportunity to nominate a charity for funds please do think of us; or if you would like to make a donation, it would be much appreciated. Cheques, made payable to the Senior Citizens Forum, can be sent to our freepost address above.

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