



OUTLOOK

Christmas 2024

To all our readers -
Happy Christmas
and Best Wishes
for the New Year.



In this issue -

A message from the Chair.
Welcome Day '24 pictures.
Friends Remembered.
A Christmas Quiz
Rhinns O' Kells Challenge
La Pasionaria
Weekend in Llandudnow
And more.....

Before printing please consider the environment. If you are reading a paper copy please recycle.

Published by Opportunities in Retirement, Ayr. An organisation for the over 50's



Welcome to “Outlook” our OiR Newsletter for Christmas 2024.

Thank you to all our Group Leaders, and Members, who have contributed articles and pictures for this Winter edition.

Remember, if you don't have access to a computer we can arrange to have your handwritten article (s) typed and your photographs scanned. Pictures which are copyright protected cannot be reproduced. Please contact the office for help. Some articles may be amended slightly to fit the space available, but editing of text will be kept to a minimum. When submitting articles and pictures for publication please use a Word document and ensure that 'read only' is **not** applied to any of the text/pages. **Please send graphics & photographs, with relevant titles, to the office separately - do not insert these into pages of text - thank you.**

Final submission date for the Summer edition of “Outlook” will be the end June 2025

Group meetings and Town Hall meetings will resume in January and members will be able to enjoy the company of others again after the Christmas Break. Information was correct when our pages were created but, readers should check the OiR Ayr website, or contact the office, for current information about group meetings or dates for the Town Hall Talks.

If you have access to a computer but the office is not aware of your current email address please send a message to:- **office@oirayr.org.uk** so you can access Outlook online and reduce our postage costs.

Stephen Dodd— Layout & content

Isabell Rogers— Typing & proof reading

Margaret Fagan—Circulation & printing.

Our mission statement

To make OiR the organisation of first choice, to enable our 50's and over community to participate in co-ordinated and supported opportunities which enhance their lifestyle and personal well being.

Published and printed by

Opportunities in Retirement, Ayr

61 Main Street, Ayr KA8 8BU

Email: office@oirayr.org.uk

Telephone 01292 260086

Office hours –Tuesday, & Thursday by

appointment - see page 7 for temporary pop-up locations

Facebook : www.facebook.com/OiRAyr

Opportunities in retirement, Ayr (known as OiR Ayr) is a registered Scottish Charity—No. SC005639



A message from the Chair



Hello, and welcome to the Christmas 2024 edition of "Outlook". Our office is still out of commission but, hopefully, we will get it back some time in the new year.

The Committee have reluctantly decided that there must be an increase in the membership fee to £25.00 (from £20.00) for 2025. This is necessary to ensure the future long-term stability of our organisation. Various methods of payment are available. The preferred option is by BACS. Card payments can also be made online through the OiR web site. A valuable source of income is Gift Aid. Anyone who is a UK taxpayer and has not signed a Gift Aid form, please consider this option. Contact the Office for details.

A very successful Welcome Day was held on 23rd October in Newton Wallacetown Church Halls and attended by many existing & new members and also by our local Councillor, Mr George Weir. Events like this are very important for promoting OiR and for getting publicity. Photographs taken on the day appear on pages four and five of this edition of Outlook.

To have a successful organisation such as OiR, efficient administration is necessary. For that I have to thank Margaret, our Office Manager, and the many willing office volunteers who assist her.

I can recommend a visit to the Prestwick Pioneer Breakfast Group. This operates fortnightly from 9:30am at Wetherspoons in Prestwick. A varied selection of breakfasts is available together with the all-important social interaction.

To save on printing costs, only a few copies of this newsletter will be printed. These will be available from the OiR Office, or at the Town Hall meetings. If you wish to receive a digital copy, please ensure that the office has your email address.

With Best Wishes from the Committee for Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kind Regards

Barrie Southwood (Chair)



Meeting times and venues

If you intend to visit/join a group please check the meeting place and venue before you travel as they may have changed. Visit the OiR website for current information or contact the office.

Limitation of Liability

Oir Ayr does not assess the fitness of its members to participate in any of its various activities. The decision on your fitness lies within yourself, in conjunction with any medical advice you may wish to take. It is your responsibility to ensure your personal safety and that of your belongings.

WELCOME

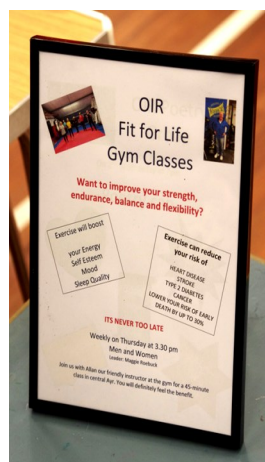
DAY

Pictures taken during our Welcome Day on the 23rd October 2024 in Newton Wallacetown Church Hall



More from our 2024 "Welcome Day"

Photographer - Stephen Dodd



We wish to say a big "Thank You" to all who attended our Welcome Day on 23rd October. Thanks to everyone who booked a table, and to all our Office Volunteers, your contribution to a very successful afternoon is appreciated.

Friends Remembered

Since the last issue of Outlook we have Sadly lost the following Members.

Arnie Green

Alan Green

Sarah Chapman

Our sincere condolences go to families and friends.



ARNIE GREEN

OiR members were shocked to learn of Arnie's death on 2nd September, following a prolonged period of ill health. Arnie was a faithful OiR member who worked quietly in the background to promote our organisation. Many members will never be fully aware of the extent of his commitment and effort.

Arnie was born and raised in Prestwick and had his schooling there. His primary school was the former Prestwick Public School – now Prestwick Community Centre, and his secondary school was Prestwick High School, now known as Prestwick Academy. Following school, he undertook an engineering apprenticeship with Wallacetown Engineering. This led to a career which subsequently took him all over the world, and especially to the USA, Spain, Denmark and Russia. It was while he was training at Wallacetown Engineering that he met his wife, Ann.

Following his marriage to Ann, and continuing to live in Prestwick, Arnie became father to two daughters, Fiona and Nicola, of whom he was immensely proud. In time he became a devoted grandfather to Fiona's son, Jack.

We all benefitted from Arnie's love of music, in his Church life at Prestwick South Church, and through his active participation in the OiR Folk Group and Ayr-Play.. We, at OiR, his church and Prestwick Community Centre also benefitted greatly from his IT skills and his commitment to running websites.

Arnie was a very energetic OiR Executive Committee member, who also served as Chair of the OiR in one of our most difficult times, throughout the worst restrictions of Covid. He was, until his illness, looking forward to returning to that post under more "normal" conditions.

A large turnout, including many of his OiR friends, were at his memorial service in Prestwick South Church, which was a fitting tribute to a friend and colleague who can only be described as a "great guy".

As an organisation, we extend our sympathies to Ann and to his family

David Bowman

ANN MONAGHAN

Ann Monaghan, who passed away in August, will be remembered with affection by many OiR members for the many holidays and day trips organised by Andrew and herself over a number of years.

Around 2002, when both retired from their tourism business, and had joined OiR, they decided, with the approval of the Executive Committee, to offer Day Trips to OiR members. These were a great success, so they then decided to offer their first holiday abroad – to Lake Garda. These holidays abroad continued until, in 2017, their last holiday was to Croatia.

I know that I speak, not just for myself, but for the many members who enjoyed the holidays so very much. Ann was more than the organiser, she was also a very respected, good friend. In addition to her superb organisation, members used to say all you had to do was to turn up at the airport with your suitcase, your money and your passport.

Ann's friendly, very helpful, personality added greatly to the enjoyment of the holiday. No problem seemed insurmountable to Ann. In other words, Ann and Andrew together, ensured that all was well and that any hitches would be overcome.

Ann, with her welcoming smile, will be much missed. I know that OiR members will join with me in offering Andrew our sincere sympathy.

Amy Kinnaird

Farewell Jim!

Sadly, Jim Sands has decided to retire from the Hill and Mountain Walking Group at the ripe old age of 82! He joined in 2001 so has 23 years under his belt. During this time, he has made a huge contribution to the activities, being a very experienced Walk Leader. For a final walk he opted for one of his favorites, a low-level walk to see the autumn colours in the Nith Valley near Drumlanrig. Twenty-four members of the group joined him making a very jolly party. The highlight was at lunch time, when Irene produced a superb cake, decorated with autumn-coloured leaves for Jim (plus another one, cut in to a well-judged twenty-five pieces for the rest of the team!).

DICK VERNON

Pictures - top Jim accepts cake from Irene.

Below - Cake with Autumn Leaves.



OIR OFFICE CLOSURE FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

Our OiR 'pop up offices will close for the Festive Season on **Thursday 5th December at 2pm**, re-opening again on **Tuesday 7th January at 10am**.

We will continue to operate from the following venues:

TUESDAYS – PRESTWICK COMMUNITY CENTRE

10am – 12.45pm

THURSDAYS – NEWTON WALLACETOWN CHURCH HALL

10am – 11.45am

Please do continue to make an appointment wherever possible by emailing us on: office@oirayr.org.uk.

We wish all our members a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Happy 2025.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS FOR 2025

Please note that Membership renewals will be due in January 2025 - except for those who paid at our Welcome Day and subsequent to that date.

Our Membership Fee for 2025 is £25.00 and this can be paid either online, via BACS payment, or by coming into one of our 'pop up' offices in the New Year. More information can be obtained by emailing the office after 7th January on – office@oirayr.org.uk.

A CHRISTMAS QUIZ – JUST FOR FUN

SOME CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

1. Who invented Christmas crackers?.....
2. Who is responsible for bringing Christmas trees indoors in the UK?.....
3. When did the Vatican first introduce Christmas trees indoors?.....
4. Where was mulled wine first thought to have been drunk in the UK?.....
5. How many ingredients are in a traditional Christmas Pudding?.....
6. And, what do they represent?.....
7. When do the twelve days of Christmas end?.....
8. In which year did we start celebrating Christmas on 25th December?.....
9. In the UK Christmas Decorations traditionally stay up for - 12 days, 13 days, or 14 days?.....
10. Why has Santa been banned from sooty chimneys?.....

A “MERRY CHRISTMAS” – BUT IN WHAT LANGUAGE?

1. Joyeux Noel.....
2. Feliz Navidad.....
3. Frohe Weinachten.....
4. Buon Natale.....
5. God Jul.....
6. Wesolych Swiat.....
7. Vrolijk Kertfeest.....
8. Feliz Natal.....
9. Mele Kalikimaka.....
10. Mutlu Noeller.....

Devised by Isabell Rogers



An appeal to all our Group Leaders and Members.

Your next copy of “Outlook” will be the Summer Edition 2025. We need your news, articles, poems, stories and pictures to fill these pages, so please send your contributions to the office to arrive by the end of June 2025.

Please do not put text and pictures together on the same page. Send them separately and please put titles with your pictures so we can match them with your text. This makes conversion to Publisher so much easier - thank you. Please see page two (2) for more information.

Rhinns O'Kells Challenge

Saturday 7th September 2024

In the 20th year of the RoK Challenge a few members of the OiR Hill and Mountain Walking Group attempted and completed the walk with other keen hikers, taking the total to twenty-two participants.

The challenge has been organised, since it's inception, by Councillor Drew Filson and he is hoping for someone else to take on the event as this was his last.

At £15 it was fantastic value. We met in Dalmellington, were dropped-off by coach at the Forest Lodge car park with a map of the route, then picked up at Drumjohn and provided with refreshments at the Dalmellington Inn.



We had fantastic weather for the challenge. It was a very warm day with good visibility, luckily there was a light breeze to keep us cool and to keep the midges at bay once we got to higher ground.



There were nine hills to be tackled on the day heading north.

Meikle Millyea, Milldown, Millfire, Corserine, Carlin Cairn, Meaul, Bow, Coran of Portmark and Black Craig.

The ascent to the top of Meikle Millyea was tough and undulating. Descending the penultimate hill of Coran of Portmark and the climb to Black Craig was a sting in the tail with a very tricky surface to deal with.



Rhinn O'Kells Challenge - continued



I recorded the route as 15.3 miles and 4100 feet of climbing. A total elapsed time of 8.24 hours and a moving time of 6.21 hours. It didn't feel like I had had two hours of rest!

Steve Hutchison

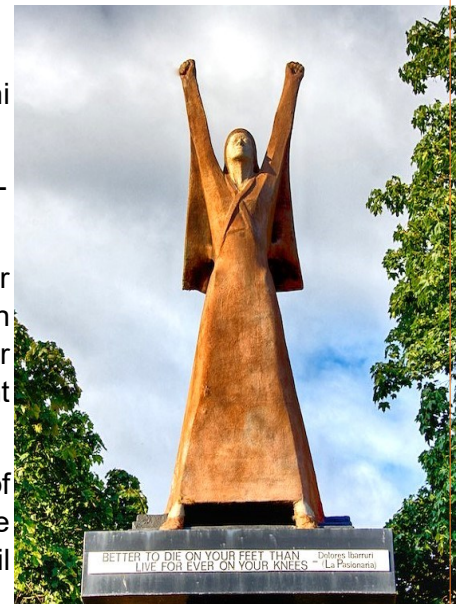
LA PASIONARIA

What is the connection between the statue in Glasgow of Dolores Ibarruri Gomez – LA PASIONARIA – and OiR?

Some of OiR's older members will remember the late Bob Smillie – a dedicated OiR member and leader of the Tuesday Walking Group for many years.

Bob occasionally spoke of his cousin, also called Bob Smillie, a former Glasgow University chemistry student, who died in the Spanish Civil War. Born in Larkhall, he became an activist in the Independent Labour Party. Their grandfather, miners leader Robert Smillie, had been a fervent independent activist, and was a close friend of Keir Hardie.

Giving up his studies, young Bob Smillie travelled to Spain, in the company of Jennie Lee, to join the International Brigades. He then fought, alongside George Orwell, with the Republicans against the Fascists in the Spanish Civil War of 1930-1939.



There were internal conflicts in the Republican Party. Bob's cousin was arrested by the forces on his own side and transferred to a prison cell in Valencia. He died soon afterwards in 1937. The official diagnosis was appendicitis or peritonitis. He was buried in Valencia on 12th June 1937.

Ibarruri Gomez was a major figure on the Republican side, she is credited with coining the phrase "No Pasaran" – "they shall not pass". The Republicans shouted that slogan as they marched.

A statue to La Pasionaria – very dramatic with arms outstretched – was erected in 1979 on the Clyde Walkway. This was a tribute by the City of Glasgow to the British Volunteers of the International Brigades from many countries, who travelled to Spain in the 1930s to fight Fascism.

A few years ago, members of OiR's Saturday Walking Group were curious about the statue as they passed by, while on a walk along the Clyde Walkway.

La Pasionaria lived in exile in Moscow for almost 40 years. She was able to return to Spain after General Franco's death. Dying at the age of 93, she remained politically active all her life. She lived, as she had always done, living up to the quote on the statue – "Better to die on your feet than live forever on your knees".

Amy Kinnaird

Tuesday Walking Group Weekend to Llandudno

The Tuesday Walking Group recently enjoyed a weekend in Llandudno, staying at the Chatsworth House Hotel for three nights from October 18th to 21st. The weather was very good on the Saturday so a group of about twenty walkers travelled on the tram to the top of Great Orme, then walked along the west promenade to Colwyn. The non-walkers went on an excursion to Bety's-y-Coed and Colwyn. The weather was not so good on the Sunday so a planned walk was cancelled and everyone went to Portmeirion and Caernarfon instead. Portmeirion is where the 60s TV show, "The Prisoner" was filmed starring Patrick McGoochan.

The weekend was rounded off by a raffle and quiz in the hotel lounge on the Sunday evening.

Barrie Southwood



Left - Walkers enjoy the good weather. Right - View of Portmeirion. Top - Bust of Patrick McGoochan

CHRISTMAS QUIZ – Answers - JUST FOR FUN

SOME CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

1. Tom Smith
2. Prince Albert
3. 1982
4. Hadrian's Wall
5. Thirteen
6. Christ and his Twelve Apostles
7. 5TH January
8. 336 A.D
9. 12 days.
10. He leaves his Carbon Footprint (Wee Christmas Joke)

A "MERRY CHRISTMAS" – BUT IN WHAT LANGUAGE?

1. FRENCH
2. SPANISH
3. GERMAN
4. ITALIAN
5. NORWEGIAN
6. POLISH
7. DUTCH
8. PORTUGUESE
9. HAWAIIAN
10. TURKISH



Rotary Club of Ayr

I was recently asked to give a talk at a weekly meeting of Ayr Rotary. Ayr Rotary is part of Rotary International, the largest service organisation in the world, with over 1.2 million members. They are very active in the local community, running several major projects including the annual Beach Clean, Poppy Collection, Food bank and Message in a bottle.

It would be beneficial to develop links between Ayr Rotary and OiR and I plan to speak to Rotary again next year about our organisation. I will also involve the walking groups in the Beach Clean planned for April 2025.

A representative from Rotary will give us a talk in the Town Hall on January 21st 2025. Their newsletter can be found at: <https://rotaryclubofayr.org/newsletter/>



Barrie Southwood

REMEMBRANCE

When the clocks go back on the last Sunday in October, and the days grow shorter in November, the appearance of Red Poppies, worn on our lapels, are a visible reminder. The Red Poppy commemorates all those who sacrificed their lives in World War One and all conflicts which have happened since. The Red Poppy is a national symbol of Remembrance and Hope for a Peaceful Future.



**They shall not grow old,
As we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the
years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, and
in the morning,
We will remember them.**



The Lady Haig Poppy Factory in Leith, Edinburgh was established in 1926. Exclusive to Scotland over three million Red Poppies and 40,000 wreaths are created annually by a team of around thirty disabled and vulnerable ex-servicemen and women. The factory is one of the Royal British Legion Group of charities.

S.D

BE SCAMWISE

Scammers are very clever and convincing, they enjoy targeting vulnerable people. There are many ways in which they will attempt to get your money. They will pressure you to act quickly. Keep calm and hang up.

Half of those targeted by scammers are over 55.

The anonymity of the telephone system and the low cost of calls make the phone the preferred medium for scammers but they will also attempt to defraud you online via your computer.



Delivery scams, Amazon Scams, Energy Scams, Charity Scams, Prize Draw Scams, Bank Scams, Online Shopping Scams and Remote Access Scams - where someone tells you they will fix a computer "problem" if you download software - are the most frequently reported scams in Scotland.

A third of all scam victims fall for another scam within 12 months. **Don't let this happen to you.** Listen to your common sense. Don't give away your bank details or part with any money - whatever the threat. For advice on internet security go to - getsafeonline.org or independantage.org/get-advice/technology.

S.D

THE PUFFER KAFFIR

OiR's Executive Committee have been getting together in recent months for their Meetings in 'The Local' at Ayrshire Housing. The Local is a meeting space in Ayr for Community Groups and Voluntary Organisations to use.

I have been interested in the building for some time as the murals on the walls of the corner of Crown Street and Main Street catch the eye and seem to tell a story.

The large mural on the gable wall in Crown Street was commissioned in 2016 by the building's former owner 'Craft and Harbour Bar' who had engaged a Glasgow based muralist 'Recoat' to create a mural which celebrated the local area.



Then, in 2003, Ayrshire Housing invited the same organisation to repair and refresh the mural, and to add a further mural to the front of the building, facing Main Street.

On the Crown Street wall there is a silhouette of the Clyde Puffer – MV Kaffir, which sits, half sunk, at Newton Shore. The pink mountain range is the view of Arran from the Pier. The blue letters and star are from the uniforms of the Tram workers who worked on the former tram service in Ayr, many years ago. The orange tracks form the marks from the tyres of tractors which would smooth the sand on the beach.

The mural facing Main Street contains a blue silhouette that is thought to be an old mine ventilation shaft. The chevrons, from the local cranes are black and smaller in the wall mural.

Ayrshire is famous for potato farming and an old photograph of the potato harvesting machinery provided the orange 'sun like' pattern. The pink vertical lines define the Blackthorn salt harvesting building at the shore.

I have found that the story of the murals add interest to the history of our Royal Burgh, and brighten up the town on a dull, winters day.

The puffer, launched in 1944 was one of hundreds commissioned by the Admiralty during WW2 and cancelled before completion, and then bought for J Hay and Sons Limited coasting business. The puffers' were given 'ethnographic' names including Cretan, Inca and Sexon.

The Kaffir's story ended on the night of 23rd September 1974 but, that's a story for another day!

Amy Kinnaird



My younger days

When I was in my younger days, I weighed a few pounds less,
I needn't hold my tummy in to wear a belted dress.

But now that I am older, I've set my body free:

There's the comfort of elastic where once my waist would be.

Inventor of those high-heeled shoes my feet have not forgiven:

I have to wear a nine now, but I used to wear a seven.

And how about those pantyhose – they're sized by weight, you see,

So how come when I put them on the crotch is at my knee?

I need to wear these glasses as the print's been getting smaller:

And it wasn't very long ago I know that I was taller.

Though my hair has turned to grey, and my skin no longer fits,

On the inside, I'm the same old me, it's the outside's changed a bit!

Anon