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Magazine of
The National Federation of
18 Plus Groups

Autumn 2003

East Anglia Multi-Activities Weekend /
Wellesbourne Raft Race / Return to Eden /
National Greek Week / Slimming for a Good
Cause



Thurrock 18 Plus at
The East Anglia Multi-Activities Weekend

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Well hello and welcome to the autumn Plus News. Lots to see in this issue and read about. Various summer adventures have taken place and once again those involved seemed to have a good time. Even your esteemed Editor took part in one of the events reported on and the sunburn scars are still on his legs to prove it!

Hard to believe WASH and (whisper) Christmas are upon us again... look forward to seeing you all at Hunstanton again. I'm usually never short of reports for this event, but I'm sure there are other things going on this chilly autumn you want to write about. The plusnews@talk21 e-mail address is now on line again, by the way.

Finally, look for an announcement / plea regarding the future of the magazine elsewhere this issue, and get writing for the next edition, due around January or so.

Peter

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PLUS NEWS is YOUR magazine.
Without you, it's nothing!

Please send your articles and
photographs to:

Peter Sharples
4 Michelle Close
Kings Heath
Birmingham
B13 0PR

Telephone: 0121 684 0333

E-mail: plusnews@talk21.com

THE SMALL PRINT

The views of individuals expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the editor or of The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups.



National Chairman's Column

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Can I thank everyone who came to WASH - 20 years old this year and still the biggest party in 18 Plus! This event summed up what the Federation is all about - a chance for people to get together, mix and have a laugh. Alcohol was however off limits for me during the weekend!

There was the added bonus this year of the 'bring a friend' scheme and I am sure they were all made extremely welcome. Finally I would like to thank the organising committee for what was quite clearly another successful (if cold!) weekend.

Bekki
National Chairman

East Anglia Area Multi Activity Weekend

The Multi Activity Event, again run by East Anglia Area, was for the first time held over a whole weekend and this allowed for a fantastic atmosphere as Plussers from as far as Birmingham, Banbury and Redbridge descended on the outdoor centre near the Cambridgeshire village of Mepal. There was

rock climbing, windsurfing, canoeing and rifle shooting and also VERTEX! (Very Exhilarating Ropes Task Experience!)

How do you explain VERTEX to someone who's never seen it? One word sums it up... terrifying! Imagine climbing 12 metres up a telegraph pole that sways in the

wind, and then having to jump for a trapeze! Or maybe have four of you climb the pole and perform a trick at the top? These and many more are part of VERTEX. Of course you are at all times attached by rope and pulley to a

colleague below, but even though you are perfectly safe, it doesn't stop you being worried. There were just over 50 Plussers present and the event started with plenty of drink Friday night. On the Saturday morning we arrived at the main hall for 9am! Once split into groups we went to our first activity, for us it was windsurfing.

Much amusement was had by seeing us trying to get into the wetsuits, and we proceeded to our instruction on the finer art of... swimming. I'd never been windsurfing before and I was amazed at how difficult it is. But we had three hours to master the basics and I have to say by the end of it most of us could at least go some

distance on the board without falling off. I look forward to trying this again next year.

After lunch we went canoeing and later rock climbing. I'm still amazed that I ended up in the lake whilst trying to canoe. Rock climbing was fun as always. Mepal has three custom built walls with around nine



different climbs, going to a maximum height of 11 metres.

On the Saturday night we had more drinking (surprise) and a murder mystery evening. Many thanks to my six suspects and congratulations

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to 'Team E's' (Trevor and Emma from Redbridge and Sam from Havering) for being the first to correctly deduce the suspect, room and weapon.

Sunday Morning saw three hours of VERTEX to contend with, just what you need with a hangover! From balance beams to the fan descender (hold on to a bar 12 metres up in the air and then drop to the ground), I have to say VERTEX still petrifies me after three years!

On Sunday afternoon we had a go at shooting and archery and became quite proficient at both.

After packing away our tents it was time to draw the raffle.

1st Prize - Ticket to next year's event (Sarah, Thurrock)

2nd Prize - £20 (Alan, Thurrock)

3rd Prize - £2, stake back (Jo, Halesowen)

Congratulations to you all, and thank you to everyone who turned up.

Next year is being planned already and is going to be bigger and better! The provisional dates are Friday 27th August to Bank Holiday Monday 30th August 2004.

Barry Healey,
Multi-Activity Weekend Co-ordinator.

Brean 2004

Brean is three days and three nights of entertainment running from Friday 19th to Monday 22nd March 2004 at Brean Leisure Park, Brean Sands near Weston-super-Mare.

Friday Book in from 3pm and relax till the evening in your caravan, then dance, drink and meet friends in the evening to the music of our resident DJ, 'til around 2am. There may well be a party or two afterwards.

Saturday Kites, Quiz & Karaoke plus a talent competition during the day, then in the evening dance to our DJ and enjoy a live band 'til around 2am before heading off to any parties that might be around.

Sunday Real Ale Trip (£4) where we take over a pub and cause mayhem with live entertainment thrown in, and for those not going to this trip a cinema visit is laid on. In the evening you can book a carvery meal (£12), and there are more DJ sounds, a live band 'til around 12.30am, and more parties!

Monday Time for home I'm afraid, but see you all in 2005!

Booking forms are now with groups, and deposits are due early February (£18.50) with final deposits at start of March (£30).

Wayne Fenton
Organiser, Brean 2004
01438 241787 or 07890 446764

Pefkos 2004

The 7th Annual 18 Plus Holiday Abroad

18 - 25 September 2004

Pefkos is a small laid-back resort in Rhodes with a good long beach and some delightful tavernas, bars and a disco. Only 2 miles away is the historic town of Lindos with it's Acropolis, golden bay, narrow streets, numerous bars and discos. Further afield you can visit the medieval history of Rhodes Town, the ruined Temple of Athena, the thermal baths at Kalithea, the waterpark, and finally the Mandraki harbour, home to the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Hotel Ilysson

- located right on the beach
- swimming pool & snack bar
- TV lounge
- bar & pool table
- mini market
- golf & tennis courts
- breakfast Included!

Cost is £359 per person which includes, Insurance (-£15 if you have your own), breakfast, flights & transfers
Deposit of required £90 by 20 January. Balance due by 1st July.

Booking your holiday:

Please send a cheque for £90 made payable to 'Plus Holidays' to: Tom Seddon, 73 Kyrkeby, Letchworth, Herts, SG6 2PG

For further information, please call Tom on 01462 680 401 or email home@tomseddon.co.uk

Wellesbourne Raft Race

I said yes. What to, I hear you ask? The Wellesbourne to Stratford Raft Race with monies going to Spinal Research.

I wasn't quite sure what I'd let myself in for, but I'm glad I did it. OK, it was a home made raft, made over ten years ago, but with a few minor repairs we were off.

Picture the route - lovely countryside, slow-moving waters, sunshine and a great group of friends.

Enthusiastic and nervous, we went into the cool waters of the Avon for a fun day out, in a friendly competition.

The race started with 71 rafts. The eight mile route included two weirs with waters

occasionally shallow or sometimes deep, especially at the second weir.

Our team got into a good rhythm from the beginning and we rowed well together. We reached the first weir and the raft organisers let us know that it was safe to stay on the raft. Then we were up to our waists in the River Avon's waters, what a great feeling! Now we were really getting a taste of what this race was all about.

Arms aching but adrenalin pumping we struggled on. With the second weir approaching we were advised to get off and jump in. Sorry, but I don't like getting my head wet, so I walked around the edge

of the wall at the weir and then waded in up to the raft. (Unlike the rest of us! Ed)

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Taking part is what counts and overtaking rafts was a good feeling too. Hours later and with only bottled water and sun tan lotion on board (which we lost twice), we were feeling the strain of the sun beating down and burning our legs but not our spirit! We knew the end should be getting close and getting nearer Stratford kept us going. The weather by now, had decided to change for the worse.

The heavens were opening with thunder and lightning in front of us. This urged us on even more to the point where we just

rowed our hearts out. Stratford upon Avon approached and nearly six hours later 'Solitonic' came in 50th out of the 57 that finished.

We were all so thankful to finish and get out of those wet clothes.

To be greeted by fellow 'plussers' taking photos was a great end to a great day.

We were proud to take part, but if we had come first, it would have been a bonus!

The crew were Effie and Alan, myself, Pete [the Ed], Clare, and Greg. We made a great team.

Not quite sure if I will do it again next year!

A total of £100 was raised for Spinal Research.

Kathryn Morris - Solihull 18 Plus



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Southampton 18 Plus recently visited the Eden Project in Cornwall. It isn't just the increasing beauty of the gardens and displays of varied tropical and Mediterranean plants there, but the hidden engineering of the project that amaze. There is also the living proof of realised personal dreams and hard work to achieve goals, which can come true given the dedication, ingenuity and co-ordination of people.

The 'Biomes' are undoubtedly the impressive part of the project. No matter the temperature outside, the tropics is a t-shirt and shorts job with high humidity and high temperatures, additionally mist sprays wind their way through the jungle, the coolest part being up top in sunlight next to the high waterfall. Take the time to educate yourself, in among the astounding views there is plenty of information as to what all the plants there are used for commercially. Art also rears itself up too, both as being in concert with its surroundings and as an educating tool. Simply surreal, but not overpoweringly so.

The Mediterranean Biome is somewhat of a relief from the heat and humidity of the tropics allowing a far more conventional plant array. Many art performances are staged during visiting hours, though none were observed on this occasion.

The restaurant is situated between the Biomes. Being sunken it is also reasonably hidden from the rest of the gardens. Many interactive 'sculptures' exist, my favourite being the cloud chamber. A cairn of local stone, inside is seating in a tall room with a large white stone on the floor, with a small gap in the roof aimed at the general direction of the suns skyward traverse, so the moving clouds are projected onto the white stone in the dark.

This year was a fairly small affair organised quickly over a weekend. Next year should see the hiring of a minibus and luxury caravans for more participants over a longer time span and encompassing other attractions like the Lost Gardens of Heligan and Goonhilly. Needless to say the local pubs see many visits too! Look out for details.

Adrian Barnard

National Greek Week - Zakynthos

I would like to thank Mark Randall for organising a great holiday, a shame he was unable to attend.

The accommodation was good, especially for the money, quite what they considered you could manage on a single mini ring with two mugs I don't know, but then there are so many eateries I have never considered self-catering for such holidays in the first place. My compatriots managed to keep me away from the pizza most of the time all the same - rotters! The island has still got turtles - just, despite the tourists eager to see them. Well I now have a photo of a turtle head breaking the water (!! Ed). The afternoon trip gave you the opportunity to go to a secluded beach offshore for a swim or purchase from a waterborne ice cream seller. In addition to gassing turtles and ourselves with diesel fumes, you also get the opportunity to fall in the water when returning to shore! As you may guess one of our party managed this. Being the Greek islands boat trips make up many of the tours, and we had a

trip round the island where we saw the blue caves where the water's blue and the diesel smells stronger than ever! The shipwreck was interesting too.

A coach trip was taken around the villages, I get the impression electricity is not 100% reliable round there, and the ice lolly I had was a whole new experience, vanilla essence on one side and tasteless dry ice cream mousse on the other with severely broken up candy coating. I think some EU rules re food standards haven't quite filtered that far inland. I'm still here though.

The service was excellent, I actually found something I consider useful in the tack shops permeating the tourist section. You could clear the tourist areas with a walk and the airport was actually faster than Gatwick re luggage though in Gatwick you do have ample seating and don't need to stand in your neighbours pocket waiting nearly an hour for the bags.

Would I go again? Yes. I believe the island has enough to offer two weeks of different excursions and experiences. The company of friends is also naturally enjoyable too.

Adrian Barnard

Slimming For a Good Cause

persevere with this.

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Week 4 - Thursday, 12th June 2003

Lost 1lb. Not brilliant, but it's in the right direction.

Week 5 - Thursday, 19th June 2003

Lost 1½lb. I hate those bloody ½lbs; another ½lb and I will have lost a stone. I feel like things are slowing up now, I will never get Slimmer of the Week again.

Week 6 - Thursday, 26th June 2003

Lost 1lb. Well I've made it past the stone (1 stone ½lb to be precise). I got presented with a certificate for losing one stone. I feel good that I have reached over a stone within the sponsored period. Unfortunately, alcohol is high in calories, so I'm not getting stoned to celebrate.

Week 7 - Thursday, 3rd July 2003

Lost 1½lb. Yeah, I am finally rid of that bloody ½lb. Incidentally, I've stuck to the skipping and am getting pretty good, I feel the

neighbours are wondering why there is an elephant skipping in our garden, but what the hell, I'm getting thinner, lighter and fitter.

Sponsored diet ends, but diet does not.

Total lost 1 stone, 2 lb (16 lb)

When all the money was collected in a total of £252.80 was raised.

I would like to thank all those people who have supported me. Special thanks goes to Leeds 18 Plus, Rothwell 18 Plus and all those people who attended the Northern Area Conference in May, especially the National Chairman, Bekki Randall. For more information about the Rosemary Conley Diet and Fitness Classes please call 01509 620222, or visit their website at www.rosemary-conley.co.uk. For more information about Diabetes UK, please call 020 7720 6680, or visit their website at www.diabetes.org.uk.

Elaine Anderson - Leeds 18 Plus

Well done Elaine - Ed

Hi, my name is Elaine Anderson and I am a member of Leeds 18 Plus. I am also an obese and unfit person and when a leaflet for my local Rosemary Conley Diet and Fitness Class dropped through the door, my husband, Glen said he would pay for me to attend for ten weeks and see how it goes. I decided that to give me some extra incentive I would get sponsored for the first eight weeks and the money raised would go to Diabetes UK as Glen and his mother both suffer from the condition. To help me I kept a diary, and here are some extracts.



The Start - Thursday, 16th May 2003

Started diet. It was very strange attending the class for the first time as after all these years of being in 18 Plus (12 years) I had some idea of how a new member felt. Got weighed in, and result, I didn't break the scales!

Week 1 - Thursday, 22nd May 2003

Lost 4lb. Not bad for my first week hey! I have invested in some hand weights, ankle weights and (gulp) a skipping rope. I haven't skipped for a very very long time and feel I could very well regret this purchase. A woman impulse buying, never!

Week 2 - Thursday, 29th May 2003

No movement this week (and I'm not talking about my bowels!) despite sticking to diet and weighing almost everything that passed my lips. Feeling very pissed off, try the skipping, still feeling very pissed off.

Week 3 - Thursday, 5th June 2003

Lost 7lb Yippee! (that's half a stone). I got a certificate for Slimmer of the Week. Certainly made up for last week. Feeling great, try more skipping; I think I will



Have you got what it takes...

...to be the next Editor of Plus News?

In January 2004 my second term as editor of this esteemed publication comes to an end, and with a heavy heart I have decided that this will be an appropriate time to hand over the reins and move on to other things. With this in mind, I'm asking for any member who fancies the challenge of keeping the mass membership informed of all that's happening in the world of Plus to get in touch about succeeding me as Plus News Editor. You need basic editing/grammar skills, decent computer stuff and the ability to harass people whether they're doing anything or not! It can be frustrating, but IS rewarding. Above all 18 Plus needs its magazine more than ever it's part of what keeps this organisation alive and to lose it due to apathy would potentially be a nail in the coffin. Plus needs you!!

So get in touch, by phone or e-mail, and we can have a chat... **Peter**

National Karting 2003

Hosted by Southern Area, Saturday 6th December 2003, Andover, starting at 11:40am. Entry price £52.50. Spaces are potentially limited so book now!

Are you made of the right stuff? You get nearly 60 minutes in the driving seat against up to eleven other drivers simultaneously. Format is a five-minute practice after the team briefing, which is mandatory, then two 25-minute races.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Southern Area 18 Plus' please. Send to Adrian Barnard, 21 White Leys Close, Didcot, Oxon. OX11 7LP.

Adrian Barnard

National Diary 2003/4

Nov 7-10, WASH - Hunstanton

Dec 6, National Karting - Southern Area

Sat 10 - Sat 17 Jan 2004 National Skiing Holiday

Sat 24 - Sun 25 Jan 2004 NEC Meeting

Sat 28 Feb 2004 National Scale Event available date

Fri 19 - Mon 22 Mar 2004 Brean 2004

Sat 24 - Sun 25 Apr 2004 Annual National Conference

Sat 5 - Sat 12 Jun 2004 National Narrowboat Holiday

Sat 3 Jul 2004 National Treasure Hunt

Fri 3 - Sun 5 Sep 2004 National Training Weekend

Sat 18 - Sat 25 Sep 2004 The 7th Annual Holiday Abroad

Sat 16 - Sun 17 Oct 2004 NEC Meeting

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